

OUR VIEW

# Funds make restoration a reality

The first-glance headlines will notify the public that the Oregon Legislature funneled \$4 million to spearhead an effort to restore Eastern Oregon University's Grand Staircase, and while the action by lawmakers was essential, there is a bigger story behind the 20-year-long plan to upgrade what is an architecture masterpiece.

The staircase was just one of a number of projects created from the imagination of architect John V. Bennes, who decided to design the staircase in an Italian Renaissance Revival style. The structure contains 178 steps, 418 stone balusters and 17,470 square feet of concrete. Just its construction was a big story.

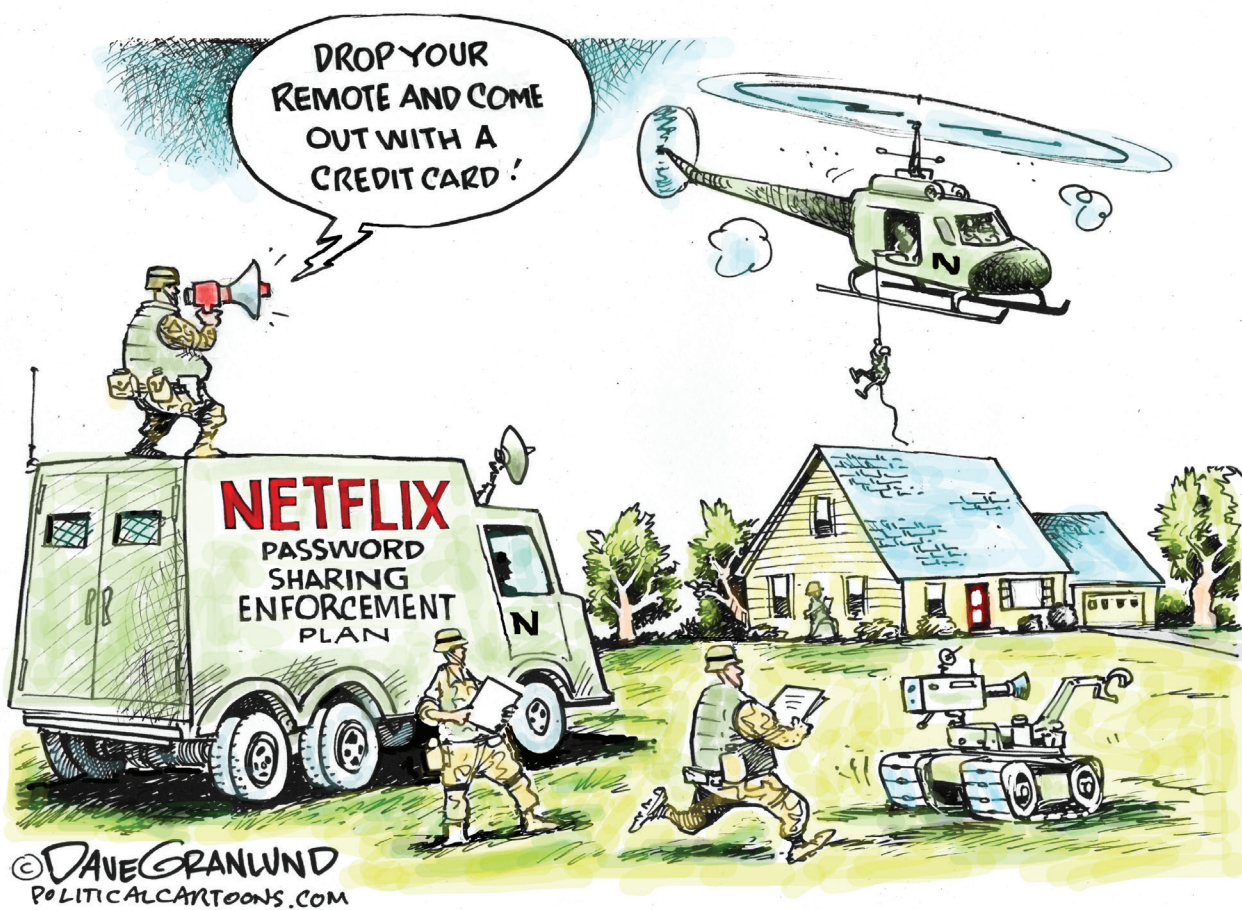
The bigger story, though, centers on all the people and organizations that began the effort to restore the staircase years ago when such a venture may have seemed hopelessly optimistic. A host of people and organizations — including but not limited to the Union County Chamber of Commerce, the city, Main Street Downtown, the Oregon Historic Preservation Office, the college and the La Grande Landmarks Commission — worked, at one point or another, to make the restoration a reality.

The staircase was and is more than just a unique architecture structure. The staircase represents a link between the past and the future of the town and the college. For many, the staircase symbolizes a memory from childhood or a cherished attribute to time spent studying at the college.

That's why allowing it to crumble was never really an option and that is again why the work of so many for so long should be lauded. Now, in a nation divided by sectional strife, the cooperation between different people and organizations is a shining example showing that we can work together to find a solution to a difficult challenge, that we can achieve great things with determination.

The funding from the Legislature was critical and every voter should feel proud that lawmakers made such a wise decision. Often that isn't the case. Yet on this one, our lawmakers saw the benefit of doing what was right.

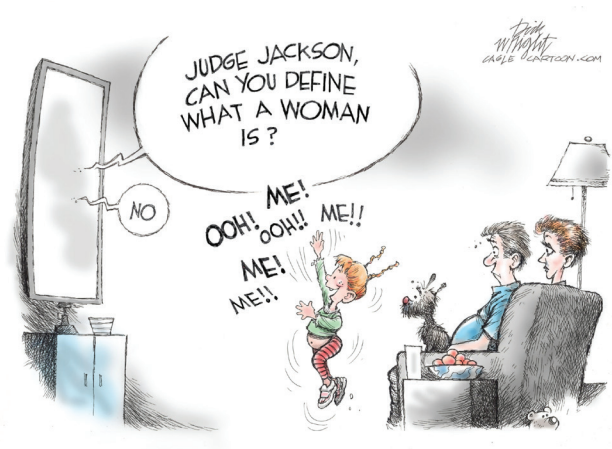
The money from the Legislature for the staircase isn't pork barrel politics but instead a solid investment in the future. The town and the county owe those who helped make such an endeavor a reality a big thanks.



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YOUR VIEWS

## Passing school bond would improve district's extracurricular activities

I am writing in support of the school Bond Measure 31-105. I am a dental hygienist at a local dental office, married, with two young boys, ages 7 and 11. I am a member of the Island City Elementary PTO as well as La Grande Little League.

As a parent, nothing is more important to me than the education of my children. In order for children to be successful later in life, a strong foundation and the best tools to build upon that foundation are essential. Extracurricular activities including sports and clubs are a huge asset to any child at any age but lack of adequate facilities to hold such is a barrier for our community. This is the case with the 98-year-old Annex adjacent to the La Grande Middle School.

The bond from 2014 was recently refinanced, which enabled the restructure of the bond debt. This would give our school district \$4.845 million to put toward replacing the Annex and maintenance facility. If

voters pass the proposed \$4.845 million bond measure, the proposed bond tax rate is estimated to remain at the current rate without adding years to the bond payoff schedule. In addition, the school district will receive a \$4 million state matching grant if the proposed bond measure passes from the Oregon School Capital Improvement Matching (OSCIM) program. If the proposed bond measure does not pass, the school district would not receive the matching grant.

The new proposed facility at the middle school would help our community and students with increased academic and club activities, eliminate ADA barriers, replace two of the district's oldest buildings and increase recreational opportunities for the community while maintaining existing tax rates.

With your "Yes" vote, La Grande School District will continue to provide adequate space, safety and infrastructure for our students and staff, now and in the future. Please join me in voting "Yes" in the May 2022 election.

Amaya Adkins  
La Grande

## Be nice to the person behind the counter

I know we've all had enough of COVID, lack of supplies and rising prices. But I am concerned about what I hear from our checkout people at every store I go to, saying they can't believe how rude and angry people are getting.

Some have even retired early because they have had enough — and you wonder why there aren't more aisles open for checking out?

Granted, there are a lot of people sitting at home and letting us pay for their living, but it is not the people who serve us who have raised prices, slowed the supply chain or made us wait a little longer to get our errands done.

Let's start being much nicer to the person behind the counter who is just trying to make a living and doing their job — let's make their day by being nice.

Because if it was you behind that counter instead, how would you feel?

Judi Richter  
Elgin

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