

JUDGE

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plaintiffs can continue to utilize social distancing and safety protocols at larger gatherings involving spiritual worship," he wrote.

Courts in other states have ruled against similar orders. The Wisconsin Supreme Court struck down Gov. Tony Evers' stay-at-home order last week, ruling his administration

overstepped its authority when it extended the order for another month without consulting legislators.

A federal judge in North Carolina on May 16 sided with conservative Christian leaders and blocked the enforcement of restrictions that Gov. Roy Cooper ordered affecting indoor religious services during the pandemic.

The order from Judge James C. Dever III came days after two churches,

a minister and a Christian revival group filed a federal lawsuit seeking to immediately block enforcement of rules covering religious services within the Democratic governor's executive orders.

In Louisiana, however, a federal judge refused a minister's request to temporarily halt Gov. John Bel Edwards' stay-at-home order, which expired that same day.

Shirtcliff's ruling turned on the legal mechanism Brown used to issue her

orders. The plaintiffs allege — and the judge agreed — they were issued under a statute pertaining to public health emergencies and not an older provision that addresses natural disasters such as storms, earthquakes or floods.

The public health statute contains the 28-day time limit, while the other does not contain a time limit.

Brown maintained in court papers the statute on public health emergencies

was intended by the Legislature to supplement, and not supersede, the emergency powers granted her for natural disasters — including disease — and therefore the time limit doesn't apply.

Brown declared a state of emergency due to the virus on March 8 and has issued multiple executive orders since then, including the closure of all schools, non-essential businesses and a ban on dine-in service at

restaurants and bars.

Earlier this month, Brown extended the order another 60 days until July 6. All but one Oregon county, however, has since received the state's approval to begin loosening the coronavirus restrictions. In those counties, restaurants can provide dine-in service with 6 feet of social distancing and salons, gyms and other nonessential businesses can also reopen with strict safety precautions.



Staff photo by Ronald Bond

La Grande High School freshmen Owen Rinker, left, and Jace Schow attach grommets Thursday to a banner for Cove High School seniors.

BANNERS

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large-format printer to design vinyl signs to honor the seniors for each school.

"I contacted the superintendent of every school in the valley," Rinker said.

The schools were on board — even those who already had signs for their seniors, such as Union and Elgin.

Each school is receiving a variety of signs they will be able to display. Imbler and Powder Valley are getting individual portraits of the seniors to hang on light or telephone poles. Cove, Elgin, Union and La Grande are getting longer signs — some 20-25 feet long — Rinker said.

Some, like Cove, have photos of the seniors on the banner. Some, like Elgin, have the names of the seniors. Union's has photos of seniors' missed spring sports. Many of the signs have the school logos. Many say "Congratulations" or "We are proud of you."

La Grande, given the large number of seniors in the class — more than 150 — will have several longer banners hung along the route the seniors will take when they have their drive-by graduation ceremony May 30 rather than individual ones for each senior.

"Not as simple to do the

"It's the right thing to do to reach out and do what you can do to make things special for those kids."

Lance Rinker, director of purchasing, marketing and information technology at Northwood and Outdoors

upright signs individually, but we wanted to do something special for them," Rinker said.

He said roughly 40-50 hours went into settling on the details the schools wanted for their signs, designing them, and then printing them.

Close to 18 hours went into attaching grommets to each sign to hang them, which was where a pair of volunteers came into play — Rinker's son, Owen, and Jace Schow, both freshmen at LHS.

"I was talking about (the grommets), Owen heard and was like 'You need help doing that?'" Lance Rinker said. "He called Jace. They play sports (and) they know all these kids."

The younger Rinker said he and Schow jumping into help was "the right thing to do."

"Jace and I from sports and athletics (know) a lot of seniors who have affected us in real ways," Owen Rinker said. "In soccer this year Tyler Leigh, Westin Blake and Ty Rivas welcomed me

with open arms. They were always nice to me. Still all (are) really close friends to me."

Schow pointed to senior baseball player Justin Frederick as one of the upperclassmen who helped him during the spring season before it was canceled, even noting it was just the presence that was impactful.

"We just wanted to help out because they are not getting what most people get (for graduation)," Schow said. "They deserve more, especially because they went through all the schooling process as us, and they don't get the same graduation as everyone else. It's barely anything for us to help make these posters."

Lance Rinker pointed to the attitude of the freshmen — doing anything to provide support — as the reason behind the project.

"That sums up what we're trying to do," he said. "It's the right thing to do to reach out and do what you can do to make things special for those kids."

African American veterans and patriotic education, according to Wikipedia.

The GAR also is credited with helping start the Memorial Day commemoration. Memorial Day celebrations began in the 1860s after the Civil War in the north. It became a national federal holiday in 1971.

Evidence of the GAR's presence in La Grande is at Hillcrest East cemetery where a stone memorial marker and flagpole commemorating the local post stand. One side of the marker, installed in 1916, states that it is a memorial to "The boys who wore the blue. They kept the stars in the field of blue. They kept the states to allegiance true. To them the Nation's life is due."

"The boys who wore the blue" refers to the blue uniforms worn by Union soldiers. They contrasted to the gray uniforms Confederate troops wore.

An editorial in the May 28, 1910, Observer told of how the bloody gulf between Blue and the Gray had virtually disappeared over the prior 45 years.

"The country has overcome what sectional strife it once held and today the saying of 'No north, no south,' is very true indeed," the editorial stated.

Veterans who fought in the Civil War who are buried in Union County include Jerome Lawrence, who was buried about 10 feet west of the GAR memorial at Hillcrest East Cemetery. Lawrence was born June 15, 1839, and died Aug. 14, 1919. "GAR" is prominently etched into his headstone.

The Union County post of the GAR was founded 1890 and disbanded in 1936 and was open only to Civil War veterans from this county, according to a June 3, 2013 Observer article.

William Thompson was one of its last surviving members.

The Observer reported in its May 29, 1940, edition that Thompson was then living in Portland and believed to be one of 15 surviving members of the GAR in Oregon. Thompson was then 92.

BOND

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and capital construction Union voters approved in November and a \$4 million matching grant from the state's Oregon School Capital Improvement program.

Union School District Superintendent Carter Wells said the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to the closure of all school buildings in Oregon, is not interfering with the district's bond project. However, he said, the coronavirus pandemic could later affect the availability of materials and cause their prices to rise or fall.

The Hutchinson upgrades will be just the start of the bond project work over the next three years. The others, which the bond design team continues to plan, include work on making the Union School District's buildings more accessible and improving heating and ventilation systems.

High on the design team's priority list is the installation of an elevator at Union High School. The elevator will be available for people with mobility issues.

"We want people to be able to access the building with dignity," Wells said.

Another high priority accessibility project, Clark said, involves the high school gym. The design

team wants a ramp outside the north entrance and a wider vestibule to make it easier for people to enter the gym. Preliminary plans call for seating inside the gym to meet the needs of those with mobility issues, Clark said.

A third accessibility project under consideration is the restoration of the cracked old steps leading into the high school's grand east entrance, which features iconic columns. This served as the main entry way into Union High School, built around 1912, for decades before its doors were closed to the public as a safety precaution to prevent people from using the deteriorating steps.

Clark said restoring the steps to allow the historical main entrance to reopen would boost security because people who enter would go past the school's offices, allowing staff to better monitor who enters the high school.

The design team also is looking at altering the main entrance in the elementary school's S.E. Miller building. It is presently on the southwest side of the building off its playground. This is far from ideal because it means children have to walk from a drop-off point through the parking lot between the building

and the high school to get into their school. The design team is studying the possibility of moving the main entrance of the S.E. Miller building to the middle of the east side of the building and installing a sidewalk that would run from Union's Main Street west about 50 yards to the new entrance. Children would not have to walk through the parking lot, and those who drop them off would be able to see them enter the school, Clark said.

Members of the design team include school district staff, project architects, contractors and the bond project manager. The team shares all of its proposals with the school district's staff and its bond oversight committee to for their approval, and the Union School Board has the final say.

Wells said the proposed bond projects are creating a sense of excitement in the school district during an uncertain time.

"It is really phenomenal that we are able to move forward (on the bond project)," he said.

The superintendent said he believes major progress will be made in the summer of 2021.

"I am very, very optimistic that when students get back to school in the fall of 2021 they will see significant improvements in the school district," Wells said.



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national fraternal organization composed of Civil War veterans, annually placed decorations at the grave sites of their fellow veterans.

The article also indicated that the GAR post had recently stopped conducting Memorial Day marches because many of its members were getting too old to participate.

The GAR, founded in 1866, was open to honorably discharged soldiers, sailors or marines of the United States' armed forces who served between April 2, 1861, and April 9, 1865, according to a submission written by Cora E. Gillis for the 1964 edition of the World Book Encyclopedia. The organization had 409,489 members in 1890, and its last member died in 1956.

The GAR is credited with being one of the first organized advocacy groups in American politics, supporting causes including voting rights for