

OUR VIEW

# Coach leaves a lasting legacy

Longevity in just about any profession usually says a whole lot about an individual's focus and integrity, and the Enterprise High School sports community can look back on coach Mike Crawford's tenure at the helm of the Outlaw girls basketball program with pride.

Crawford, a longtime fixture on the bench for the girls program, coached his last game this season for the Outlaws. He steps away from the program after 33 years, a state championship crown and a record of 520 wins in 795 games.

Crawford was in a way the last of a group of coaches from the now long defunct Wapiti League, a conference steeped in a tradition of competitiveness and prep hardwood glory. His long tenure is not only a testament to his own talents but to a single-minded devotion to the benefits of prep sports.

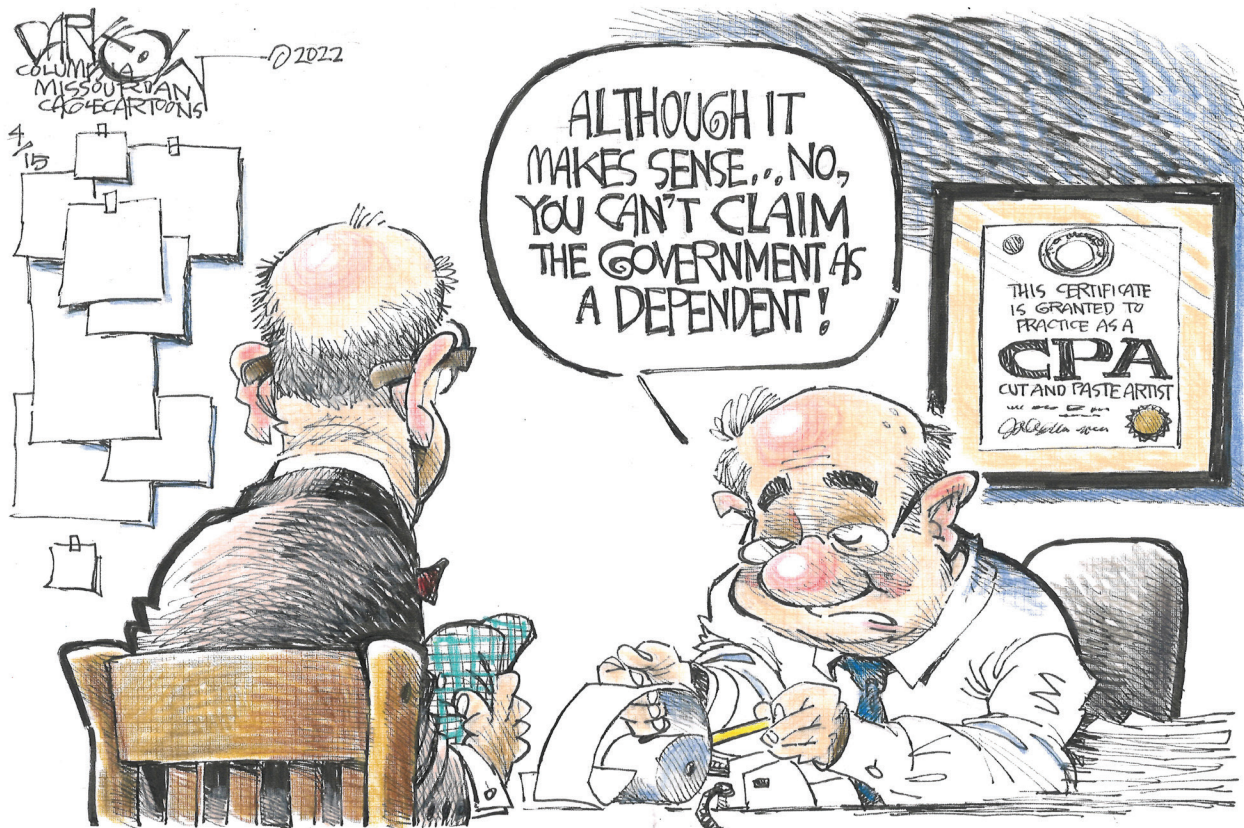
Fans and patrons of school districts often take such long stints as Crawford's for granted. We see the well-known coach on the sidelines or the bench or next to the wrestling mat and expect — and count on — their participation into the future. The years run by, and the same face remains in a coaching position, securing a sense of longevity.

Crawford's three decades of experience and success personifies this sense of security every season, where we know who the coach will be. In the world big picture that may not seem like much, but in our little piece of the heartland it is important.

Crawford didn't walk away with a string of state championships, but he should depart with the knowledge that his time, his and his family's sacrifices were worth it.

Coaches and their families at rural schools make major sacrifices every season. They endure long hours and often experience criticism along with praise. They are often caught in the middle of a terrible paradox where they must teach their players the fundamentals of a game and field criticism from parents and fans.

Most of all, though, Crawford's departure marks the final chapter of an era that began in the days of the Wapiti League, before cell-phones and internet on lonely bus rides across the Blue Mountains to small, secluded gyms where, during every game, the stakes were high and the chance at prep glory just a play away.



YOUR VIEWS

## Quality schools are the foundation of thriving communities

The community of La Grande has the unique opportunity to invest in our youth without encumbering taxpayers with more than what we have already committed to support our school district. Let's make it happen by voting Yes for Measure 31-105.

Our community has generously supported investment in education facilities in the La Grande School District, but additional investment is needed. The La Grande Middle School Annex is in desperate need of replacement. Nearly a century old, the building has limited accessibility, lacks the versatility needed to support both the classroom and extracurricular needs of our students and is an inefficient building.

I am pleased the district had the financial acumen to refinance the existing bond to attain a lower interest rate, a responsible and principled use of taxpayer dollars. By doing so, the district created the opportunity to use nearly \$4.5 million for our schools without raising our tax rate from 2021 and without extending the bond payoff date. Additionally, the district qualified for an additional \$4 million matching grant.

Quality schools are the foundation of thriving communities. We are blessed with talented educators who are committed to the growth and development of our students. With a Yes vote we can enhance facilities to further support active and engaged teaching and learning.

I hope you join me in voting Yes for Measure 31-105.  
**Tom Insko**  
 La Grande

## It is time for an Eastern Oregon governor

Fifty years is too long. It is time for an Eastern Oregon governor.

With only weeks separating Oregonians from replacing one of the most oppressive, dictatorial governors in our state's history, the choices are, unfortunately, many. Narrowing down the right candidate is confusing, with nearly 20 choices on the Republican side, a Democrat who was aide-de-camp to the current disaster and a fence-sitting Democrat turned Independent.

Kerry McQuisten has been an obvious choice on the Republican ticket. Proving her fighting spirit early on, as mayor of Baker City she stood with her community to defy the oppressive dictates of Gov. Brown and declared her community a "common sense sanctuary" from the nonsense that was destroying their businesses and community.

Kerry is known nationally for that spirit and message of common sense and adherence to American values and freedoms. She is tireless in getting that message out.

The overpopulated slate of gubernatorial candidates has become contentious and bordering dangerous. Kerry has kept her calm determination amid the infighting.

We urge you to visit [kerrymcquistenfororegon.com](http://kerrymcquistenfororegon.com) and get to know her better. You will want one of her signs. We have them.

**Alan and Colleen MacLeod**  
 Summerville

## Our children and community members deserve access to all school facilities

I am writing this letter in support of Measure 31-105. As a La Grande resident, taxpayer and parent of two La Grande School District students, I urge you to vote Yes on the proposed bond. This is a tremendous opportunity for our community and surrounding areas. Passing this measure will allow LGSD to secure a \$4 million grant to help improve facilities that are in dire condition.

This measure will not create any additional taxes or extend the length of the original 2014 school bond; the existing tax rates will be the same. The fiscal responsibility

of LGSD has provided our community and surrounding area with a tremendous opportunity to receive a grant from the state of Oregon for \$4 million. How can we as a community walk away from this tremendous opportunity?

Voting Yes will help students by providing increased academic and club activities because of the additional space. It will allow the district to replace two of the district's oldest buildings. If any community member has ever visited the middle school Annex, they are aware of the dilapidated state of this 98-year-old facility.

The proposed bond measure would pay to replace the Annex with a new facility that would be used for physical education, health, STEM and vocational classes, athletics and community events. It would house classrooms, two basketball courts that could be converted to four sport courts, restroom facilities and two drop-down dividers that would facilitate softball and baseball pitching and hitting practices.

Additionally, the district's maintenance facilities would move to another site. The district has a lease/purchase agreement to relocate maintenance operations to the Adams Professional Center.

Most important, this new facility would eliminate ADA barriers that exist in the Annex. Currently, anyone with disabilities cannot use the Annex, and this is not acceptable. Our children and community members deserve access to all school facilities.

Please vote Yes on Measure 31-105. Visit [www.citizensforschoolrenovations.com](http://www.citizensforschoolrenovations.com) if you have any questions or concerns.

**Ruthie Becker-Peters**  
 La Grande

## 'Anything is possible' attitude ensures best opportunities for school district

Union County has been our home for 44 years. Both of us have worked for La Grande School District, our sons graduated from La Grande High School, and our third generation is now in school here. Decades of support from people and businesses in the LGSD community have demonstrated an "anything is possible" attitude ensuring the best opportunities for our children and our community. We thank you.

The bond measure on the May ballot is a very rare opportunity for three reasons: 1) LGSD has refinanced the bond passed by voters in 2014 and reduced the applicable interest rate from 4.75% to 1.68%, generating significant savings in the annual debt service requirements; 2) It has been determined that by utilizing these savings, the district can sell an additional \$4.845 million in bonds without increasing the current tax rate or extending the life of the current loan; and 3) LGSD has qualified for a \$4 million match grant. The combined amount would provide the school district with a total of \$8.845 million to make vital improvements for our students and community. The \$4 million capital improvement grant is just sitting there waiting to be claimed, but it won't happen unless the bond passes. The time is now. We can't afford not to.

The bond levy is designed to replace the 98-year-old LMS Annex with a multipurpose academic/athletic and community event center. We are grateful for a century of great memories at the LMS Annex. PE, health and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) programs will be housed in the new building, providing solid stepping stones to career and technical programs at LHS. The handicap-accessible facility will benefit participants and spectators. Let's get more for the community by making the same investment.

Our circumstances vary, from young adults with no children and parents of LGSD students to great-grandparents and friends of our community's children. This includes aspiring incomes and fixed incomes. Join us in voting Yes on LGSD Bond Levy 31-105.

"Anything is possible" for the generations of LGSD in this 21st century.

**Jerry and Suzy Mayes**  
 La Grande

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Letters should be no longer than 350 words and must be signed and carry the author's name, address and phone number (for verification only). We will not publish

anonymous letters.

Letter writers are limited to one letter every two weeks.

Longer community comment columns, such as Other Views, must be no more than 700 words. Writers must provide a recent headshot and a one-sentence biography. Like letters to the editor, columns must refrain from complaints against businesses or personal attacks against private individuals. Submissions must carry the author's name, address and phone number.

Submission does not guarantee publication, which is at the discretion of the editor.

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