

Letters to the Editor

Editor's note: Letters to the editor must be signed. The Gazette-Times will not publish unsigned letters. Please include your address and phone number on all letters for use by the G-T office. The G-T reserves the right to edit.

Not the whole truth

To the Editor:

The retirement plan offered by PERS to teachers and administrators was detailed at the regular November meeting of the Morrow County school board and reported this week in our local paper. I quote: "For example, if a person had \$200,000 in his PERS retirement account, this deal would allow an additional \$42,000 in retirement benefits to be spread out for monthly payments for the remainder of his life." This example was placed on the bulletin board in the meeting room.

Too many of the statistics Superintendent Starr presents to the board and upon which parents and taxpayers base their judgments of school performance should be noted for what they don't say as much as for what they do.

The teachers and administrators that retire by February 1998 will receive a 21 percent jump in retirement benefits for two years, not one year. So the \$42,000 example is not accurate.

We have consistently heard poor statistical information concerning school performance from Supt. Starr. I believe the PERS windfall was devised to downsize as industry has had to do, and to get new people on the job who are willing to facilitate an improvement in student academic performance.

At a recent school board's convention, the author of Senate Bill 880 (the teacher tenure law) told board members that lawmakers will revisit the law in the next session with an eye towards changes if school boards don't take advantage of the current law to improve school performance.

By March 15, 1998, school boards will have to tell every teacher in their districts whether his or her contract will be extended. If it is not, board members will have to see that the teachers get a plan of assistance to help improve his or her teaching. Each year, on March 15, school boards are required to give teachers renewal or nonrenewal notices. Plans are required for any teacher not renewed.

It was noted that standards under which teachers can be dismissed have not changed. It was also noted that the real value of Senate Bill 880 is that it forces administrators and school boards to review annually how teachers and principals are doing on improving student performance.

In Morrow County, any such

review has to be based on full statistics-not on half truths. As other schools upgrade, do we really want 35 percent of south Morrow and 60 percent of north Morrow students to fail to receive the Certificates of Mastery which is becoming necessary to get a family-wage job? As stated in the Oregonian, this is what the Oregon Dept. of Education predicts for our future, based on our last state assessment scores, if no changes are made.

Incomplete statistics and wishful thinking won't help here. The tenure law applies to administrators also whose job performance needs review.

(s) Meg Murray
Ione

**FAX
Paper**
Gazette-Times
676-9228

Wheat Commission plans meeting

The Oregon Wheat Commission will hold a regular meeting on Wednesday, December 3, in the Hawthorne Room of the Double Tree/Lloyd Center Hotel at 1000 NE Multnomah, Portland, Oregon, at 1 p.m.

The Oregon Wheat Commission complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA prohibits discrimination against persons

with disabilities. Anyone who would like to participate in these meetings, but who needs special accommodations, is asked to contact the Oregon Wheat Commission office 48 hours in advance at (503) 229-6665 or TDD (503) 986-4762.

The commission meeting is open to the public and anyone wishing to attend is encouraged and welcome to do so.

ARTIFACTORY '97

Sat. Nov. 22

10 am to 3 pm

**Fair Pavilion -
Heppner, OR**

**Lunch served by
Soroptimists
Door Prizes**

**Children's Activity
Corner**

Holiday gifts & crafts

**Admission:
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we've helped people in our home town realize their dreams for more than 60 years. And now, while other institutions are treating small towns like small potatoes —

drastically reducing and eliminating services — we've opened 33 offices in small towns across the state.

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Pettyjohn's
MCGG
Bucknum's Tavern
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