

# Crane:

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of laughs. It was serious, but it was a lot of fun.”

## Background

Born on an Air Force base in Harlingen, Texas, where his father served, he spent his growing-up years moving around the country. He finally settled in Oregon and earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from what was then Eastern Oregon State College in La Grande. He received his administrative certificate/license from the University of Oregon. He also attended the Lewis & Clark College and Portland State University.

In addition to his long educational career, he served his country in the U.S. Army in 1973-76 and the Oregon Army National Guard from 1981-2002 rising to the rank

of command sergeant major.

After his years as a teacher in Enterprise, from 2007-16, Crane served as the secondary school principal in the Colton School District south of Portland. Prior to arriving in Colton, he was the principal at Irrigon Junior/Senior High School for one year and superintendent/principal at Pine Eagle in Halfway for five years.

## Planned to retire

When Crane retired from Colton in 2016, the plan was to find a place he and his wife, Heidi, would enjoy.

“My wife and I started coming up here a few years ago camping up at the lake. She fell in love with this place, and I was amazed because I always loved it here, too,” he said. “We lived on a Christmas tree farm in Colton and I never thought she'd want to move away. But she said, ‘I think

we ought to look for land.’ The next thing I knew, she had some places to look at. We looked at about five places and ended up going back to the very first place we looked at and we bought 12½ acres out Crow Creek on a big bluff. The view of the mountains is incredible.”

They've been making progress on their home.

“The first summer we put in water and electric and septic and we put two trailers out there for her parents and us,” he said.

Beginning the summer of 2019, they lived on Crow Creek on and off.

“We camped all summer long, going back and forth,” he said. “Last summer, we started building our house. It's now close to being finished.”

But plans to simply retire there weren't to be.

“Then I saw the posting for the position,” he said. “I

showed it to my wife and I said, ‘This timing is incredible. What do you think?’ and she said, ‘I think you should look into it.’ So we looked into it and applied for it and it worked out. I think it was meant to be — the opportunity to come back to where I started teaching and come back here and help the community and come back to the same school with some of the same teachers as when I left; with kids that I had in fourth grade who are now teachers here, it's just been incredible.”

## Down to business

One of Crane's first orders of business will be to discuss Blake Carlsen's resignation letter and develop a follow-up plan. Carlsen recently submitted his resignation as secondary school principal to the district board. Crane said the resignation letter says Carlsen's

last day will tentatively be Dec. 31.

Carlsen, who has been principal since 2003, formerly taught at Enterprise Elementary School, like Crane. Carlsen declined to comment on his reasons for stepping down or his future plans.

Crane said he will seek an interim principal, given that it's in the middle of a school year. Such hiring situations — as with his own — often are difficult midyear, according to school board Chairwoman Mandy Decker.

She said in a press release announcing Crane's hiring that during its search, the board didn't receive nearly as many applications as it had hoped for. Only nine applications were submitted, she said, adding that most people who are currently serving as superintendents are unlikely to leave their posts in the middle of a

school year.

“It's just too late in the game to do a search (for a permanent superintendent), especially during a pandemic,” she said. “It's too soon to even think what next year looks like.”

In the meantime, Crane has been meeting with Carlsen and acting Elementary Principal Landon Braden to work out a plan for the transition in administrators. Braden's main job is as secondary school counselor, and he is only holding the acting principal's job temporarily.

The school district also needs to find a permanent superintendent. Asked if he plans to seek the position, Crane was noncommittal.

“I don't know. ... I'm just going to do the best I can for the next nine months,” he said.

His current contract runs through June.

# Mandate:

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schools have about 48 faculty and staff.

She said the schools' faculty are fully in compliance with the vaccine mandate.

“We are 100% go. We can continue with in-person learning. Everyone on faculty has either received the vaccine or submitted exemptions,” she said. “We will be able to be up and running teaching our kids.”

Staff had through Monday to submit vaccine cards or exemptions. Jones said three people who are

not teachers did not turn in vaccination cards or exemptions by early Tuesday, but this will not affect classrooms and in-person learning.

Although the Wallowa schools had to close a couple times in the prior school year because of virus outbreaks, Jones said this year they have seen noted improvement.

“We had a couple groups have to quarantine early in this school year,” she said.

Those groups have included classes or teams. She said that, for example, if sports team members were in a class that was

exposed, that could've disqualified the athlete from participating in a game, and thus caused cancellation of a game if enough athletes were out.

“But recent times where a student has tested positive for the virus have resulted in students not requiring quarantine,” Jones said. “Students are staying home when they are ill this school year and students are cooperating with face masks and physical distancing requirements.”

With this, fewer students are directed by local health officials to quarantine, Jones said.

None of the administrators had a breakdown of the percentage who were vaccinated versus exempted.

Jones said she wasn't allowed to disclose those numbers.

Crane was concerned about his employees' privacy.

“I want to be really careful because there are a lot of feelings about this issue and I don't want people to think we're labeling or identifying them,” he said. “We're trying to be as respectful as possible and still try to follow the laws. I'm very sensitive to people's rights to privacy.”

# Soroptimist celebrates 100 years of giving

Chieftain staff

ENTERPRISE — Soroptimist International, which has a chapter in Wallowa County, recently celebrated its 100th anniversary.

Soroptimist was formed by 80 women in Oakland, California, in 1921, a club similar to Rotary in that it looks for members in high-ranking positions in their respective fields and looks to help members serve their communities.

Soroptimist International of Wallowa County is a little over a year away from its 75th anniversary. The local chapter was formed in December of 1947, with the focus on local volunteer work and supporting Sorop-

timist programs.

Soroptimist's impact in the county grew in 1957, when the Thrift Shop was opened — its largest fundraising project ever. Soroptimist has helped fund awards and helps several local programs and students, including providing high school seniors with scholarships and giving to the food bank, senior meals and libraries.


The Thrift Shop is open Fridays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and donations can be dropped off on Mondays.

For more information, visit the local chapter's website (wallowacountysoroptimist.org) or its Facebook page, Soroptimist International of Wallowa County.

Find more local news online at [wallowa.com](http://wallowa.com)

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**JOSEPH VOLLEYBALL**

The Joseph volleyball team has put together one of the best regular seasons in program history, and over the weekend cemented their dominance of the Old Oregon League. The Eagles won a match Friday, Oct. 15, and two Saturday, Oct. 16, to complete an undefeated slate in OOL action, winning all 11 of their matches, and 10 via sweep. That makes the members of the Eagles squad this week's Athletes of the Week.

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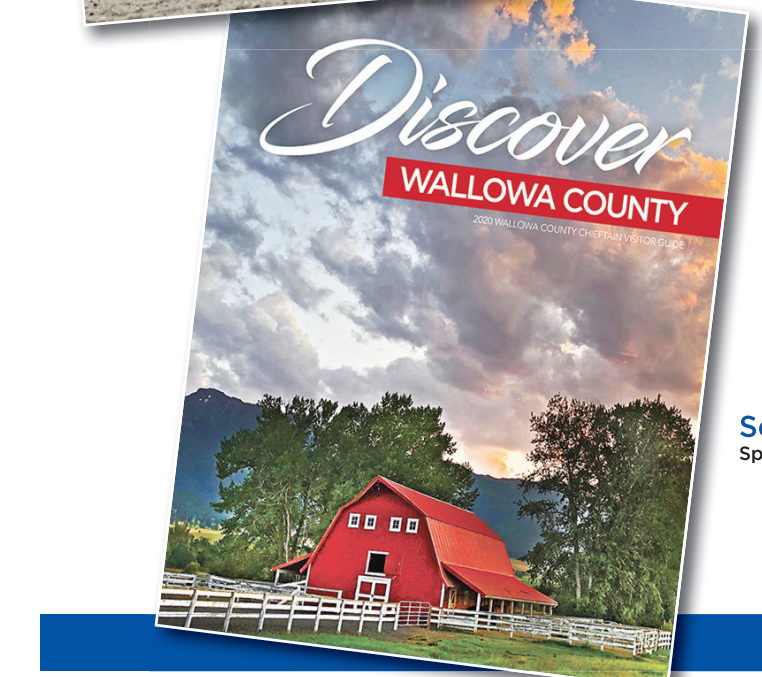
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