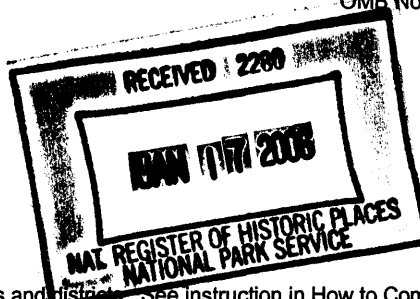


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and historic districts. See instruction in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classifications, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Sisters High School

other names/site number School Administration Building

2. Location

street & number 115 N. Locust Street

not for publication

city or town Sisters

vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Deschutes code 017 zip code 97759

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally.

James Hamrick

6 Jan 06

Signature of certifying official/Title - Deputy SHPO

Date

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
Action

entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register
See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain):

Signature of the Keeper

Edson H. Beall

Date of

3/2/06

Sisters High School
Name of Property

Deschutes, Oregon
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many as apply)

- private
- public - local
- public - state
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: Secondary School

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School District Offices

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:
Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: METAL: steel, BRICK
roof: ASPHALT
Other: _____

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

See continuation sheets.

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Description

Introduction

In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his administration created a group of programs to lift America out of the Great Depression, a vast economic crisis of high unemployment, decreased industrial output, lowered incomes, and other poor economic conditions. As a whole, these programs were called the New Deal. One of the programs designed to construct public works and thus encourage and facilitate economic recovery was the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, more commonly termed the Public Works Administration (PWA). The objective of the PWA was to restore purchasing power—to bolster a depressed national income. By providing jobs and material orders through public works, the whole economy could be strengthened. Through financing and other means the agency helped to build more than 34,500 public works, thereby providing employment and generating consumer demand and business orders for goods and services. Schools were a top priority for the agency, with 7,282 educational buildings constructed during the period. In 1939, the construction of the Sisters High School was financed with a PWA grant of \$8,550 and a school district bond issue of \$14,000. Its style, Colonial Revival, was one of the most common architectural styles used for PWA schools.

Current Use

As of November 2005, the building has been sympathetically rehabilitated and adaptively reused as the Sisters School District No. 6 Administration Office. Physical vestiges of its past and its historic function, along with its sense of time and place, have been restored and preserved. Throughout the facility, materials, design and workmanship are harmonious with the design, elements and features of the Colonial Revival style.

As the district's administrative center, the facility provides office space and resources for approximately a dozen administrative staff. As the hub of the district, which includes elementary, middle and high school systems as well as an alternative program, the new use potentially represents the highest capacity use of the building in nearly forty years, if not in its entire lifetime. The building receives a number of visitors daily and in the evenings too. These include those attending administrative and teaching-related meetings and conferences as well as parents, business leaders and community partners visiting for a variety of reasons. In addition, School Board, PTA and other meetings present sizeable gatherings. The building provides safe and secure ingress and egress for all visitors through a main entrance on the north facade adjacent to a parking area. Just inside the entry is a former classroom referred to as the Board Room and utilized for many of these events. Through the corridor, past historic lockers and vintage pine wainscoting, two other former classrooms have been renewed into office space, with another classroom space respectfully restored and maintained for future needs.

Colonial Revival Schools of the PWA Era

The Sisters High School is a distinctive local example of the traditional Colonial Revival. This style is usually the result of relatively free interpretation of its Colonial counterpart, or prototype. Because of this freedom of expression, the Colonial Revival style was extremely useful for school buildings during the New Deal, because it could accommodate a wide range of educational requirements and circumstances and because it was adaptable to varying local needs. Moreover, within PWA schools, Colonial Revivals were very popular due to the style's traditional associations. According to Reitzes:

These buildings were constructed in every part of the country; sometimes they became lost amidst the slowed but ongoing activity of urban centers, but sometimes they were startlingly prominent on the streetscapes of the smallest town. ...

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During the New Deal, the Colonial Revival continued to be an immensely useful style for school buildings, both because it evoked long-standing academic associations and because it could accommodate an enormous range of circumstances and local settings. ...

[M]any designers... did not hesitate to stretch the limits of the Colonial style while at the same time exploiting its associational value. Thus, many of the schools which appeared to be obedient in the references to traditional patterns...also carried evidence of change. In the simplest terms, this 'progress' might be expressed in a diminished concern for strict symmetry ... [A] design could present the requisite signs of Colonial identity—gabled roofs, pedimented doorway, twin end chimneys—but have its seemingly symmetrical composition 'disrupted' by important attributes of modern pedagogy...

[A] conflation of functional imagery—the civic or even commercial with the scholastic—was more prevalent among PWA high schools . . .

More often than not, Colonial high schools were at least two-stories tall, often made taller in appearance by towers or pitched roofs. When not arranged in the familiar Georgian 'tripartite' configuration, the 'basic' Colonial high school regularly took the form of a long simple block with repeating windows..., broken in the center with some kind of applied portico or integral crossing gable. This type of school usually had a single long corridor...

Because of long-standing associations linking education with citizenship...civic imagery was apparently deemed appropriate for high school design, perhaps because these buildings represented a level of serious, almost adult, education to which most Americans could only recently aspire.. ...

With infinite variations, [the] one-story Colonial ... was executed all over the country ... with ...the tall hipped roof and tiny cupola ... [and] arched pedimented entries...

Clearly, local patrons of school construction continued to regard the iconographical tradition of the Colonial Revival as a useful and valid way of transmitting community and educational values. Just as clearly the modernity of these designs ... was rarely visually expressed as an overt departure from familiar stylistic patterns. Instead, the always-malleable Colonial Revival was stretched to accommodate innovative proportions, compositions, and surface treatments...

[The] associational attraction of the Colonial vocabulary was so potent in school architecture that only small doses were required to maintain a historical connection. ... ¹

¹ "Bid Sheet," (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). A cupola was considered by the school board as one of the options or alternatives for the school; Reitzes, Lisa Beth, *Moderately Modern: Interpreting the Architecture of the Public Works Administration*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Delaware, May 1989), 437, 473-486. Quotation.

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Exterior Description

The characteristics of a Colonial Revival school shown on the exterior of the building include:

Facade and Exterior Wall Treatments. The walls on all four elevations are covered with a uniquely textured red brick material—a brick veneer—with fine joints that are set in a stretcher bond. In addition to the unusually textured brick material, the stretcher bond construction is interesting and interpretable. The brick clads a steel-reinforced wooden frame of an extremely structurally sound building, which sits on a steel reinforced concrete foundation. The exterior is approximately 94 feet east to west and approximately 56 feet north to south (rear/front facades). The exterior walls are approximately 11 feet 9 inches above grade. A pedimented former entrance extends from the building's south elevation. Clapboarding covers the gable. A new pedimented portico entrance on the north elevation was constructed in 2005 and is discussed below. ²

Roof Treatment. A steeply pitched hip roof of composition shingles features a horizontal boxed cornice that provides a clean line around the structure and ideally suits the simplicity of the one-story rectangular-shaped building. A wide frieze joins the boxed cornice, essentially serving as a surround for all windows on all elevations, except those within the pedimented former entrance. This wide banding frames the roof line. The peak of the steeply-pitched roof is 31.5 feet from ground level, making the school appear taller.

Window and Door Treatments. The Colonial Revival window treatment shows double-hung, rectangular sash windows with multiple lights in both the upper and lower sashes, that are symmetrically arrayed and set adjacently in sets of up to five into relatively plain front and rear facades. During the early 1930s, educators developed "theories about the importance of abundant light and flexible arrangements of rooms... [These] had a visible effect on schools designed during this period, so that in many instances windows and circulation were given priority and plans were conceived as assemblages of functional space rather than partitioned enclosures," according to Reitzes. This knowledge concerning the importance of light appears to have influenced the design of the Sisters school as it is graced with an abundance of windows. ³

- **South Elevation.** The south elevation is the structure's most public facade and holds its most significant exterior features—red brick and white straightforward fenestrations broken by a pediment—a combination of materials and architecture that deliver an immediate visual impact. This so, even though the entrance's double doors beneath the pediment have been replaced with a set of eight-over-eight double-hung wood windows. This well-finished alteration was completed with care and competency, with matching materials and appropriate design and workmanship a number of years ago, presumably in the 1960s or before. The craftsmanship is excellent. They are bordered on each side by a set of the same. On the facade, outside of the pedimented area—on each side—are a set of five eight-over-eight, double-hung

² Reitzes, 442. PWA guidelines insisted (when ever possible) construction was to be fireproof; masonry veneers over steel-reinforced frames were the rule. The most common material was brick; Harris, Cyril M, *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, New York, 1998), 68.

³ Reitzes, 472. Quote; Martin, Bob, *E-Mail to Michael Hall*, (Notes in possession of Michael Hall, Madras, Oregon, November 21, 2005). All exterior windows were replaced in 2005 with pine materials matching the originals in design, dimensions, detailing and finish. They utilize a simulated divided light with a Low E II rating and include a brass sash lock. They were reviewed by the SACHP on October 20, 2005, at which time the building was recommended for listing in the National Register.

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wood windows with four-light awning windows above, along the roofline. In total, the front displays sixteen eight-over-eight double-hung wood windows and ten sets of awning windows.

- *North Elevation.* The new entrance is in the center of the facade of the north elevation and is described separately below, including its door and transom. *All other features and details of the facade remain as before and are described in the following paragraph.*

Between the new entrance and both the east and west ends are a set of five eight-over-eight, double-hung wood windows with four-light awning windows above, again along the roofline, and matching those on the south elevation. In addition, two other eight-over-eight double-hung wood windows exist on this elevation along the roofline, one near both the east and west ends. These are of the same size and design as the set of five, but without the awning windows above. In total, the rear facade displays fourteen eight-over-eight double-hung wood windows, ten sets of awning windows and a newly installed multi-light transom over the double-door entrance (described below).⁴

- *East and West Elevations.* The east and west elevations are as originally built, having one eight-over-eight double-hung wood window, along the roofline, near the northern corner. In addition, there is a multi-light transom (five-lights wide by three-lights high) above both east and west entrances, spanning the width of the entrance. Both east and west facades enclose a double-door entrance with four steps leading up.

The muntins are firm, though not broad or weighty; however the surrounds between windows are quite heavily built. A lintel course serves as the window head on the south elevation, spanning the tops of the windows beneath the pediment. Similarly, a header course serves as the sill on all windows, on all elevations.

New Entrance—Exterior (North Elevation). The north elevation is the location of a new entrance, a part of the historic rehabilitation project completed in November 2005. The feature visually and functionally bonds with the building, preserves its historic fabric and maintains the facade's character and integrity. Overall, the new entrance is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the building. It is, however, distinguishable from the original work. Its construction and completion is described in the following:

In the center of the north elevation was a set of two eight-over-eight, double-hung wood windows with four-light awning windows. These elements and associated materials were gently removed, avoiding any disturbance of wall fabric bordering the opening, and salvaged. Only materials the width and the height of the two windows were removed. Only a new entrance doorway and transom penetrate the wall. A double-door entrance compatible with those on east and west elevations, just slightly wider to meet code, was installed. A multi-light transom (six wide by two high) completed the installation, compatible in scale and character with those on the east and west entrances. *All other original fenestrations, features and materials on this facade remain as originally built.*

⁴ The windows and brick that were removed were saved and the brick reused as needed. In addition, a brick chimney on the north side of the roof was removed and materials saved. This sizeable element passed through the Board Room near the east corridor door and sat on a foundation in the Basement. In both locations it held essential space; in the Board Room for meeting space and in the Basement for furnace space. Bricks were removed brick-by-brick and re-used on the bases of the pillars that support the portico.

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In conjunction with the entrance, a new pedimented portico was built, compatible with the south facade's pediment and the north facade's design and character, though clearly making a visual distinction between old and new. It is supported by square pillars, covered with finish grade plywood painted a light wooden tone. The pillars rest on concrete bases clad in red brick that had been salvaged. The portico's ceiling (underneath), is also covered with finish grade plywood a light wooden tone. White clapboarding covers the gable area. The roof line's wide banding runs just beneath the new feature, further distinguishing new work from the older work.

Just outside the doorway, three steps lead down from the landing to the sidewalk at grade that runs the perimeter of the building or leads to the parking area. The entrance meets ADA requirements, including a ramp that runs east from the double doors, just past the five eight-over-eight fenestration, turning left back toward the center of the site and to the sidewalk. The steps and ramp are graced by a steel railing painted brick red.⁵

Interior Description

Main Floor Overview. The school building's most significant interior features lay in its primary space, a single long *corridor* about eight feet wide running east to west through the center of the building. The features are original steel lockers and original wide knotty pine wainscoting. All steps possible were taken to protect and preserve these features, including removal and storage prior to any work being conducted at or near the features, including painting. As one walks down the center of the structure, the lockers line the corridor on both sides, cinnamon-rose in color. They are set in groups of up to sixteen in long sections between classroom doors and in smaller groups of several in shorter spaces. On the end of each set is the knotty pine wainscoting. In addition, the wainscoting runs around insets holding classroom doors and across wider spans of wall. A traditional detail, more a small crown molding than a chair rail, runs atop the lockers and wainscoting, finishing the appearance, and providing some human scale to eleven-foot, nine-inch high plaster ceilings.⁶

⁵ The entrance was constructed after careful consideration of all other options, including re-introducing the former south entrance and making greater use of the east or west entrance(s). The variety of uses and visitor needs, as described above under "Current Use," were important considerations of lasting importance. In addition, the entrance needed to facilitate the best use of the entire building, both presently and in the future. Use of the parking area and its need to remain as such in its historic location along Cascade Avenue and away from public view from the highway also was a factor. Avoiding disruption of the south elevation, its most public facade that holds its most significant exterior features, was another concern.

The District consulted with an Historic Preservation Consultant, Deschutes County's Historic and Cultural Resources Planner (CLG) and the Oregon SHPO's Design Review Specialist prior to the rehabilitation. In a thorough review and analyses of the needs and the options available, the conclusion was reached by district officials, architects and preservationists that a new entrance on the north elevation, sympathetic to the structure's historic character and fabric but distinguishing new from old, was the best solution to meet the needs and to address the historic considerations. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* were utilized to ensure that features significant to the structure's historic character and values were preserved. Architectural plans specified preservation activities related to historic materials, spaces, and features. In addition, previous incompatible alterations were removed and historic character was subsequently restored. The SACHP reviewed the entrance on October 20, 2005, recommending the building for listing in the National Register.

⁶ "Periodical Estimate for Partial Payment No. 1," PWA Form No. I-23, December 7, 1938 to January 1, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). This document indicates some of the lumber used in the school was from the Tite Knot Pine Mills; Deschutes County Historical Society, *A History of Deschutes Country in Oregon*, (Deschutes County Historical Society, Bend, Oregon, 1986), 41, 301. Tite Knot operated near Sisters from 1933 to 1943 when operations moved to Redmond. Built by Bert Peterson, it was about four miles south of town. Samuel S. Johnson and his father obtained a half-interest in the latter 1930s. Johnson served seven terms in the Oregon House of Representatives, from 1965-1978, and was Mayor of Redmond for two

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The school building has a simple layout. In addition to the east-west corridor, a *hallway* running crosswise to the corridor lies in the center. There are four former classrooms, two north and two south of the east-west corridor. Two were restored to original configuration, floor space, materials, etc. One was discreetly divided for offices, maintaining fenestrations, other features and materials. The last, also a full-sized classroom, was rehabilitated into staff office space with a small Business Manager's Office in its far corner. Each classroom has two doors, one on each end, opening to the corridor. The classrooms' tall five eight-over-eight and four-light awning windows, as well as entrance doors with multi-light transoms, bring an immense amount of Central Oregon's brilliant sunlight into the immediate spaces and into the building's corridor and hallway. Interior doors with six-light windows also share natural light throughout the space. A multi-level shade on each window provides staff "sanctuary" as needed. Classic hanging light fixtures adorn the center of the corridor and hallway, with petite, barely noticed florescent lighting in other spaces. The walls above the wainscoting and in the classrooms and restrooms are plaster and painted an historic off-white with a light golden tone that reflects light remarkably well. A chair rail molding runs just above the tops of the tall windows. Ceilings are of plaster, except in the classroom spaces that are of acoustic tile. Along the edges of the floors a simple rectangular broad baseboard finishes and protects walls. The floor is covered by a long-lasting carpet laid throughout the building.

On each end of the north elevation is a restroom. The men's on the west and the women's on the east. The rooms remain in their original size, each with two eight-over-eight double-hung wood windows on the north elevation and one eight-over-eight double-hung wood window, along the roofline of the adjacent wall, all bringing natural light. Fixtures, hardware and design have been upgraded and meet all codes.

The following describes the main floor as one would find it, beginning on the east end walking down the corridor westward, turning when one reached the end and walking eastward.

1st Classroom (North Side). On the east end as one would enter though the double-door entrance, a few steps past the Women's Room and past a few lockers, is a doorway into a former classroom that has been divided by wall into a Break Room and a Facility/Technology Manager Office on the other side of the with its doorway into the corridor. These rooms are finished and furnished as described previously, with one tall five eight-over-eight and four-light awning window in the Break Room and three of them in the office space. ⁷

In the corridor—still on the right, one sees the traditional school multi-faucet drinking fountain, along with vintage lockers and wainscoting on each side and then arrives near the new north entrance.

terms, from 1978-1982. Research indicates it is quite likely that the knotty pine wainscoting in the corridor was from this mill during the time Johnson held an interest. The other mill recorded in the PWA document, the Idanha Lumber Co., can reasonably be assumed to be the source of fir lumber used in the walls and roof for framing, etc., as Idanha is on the western slope of the Cascade Mountains.

⁷ In all instances in the building, new walls were aligned with the center of the window frame. New walls were not attached to historic fabric. Window molding/trim or other materials were not cut or otherwise damaged.

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New Entrance—Interior (North Elevation). The interior portion of the new entrance is described by the following:

The formation of the new entrance on the interior consisted of first the removal of a short piece of wall facing the corridor (a former office space) and, second, the shifting eastward about four feet of the eastern wall (shared with the Facility/Technology Manager Office). This provides room for a small space that is the Human Resource Center at the east edge of the corridor, with a door and a window into the corridor and a window to the hallway. Adjacent to the Center is the hallway leading to the main (new) entrance. Just past the Center, this span opens to nearly twenty feet wide, holding a waiting room for visitors and providing space for the interior landing of the main entry doors. The waiting room's north wall holds one of the tall five eight-over-eight and four-light awning windows. A counter divides the work area from the waiting area. Just inside the entrance doors, on an earth-toned tiled floor, a visitor may step left to the Center's waiting room, walk to the right into a former classroom that is now the Board Room, or continue forward to the administrative offices. The new entrance hallway is well lit by natural light, attractively painted in the off-white color, and covered in a nicely matched in size and design, but distinguishably new, pine wainscoting and finishing moldings.⁸

2nd Classroom (North Side). The next room, now known as the Board Room, is another former classroom that is finished as already described and appears quite spacious. Essentially as constructed in 1939, it is about twenty-nine feet, running east-west with the corridor, and about twenty-two wide, from the corridor to the windows (29' X 22'). Ceiling height in this and all other classroom spaces is eleven-feet, nine inches. Entrance from the hallway is through a compatible pine double door with appropriately scaled windows, with a single-light transom. The space is showered richly with sunlight through its tall windows with the chair rail molding running just above their tops. The room boasts four original wooden and glass cabinets, one in each corner. The sunlight and new paint beautifully show off this room. In addition to the double-door entrance from the hallway, there are two doors from the corridor on each end of the room, as built in 1939. Between the two doors are fifteen of the original lockers. Leaving the Board Room back into the corridor and on the same side (north) is the Men's Room.⁹

3rd Classroom (South Side). Moving from the Men's Room down the other side (south) of the corridor is another space, finished as described above and much like the Board Room, though without vintage cabinets. It, also, is well lighted with the five sets of tall windows, is spacious and exists essentially as it did in the historic period. This space has been carefully and competently restored and reserved for future office space. Between this door and the second door into the room exists sixteen of the original lockers.

Original Hall and Adjacent Administrative Offices (South Side). The next entrance is the original entrance hall and next to it two flanking spaces that held administrative spaces during the historic period. Coming from the third classroom past a short copy area and turning right into the space one sees a hallway approximately ten feet wide. A few steps to the immediate right, one may go down a stairway to the basement (described below). Just past the stairs on the right is a doorway into the Superintendent's rectangular-shaped office. This space has a set of eight-over-eight windows to the exterior, providing a view of the old wagon road route now a highway through town and over the mountains. At the end of the hallway is a small staff

⁸ The Human Resource Center is differentiated from the Human Resources Director's Office. The Center functions as an information center regarding employment opportunities, while the Director's Office serves as the department manager's office.

⁹ The double-door entrance into the Board Room is a modification. One of the cabinets historically existed in this room. The others existed in other classrooms and were moved into this space. All were skillfully restored as originally built to be shared with the Sisters community.

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office about ten-by-ten feet. This space has a door and a window into the hallway, as well as a set of eight-over-eight windows on the exterior wall that sit directly beneath the pediment. This arrangement allows light into the hallway space, which is especially welcomed in the winter months. Standing in the hallway looking to the left is a doorway into the Human Resources Director's Office. It is essentially a replica in size and shape as the Superintendent's Office, though on the other side of the hallway. A doorway from this office leads into the primary office space, the fourth classroom, which is generally accessed from the corridor. The Director's office also has an excellent view of the old wagon route through its eight-over-eight windows. In addition, a window between this space and the primary office space (fourth classroom) also allows in natural light. Finally, there is also a small Work Room between the Director's office and the corridor. The Work Room has window between it and the corridor. All of these spaces are finished as others previously described. This entire space exists essentially as in the historic period, with the small office at the end of the hallway being the exception. The spaces for the Superintendent and Human Resources Director offices flanking the hallway space are believed to have been administrative and clerical space during the historic period, thus again functioning essentially as they did during that time.¹⁰

4th Classroom (South Side). Back in the corridor, just past the window of the small Work Room, one may enter the primary staff office space through a door that opens adjacent to sixteen original lockers. This space primarily functions as the Accounts Receivable Office, though is used for other functions as well. It is finished as earlier described and especially benefits in the winter from natural light. It is the last of the four classrooms and exhibits most of the original space. The only exception being a small Business Manager Office built in the southwest corner of the room. A window between this office and the primary space help retain the space and scale of the original classroom. The classroom's second door exits into the corridor at the east entrance. That completes the description of the main floor and this narrative moves to the Basement.

Basement. The foundation joins with and sits over a mass of concrete and steel that is the basement. It suggests a "bomb shelter," possibly strengthened and hardened with thoughts of "war in the air" in 1939. All four walls, the floor and ceiling of the basement are composed of heavy concrete. The basement area is reached by a stairway from the main floor as described above. It is much smaller than the main floor, about 20 feet by 41 feet, its length lying perpendicular to the main floor, with three smaller rooms off a long main section that runs along the eastern portion of the basement. These rooms house storage; a vault; and mechanical, electrical, heating and computer systems and controls. The interior finish is plaster painted like the main floor, with wooden doors and moldings. The remainder of the area under the main floor is crawl space.

Setting

The high school building sits in its own space, as a monolith, along the eastern edge of Sisters, Oregon, just north of Highway 20, also known as the McKenzie Highway, and originally the Willamette Valley and Cascade Mountain Wagon Road. The parcel is 1.96 acres. Bordering the property to its east across Locust Street is the Sisters Grade School's athletic field. On the same parcel of property as the athletic field are grade school buildings and a playground. Just north of the high school property, across Cascade Avenue, is the recently completed Sisters Public Library (2005) and the future home of Sisters City Hall (2006). To the west/southwest is the commercial area of Sisters with dozens of specialty shops, restaurants and tourism-related businesses. On the north elevation running parallel to the building is a parking area, sited in its historic location. A dozen frail deciduous trees in the parking facility will grow and beautify the area in the summer months. Running the

¹⁰ Two incompatible alterations consisting of two walls that broke up the hallway and separated the space from the corridor were removed during rehabilitation and integrity was subsequently restored. Wainscoting removed by past alterations was replaced by appropriate materials in the hallway as needed. The stairway is in its historic location.

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perimeter of the building is a concrete sidewalk, accessed from all entrances. Another sidewalk leads from the east entrance to Locust Street. Sidewalks on the south, west and east remain in their original historic scale. Just north of the east entrance are four diminutive heat pumps that will be screened. The building stands near the center of the property on a healthy and nicely maintained lawn that is inviting in the summer. Several medium-sized evergreen shrubs flank each side of the south elevation's pedimented area between the sidewalk and building, with several smaller ones and a wispy deciduous tree on the west end of the facade. On the western edge of the property are a series of small- to medium-sized evergreen trees. Surrounding the entire property on the north, west and east is a short, corral-like log fence. Just within the fence at the southeast corner are a flag pole and a sign reading "School District No. 6." ¹¹

Property Ownership

On October 11, 1938, Deschutes County School District No. 6 purchased Block One of Davidson's Addition to Sisters from the Oregon & Western Colonization Company. It was known at the time that the Willamette Valley and Cascade Mountain Wagon Road right-of-way would pass over or near to the property, and that part was exempted from the deed. For this reason, the block has a triangular piece "off" its southwestern corner where the path of the old wagon road crossed it. Now that corner is Highway 20, formerly called the McKenzie Pass Highway. The historic site and specific location of the school building remains exactly the same as when built in 1939, on Block One of Davidson's Addition. ¹²

Conclusion

The Sisters High School exhibits a high level of integrity and retains a close association with the Public Works Administration of the New Deal era. The building occupies the original space that has been its home for nearly seventy years. It sits prominently as a monument to School District No. 6 and the Sisters community, serving as the repository for the cultural and aesthetic content of the historic period. The building's simple lines and modest design speak for an entire generation, communicating both educational and community values.

In 1939, the school board and its architect took their project very seriously, believing that the building should be not only useful to the community, but should be one of which it could be proud. It is a distinctive example of the traditional Colonial Revival style realized in a PWA-funded school building. A number of Colonial features are visible, including the tall, steeply-pitched hip roof; the simple block design; the symmetrically arrayed multi-light windows; and, inside, a single long corridor preserving heirlooms of that generation. The design blends both the scholastic and the civic notions prevalent in discussions of education during the period and retains the features and the essential elements of a PWA high school.

The exterior and interior present a high quantity of original materials and workmanship that are exceptional, irreplaceable and interpretable. The exterior red brick and the straightforward fenestrations are compelling. The brickwork clearly displays the use of tools, technology and equipment of the era as well as the skills of highly gifted craftsmen. The interior conveys a close

¹¹ "Deed, Louis W. Hill to School District Number Six of Deschutes County," December 4, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). The athletic field property was sold to the school district in 1939 by Louis W. Hill, president of the Great Northern Railway for ten dollars. The deed specifies that it is to be used as an athletic field, and if the District should fail to use it as such, the property would revert back to ownership by the Hill interests; Martin, Bob, *E-Mail to Michael Hall*. When warmer weather returns in the spring of 2006, the parking area, now graveled, will be paved, a bike rack will be installed, landscaping will occur, and heat pumps will be hidden.

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feeling and association with school days of the past. The corridor's historic knotty pine wainscoting wraps the walls adjacent to steel lockers, both original and existing as they did during the PWA era, instantly taking one back to that period.

In 2005, original materials, spaces and features of historic significance were treated sympathetically with forethought, prudence and discretion. The work is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the building, and clearly differentiates new from old. The adaptive reuse project was remarkably successful, adding a distinguishing chapter to the building's proud history. The Sisters High School is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Sisters High School
Name of Property

Deschutes, Oregon
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing).

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1939

Significant Dates

1939

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B** removed from its original location
- C** a birthplace or grave
- D** a cemetery
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance Within the past 50 years

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Isted, John Elwood, architect
Hart, O.C. builder

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite books, articles, and other sources used in preparing the form on one or more continuation sheets) See continuation sheets

- Previous documentation on file (NPS):
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36CFR67) has been requested
 - previously listed in the National Register
 - previously determined eligible by the National Register
 - designated a National Historic Landmark
 - recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
 - recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

- Primary location of additional data:
- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other : Sisters School District No. 6
- Name of repository: Deschutes County Planning, Bend

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Statement of Significance

Introduction

Sisters High School, which opened September 6, 1939, was built under the Public Works Administration, one of many New Deal programs created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to encourage and facilitate economic recovery during the Great Depression. Created by the National Industrial Recovery Act on June 16, 1933, the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, more commonly termed the Public Works Administration (PWA), spent over \$6 billion on the construction of public works as a means of providing employment, stabilizing purchasing power, improving public welfare, and contributing to a revival of American industry. More than any other New Deal program, the PWA epitomized the Rooseveltian notion of "priming the pump" to encourage economic growth. Between 1933 and 1941, the PWA distributed funds to municipal and state governments and to federal agencies for the construction of more than 34,500 projects, ranging from local buildings to state highway bridges to federal dams. Schools were favored by Congress and given "preference status" from the PWA, with seventy percent of the new schools built during the time receiving funding by the agency. As a property directly associated with the New Deal, and specifically with the PWA, the Sisters High School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its significance in the area of Government.¹

The Great Depression

Though historians, economists and others have long debated the causes of the Great Depression, October 29, 1929, the day of the Wall Street Crash, is generally accepted as the moment in time when the nation at large recognized the vast scale of the economic problems confronting the United States. On President Herbert Hoover's last day in office, March 4, 1933, he awoke to find the banking system of the country had collapsed. His woeful words, "We are at the end of our string. There is nothing more we can do," reflected the disheartened spirit of the nation. It was nearly three and a half years since the stock market crash had tossed the U.S. and most of the world into the worst economic disaster in Western history. Total expenditures for construction of all types had dropped to less than a third of its peak levels during the 1920s. Industrial output was less than half the 1929 figure. Though difficult to count closely, the number of unemployed had risen to between 13 and 15 million, a record high of 25 percent of the labor force—with 30 million women and children counting on them for food and shelter. Hourly wages had dropped 60 percent since 1929, white collar salaries 40 percent. Men sold apples on street corners, women waited for meager subsistence dispensed by charities, children went to bed hungry, and despair was everywhere.²

Oregon, like the rest of the nation, fell on hard times. Many Oregonians were already living in depressed circumstances, trying to earn a living on homesteads, small farms, or with underpaid sawmill jobs. In some cases, entire towns had been built around a single lumber mill, but no homes were being built. Oregon's timber industry depended on California markets and suffered when

¹ Encyclopedia.com "New Deal," May 17, 2005. The term "New Deal" was first used by Roosevelt in his speech accepting the Democratic party nomination for President in 1932. The New Deal is generally considered to have consisted of two phases. The first phase (1933-34) attempted to provide recovery and relief from the Great Depression through programs of agricultural and business regulation, inflation, price stabilization, and public works. The second phase of the New Deal (1935-41), while continuing with relief and recovery measures, provided for social and economic legislation to benefit the mass of working people; National Park Service, *Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site*, "Public Works Administration," May 17, 2005. Quotation; "Sisters Schools Open Wednesday With 149 Present." (*The Redmond Spokesman*, Redmond, Oregon, September 7, 1939), 1.

² Time-Life Books, *This Fabulous Century, 1930-1940*, vol. IV, (Time-Life Books, New York, New York, 1969), 23-28.

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prices and demand there declined. Employment in the industry dropped by 60 percent from 1929 to 1933, wages fell by 77 percent. In other instances, businesses could not meet their payroll. Lindley explains that, "[many] businesses were owned by a local family, with a few others on the payroll who were almost like family; ... a decision to lay someone off wasn't made by distant management, but painfully close to home." Portland's economy suffered tremendously. Construction slowed to nearly nothing. Two out of three small businesses were behind on their property taxes by 1933. Because of high unemployment and the increased number of destitute people in Portland, local officials had exhausted all local emergency funds by mid-1930. Oregon farmers got \$1.11 per bushel for wheat in 1929, but just forty-two cents in 1932. Farmers and ranchers east of the Cascades suffered from deflated agricultural and livestock prices, too. When Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) was inaugurated President in March 1933, forty thousand people in Oregon were on relief and twenty-four thousand householders were registered with the local employment bureau. Those who had money and were better off also felt the effects of the Depression as banks failed and homes, farms, and businesses were foreclosed. FDR promised bold actions to deal with the Great Depression. In a series of "fireside chats" broadcast on radio from the White House, he promoted the reform, relief, and recovery agendas of his New Deal.

3

The New Deal

As the President put his New Deal into effect, Congress passed dozens of acts and established new agencies, many with such long names that they came to be known by their initials. So many, in fact, they were referred to as the "alphabet agencies." FDR's programs included the Public Works Administration (PWA), Works Projects Administration (WPA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and numerous others. The establishment of these programs was greatly influenced by projections of the number of people that might be taken off of relief rolls and forecasts of the potential stimuli to sectors of the economy producing building materials.

All three were involved in the construction of public facilities. The first program to start building was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Beginning in April 1933, it recruited single young men, aged seventeen to twenty-eight, to stop soil erosion, plant trees, fight forest fires, create parks, build or repair roads and bridges, and do other work. The men were formed into companies of two hundred under military supervision and sent to camps throughout the country for basic conditioning and six months or more of labor. By 1935, the CCC provided employment for half a million young American men in 2,600 camps in public land states like Oregon. Next to work in June 1933 was the Federal Administration for Public Works, more commonly known as the Public Works Administration (PWA). The objective was to restore purchasing power—to bolster a sagging national income. By providing jobs and material orders through the normal channels of business an entire segment of the economy could be stimulated. Existing businesses could be sustained, such as contractors, architectural and engineering firms, material and supply dealers, and various types of manufacturing plants and mills. Workers in the construction and allied trades, the third largest group of workers in the nation, could be employed and fulfill their consumer needs. The whole economy could be strengthened. Established in 1935, the Works Projects Administration was mandated to choose projects that would make a genuine contribution but would not compete with private business. The WPA philosophy was to put the unemployed back to work in jobs which would serve the public good and conserve the skills and the self-esteem of workers. The agency had an emphasis on unskilled labor, but also recruited unemployed architects, stone masons, painters, weavers, metal workers, plumbers, teachers and artisans into special projects. Eight and a half million people with 30 million dependents performed almost 19 billion hours of WPA

³ Lindley, William R., *Hard Times, Good Times in Oregon: Recollections of the 1930s*, (Sunflower University Press, Manhattan, Kansas, 1995), 15-16. Quote; Peterson del Mar, David, *Oregon's Promise: An Interpretive History*, (Oregon State University Press, Corvallis, Oregon, 2003), 185; Oregon, *Oregon Blue Book*, "Oregon History - The Great Depression;" Oregon Historical Society, *The Oregon History Project*, "Oregon in Depression and War, 1925-1945: Portland's Hoovervilles."

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work for nearly \$9 billion in wages. At its peak, the WPA provided relief to a third of the nation's unemployed—over three million.⁴

The accomplishments of all three agencies are staggering, even today. The WPA built 40,000 new buildings and improved 85,000 others. The CCC developed more than 800 state parks, restored 3,980 historic structures, built 204 lodges and museums, improved 5,000 miles of beaches, surveyed and mapped millions of acres, and planted three billion trees. The PWA had financed 34,508 projects with an estimated cost of \$6,086,000,000 by March 1939. The New Deal has no comparative historical period for scope and variety of public works projects. *Life* magazine called it "the greatest public building program in the history of mankind."⁵

The PWA

From July 1933 to March 1939, the PWA, in addition to constructing dams, airports, bridges, and public housing, gave the country 7,488 educational buildings, 822 hospitals, 4,287 public buildings, 1,850 sewer systems, 2,582 water systems, 11,428 streets and highways and thousands of more publicly-owned structures and other resources. These public works were undertaken in all but three of the 3,071 counties in the U.S. through cooperative efforts with federal agencies and local governments. This included 70 percent of all the educational buildings built in the country during the period; 65 percent of all the sewage treatment plants; 65 percent of all the courthouses, city halls, and other nonresidential public buildings; 10 percent of all the roads, streets, bridges, viaducts, subways, and other engineering structures; and 35 percent of all the hospitals and allied public-health facilities.⁶

The PWA was successful for a number of reasons. First, its actions were coordinated with those of other recovery programs, including the WPA and CCC. Second, it was established by Congress as a nation-wide cooperative program to assist state and local governments in meeting their public service needs. Third, the wages paid out of funds for projects to those employed went for food, clothing, shelter, entertainment and other products and services. Fourth, the nature of PWA construction required considerable expenditures for durable goods, including buildings, ships, dams, power plants and other structures which created a

⁴ Isakoff, Jack F., *The Public Works Administration*, (University of Illinois Bulletin, vol. XXXVI, no. 24, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, Illinois, November 18, 1938), 25-26. Isakoff explains the general distinction between PWA and WPA projects. The PWA was to receive applications for construction projects, other than those of a repair or maintenance character, where the aggregate cost was over \$25,000; while the WPA would undertake work of construction projects under \$25,000 and those of a non-construction character designed to employ professional, clerical, and other white collar workers. The PWA sought to stimulate the private employment of labor, whether in need of relief or not, while the WPA was concerned with getting people off the direct relief rolls, and putting them to work on work-relief so long as might be necessary; Oregon, *Oregon Blue Book*, "Oregon History - The Great Depression." The Works Progress Administration along with the Civil Works Administration and Federal Relief Administration were predecessor agencies of the Works Projects Administration; United States, Public Works Administration, *America Builds: The Record of PWA*, (Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, Prepared by the Division of Information, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1937), 7-8; Craig, Louis, and the staff of the Federal Architecture Project, *The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics, and Symbols in United States Government Building*, (MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1978), 353.

⁵ Leighninger, Robert D., Jr., "Cultural Infrastructure: The Legacy of New Deal Public Space," *Journal of Architectural Education*, (MIT Press for the Association of the Collegiate Schools of Architecture, Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts, May 1996), 226-236; "PWA Has Changed Face of U.S.," (*Life*, April 1, 1940), 61. Quote. United States, Public Works Administration, *America Builds: The Record of PWA*, 8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 8, 288-291, Tables 19, 20, and 21. Figures include federal and non-federal projects.

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demand for goods such as motors, pumps, heating plants, and similar goods. At the same time, contractors and manufacturers with PWA funds bought capital equipment and producer goods, such as dredges, tractors, bulldozers, trucks, and other goods. Fifth, PWA contracts and material orders served as security and created a demand for loans from private banks and other lending agencies. And, sixth, it provided financing through loans, grants, or by assisting with the issuance of bonds, or through a combination of these means.⁷

The agency built public works through two types of projects. One was the federal project. These were administered through the infrastructure the federal government already had in place—its departments and their seventy agencies, such as the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation and National Park Service, the War Department's Corps of Engineers, and others. Some of these were among the largest projects ever conducted, including the Tennessee Valley Authority; Bonneville, Grand Coulee and Boulder Dams; the 483-mile Blue Ridge Parkway; and the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Enterprise. Others were smaller, such as public housing, roads and prisons.⁸

The other type was the non-federal project. Sisters High School was a non-federal project. These were locally administrated and were smaller in cost and scope. Most were locally initiated. In this type of project, the PWA provided financing, extending grants or a combination of grants and loans, directly to states and local governments for the construction of public facilities. This was the federal government's first systematic network for the distribution of funds to localities. The typical grant was for 45 percent of the total cost of the project. In general, the PWA accepted potential projects estimated to cost over \$25,000. Applicants submitted potential projects to one of seven regional PWA offices around the U.S. Once approved, each project was assigned an inspector from the agency's engineering division to help ensure local officials followed rules and procedures. Inspectors reviewed bids and specifications of each project and oversaw bid openings. With the exception of site inspections, PWA officials were not involved in the actual construction of a project. The individual applicant was responsible for the hiring and paying of architects, contractors and others. The agency did not provide jobs directly, as did other New Deal programs. The agency did, however, require that in the hiring of labor that preference be given to qualified workers on relief. Typically, 30 percent of the labor force on a PWA project came from relief rolls. In general, the PWA had specialists to help with funding, technical assistance, engineering, legal issues and other matters. The agency would study the plans and use its specialists, such as engineers or architects, for insight and suggestions to ensure it was a high-quality project and to look after the public's money.⁹ By 1937, it had achieved an incredible record by as it entered its fifth year. In its own publication that year, it summarized the achievements. The PWA had:

⁷ Ibid., 8-10, 63.

⁸ Ibid., 93-112.

⁹ Isakoff, 25-26, 31, 41-48, 79-80, 88-95, 106, 120. Of the non-federal project expenditures from 1934 to June 1938, \$791 million had been expended on loans, while \$858 million was spent on grants; Curran, Christine, *Winona City Hall*, (National Register of Historic Places, NPS Form 10-900-a, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington D.C., 1995), sec. 8, 6. Curran summarizes several chronological aspects of the PWA: "The PWA spent its first six years under the leadership of Harold Ickes, FDR's Interior secretary (see footnote 10). In 1939, a new agency was created to consolidate several New Deal programs, including the PWA. Headed by John M. Carmody, the new agency was known as the Federal Works Agency. The New Deal programs under the Federal Works Agency continued in name and structure as they had before the reorganization; when the PWA was first authorized in 1933, under the National Recovery Act, the average grant was thirty percent. Under the 1935 Emergency Relief Appropriation Act, the grant average rose to forty-five percent." This is the Act that the Sisters project operated under.

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- Launched without precedent the largest construction program in history and established public works as an effective weapon against depression;
- Made possible four-fifths of all public construction in the United States after building had reached a standstill;
- Created at the sites of projects 1.5 billion man-hours of work at prevailing wages, reduced unemployment and kept thousands off relief rolls;
- Generated an additional 3.5 billion man-hours of work 'behind the lines' producing materials in forests, mines, manufacturing plants and in transportation;
- Spent \$1,126,197,000 for wages to workers on construction sites and \$1,948,389,000 for materials, a large part of which also went into workers' pay envelopes, which helped to restore purchasing power and revive industry;
- Built 70 percent of the school buildings erected when educational building had dwindled;
- Erected 62 percent of the hospitals when communities were unable to meet hospitalization and medical needs;
- Constructed 64 percent of the water works and thousands of sewers improving health conditions;
- Inaugurated the first federal slum clearance and low-rent housing program in America with 51 projects for thousands of families of small income;
- Purchased municipal bonds which assisted in restoring city credits and later sold these securities netting a profit to the Government of \$10,500,000;
- Set new high standards of construction through close supervision of work and materials; and
- Added immeasurably to the permanent and useful capital assets of the Nation and raised the standards of living. ¹⁰

McElvaine summarizes the agency's success and provides some insight into Harold L. Ickes, FDR's Secretary of the Interior and PWA Administrator:

Ickes saw the PWA as a means of bringing about recovery, but also a way to provide valuable public projects for the American people. ...he would not spend for the sake of spending—or just for the sake of putting money in the pockets of the needy. This meant that much of the PWA appropriations went for materials, architects, engineers, and skilled workers. Private contractors often did the work. All this was to the long-term good. 'We set for ourselves at the outset,' Ickes said, 'the perhaps attainable ideal of administering the greatest fund for construction in the history of the world without scandal.' For all practical purposes, the PWA attained that ideal. The agency registered an incredible record of efficient use of funds and left a great legacy of public structures ... Spending \$1 billion, the PWA greatly improved the nation and helped many people get through hard times. ¹¹

¹⁰ Isakoff, 32-33. Ickes' appointment by the President as the Administrator was *in personam*, apparently indicating the "desire of the President that the P.W.A. and the Department of the Interior function separately from each other," according to Isakoff. He received no compensation for his services with the PWA, serving at the pleasure of the President without action by the Senate; United States. Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, *PWA: A Four-Year Record of the Construction of Permanent and Useful Public Works*, (Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, Harold L. Ickes, Administrator, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1937), 2, 28. Behind the lines employment referred to indirect employment, such as workers in forests, mines, mills, manufacturing plants, transportation services and other fields as a result of orders for building materials, machinery, and supplies of every character from concrete and steel to school and hospital equipment.

¹¹ McElvaine, Robert S, *The Great Depression: America, 1929-1941*, (Times Books, New York, New York, 1984), 152-153. Quote.

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So far-reaching were the activities of the PWA that there are few places in the country where visible evidence of the agency can not be seen. Oregon had been approved for 291 non-Federal projects by March 1939, with 170 completed and 121 under construction. The total estimated cost of these projects was \$30,062,208, with the PWA providing \$16,688,026. A variety of projects were spread throughout Oregon. As examples are eleven projects, funded by either loans or grants, approved in August 1936. They included Eagle Point waterworks; Toledo waterworks; Huntington's municipal improvement; Marion County highway work; Cascade city hall; and four school projects—Brookings school, North Powder auditorium and gymnasium, Junction City school, and Bend's Kenwood School gymnasium/auditorium. Other PWA examples in Oregon announced in November 1938 included nineteen construction projects that amounted to \$809,617. The projects included Portland Port Commission dock improvements; City of Portland waterworks system; Silverton sewage system and disposal plant; Corvallis waterworks; State of Oregon rock production in Eastern Oregon; Oregon State Game Commission fish hatchery and dams; Astoria city hall remodel, city jail, cemetery and pump plant; Wickiup Water District domestic water system; Myrtle Point addition to city hall; Toledo street paving; The Dalles civic building; Oregon State Highway Commission highway improvement in Klamath and Lake counties; and seven school projects—Grants Pass high school building; Willamina high school building; Tenmile grade school building; two grants for athletic fields of Portland schools; Marshfield senior high building, gym and swimming pool; and Malheur county school building and equipment. Many other projects were undertaken.¹²

The PWA In Central Oregon

The PWA funded the construction of several public buildings in Central Oregon, including the Deschutes County Library (Bend), Bend City Hall, and four schools.

Deschutes County Library. In Bend, a PWA grant was applied for by the Deschutes County Library board in 1935. Before assistance for the library could be approved, PWA grants were halted for a period, to be renewed in the spring of 1938. In the summer of 1938, PWA and WPA applications were approved, and the board accepted the PWA grant of \$13,500 for the construction of the \$30,000 building. Morris H. Whitehouse and Walter E. Church, architects for the state capitol and state library, were the architects. Fred Van Metre was the contractor. John Elwood Isted served as the "clerk of the works for the Library Board," according to *The Bend Bulletin*, apparently the liaison to the PWA and to the architects for the board. The building opened to the public on February 22, 1939. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1993.

Today (2005), it is the administrative offices for the library.¹³

Bend City Hall. The Bend City Hall was built for \$32,000, with a PWA grant of \$14,400 and \$17,600 in bonds. It opened and was formally dedicated May 2, 1939 by Oregon Governor Charles A. Sprague and Bend Mayor Fred S. Simpson. Also taking part were Secretary of State Earl Snell, State Treasurer Walter E. Pearson, the Bend High School band and the Bend company of the Oregon National Guard. The ceremony was broadcasted over KBND radio. The building is Bend's first city hall and still in its original use today. Prior to completion of the building, officials had utilized rented facilities since the city's incorporation in 1905. The City Hall is located at the corner of Wall Street and Louisiana Avenue in the downtown

¹² United States, Public Works Administration, *America Builds: The Record of PWA*, 284-85, Table 16, Oregon project and allotment status; "Oregon PWA Grant Totals \$809,617," (*The Redmond Spokesman*, November 10, 1938), 13; "Kenwood School Grant Approved: PWA Allots \$11,430 for Gymnasium," (*The Bend Bulletin*, September, 1936), 1. Kenwood did not utilize this grant.

¹³ "Library Building Costs May Be Cut," (*The Bend Bulletin*, October 6, 1938), 3; Hall, Michael, Deschutes County Library, National Register of Historic Places, NPS Form 10-900, (National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington D.C., August 23, 1993), sec. 8, 3; "PWA Aid for Bend Library is Confirmed," (*The Bend Bulletin*, June 23, 1938), 1; "Library Board Votes to Accept PWA Grant." (*The Bend Bulletin*, June 22, 1938), 1; "New Library Now Ready to Use," *The Bend Bulletin*, February 21, 1939), 1.

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area. The building included room for the city water department, recorder, engineer, city manager, police station and jail, and public restrooms. It was designed by John Elwood Isted and the builder was Fred Van Matre.¹⁴

Deschutes County Courthouse. The Deschutes County Courthouse was almost built with PWA funding; however, agency funding never became a reality. In 1937 a \$67,500 grant was offered to support plans for a joint City of Bend-Deschutes County Courthouse, but the idea of a shared building was defeated at the polls. The PWA then rejected the County's request for an extension of time to pass its own levy for matching funds. The next year, 1939, a special levy was passed to cover the County's cost, but Congress adjourned without providing a matching grant. Finally, beginning in January 1940 with a small amount of WPA work, a reduction in the scope and cost of the building, and a county levy, a courthouse was finished, opening December 31, 1941. John Elwood Isted served as the County's general inspector of construction, overseeing construction of the building.¹⁵

Kenwood School Gymnasium. Another structure, a gymnasium for Bend's Kenwood School, was also nearly built with PWA funding but never reached fruition. John E. Isted, a Bend architect, had prepared plans in August 1935. On the school board's behalf, he applied to the PWA for a grant, which was awarded in September 1936, the day before school began. The board, however, did not want to interrupt the school year and to risk endangering students during construction. The PWA would not permit the school to retain the funds if building was not going to commence immediately and, so, rescinded the offer. In 1937, the Board took up the plan again, but did not build due to high costs. Though some remodeling was undertaken during the period without federal aid, the gymnasium was not built until a decade later, opening March 1950.¹⁶

Educational Facilities. The nation as a whole lagged seriously behind in school construction at this time. In 1932, almost three-fifths (57.8 percent) of the country's 245,941 elementary and high school buildings were one-room school houses. Less than five percent of the school buildings existing in 1935 had been built in the five previous years. A third of the country's schools were built between 1870 and 1900, and about 7.6 percent dated back to the Civil War period. In the principal cities of the United States, school building construction lagged behind that of other types of construction from 1923 to 1930—and this was the period of greatest school construction to that time. Average expenditures per city for schools began to decline in 1926, long before the depression was felt. Compounding the problem was a rapid increase in high school enrollment due to population factors and the realization of the importance of education by both parents and children. From

¹⁴ "City to Vote on Bonds for New Building," (*The Bend Bulletin*, August 4, 1938), 1; "City Selects Site on Wall for Building," (*The Bend Bulletin*, August 17, 1938), 1; "PWA Approves City Hall Bid," (*The Bend Bulletin*, November 18, 1938), 1; "City Sells Bonds for New Building," (*The Bend Bulletin*, October 26, 1938), 1; "City Hall Work Well Under Way," (*The Bend Bulletin*, February 23, 1939), 1; "Progress Reported On City Hall Work," (*The Bend Bulletin*, March 6, 1939), 1; "City Moving Records Into New Building," (*The Bend Bulletin*, April 27, 1939), 1; "New City Hall to Open Monday," (*The Bend Bulletin*, April 28, 1939), 1; "Governor to Dedicate City Building," (*The Bend Bulletin*, April 29, 1939), 1.

¹⁵ "\$103,190 Cost of Courthouse Job," (*The Bend Bulletin*, November 20, 1940), 1; Wiederhold, Kathleen M, *Exploring Oregon's Historic Courthouses*, (Oregon State University Press, Corvallis, Oregon, 1998), 190-199.

¹⁶ "Plan New Gymnasium for Kenwood School: WPA [sic: PWA] Grant is Sought by School District," (*The Bend Bulletin*, August 27, 1935), 1; "Kenwood School Plans Approved: No Funds Alloted by PWA Authorities," (*The Bend Bulletin*, August 22, 1936), 1; "Kenwood School Grant Approved: PWA Allots \$11,430 for Gymnasium," (*The Bend Bulletin*, September, 1936), 1; "Kenwood Project to be Postponed: New PWA Grant Will Be Asked in Spring," (*The Bend Bulletin*, September 19, 1936), 1; "School Board Accepts Plans for Gymnasium," (*The Bend Bulletin*, April 13, 1937), 1; "Reject Bids on Kenwood Plant," *The Bend Bulletin*, April 27, 1937; "Kenwood Gymnasium Bids Are Rejected," (*The Bend Bulletin*, May 25, 1937), 1; "New 4-Room Grade School Gets Approval," (*The Bend Bulletin*, March 10, 1950), 1.

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1930 to 1932 the high school enrollment increased 16.8 percent. The large increase in high school enrollment required a higher per-capita expenditure on school property because more elaborate buildings and more expensive equipment were required for effective secondary education. A serious situation had become acute by 1932. ¹⁷

The PWA decided to correct it and educational facilities, consequentially, became a high priority for public works. PWA funding for school construction had four main purposes: (1) To provide new facilities to meet the needs of shifting populations and growing enrollments; (2) to replace unsafe and obsolete small buildings with modern, consolidated schools; (3) to provide new structures with modern equipment to replace obsolete and overcrowded buildings without proper heating, ventilation, lighting, or sanitation; and (4) to provide additions and improvements to existing buildings. *America Builds: The Record of PWA* summarized its accomplishments for the nation's schools from its inception in 1933 to July 1, 1939:

PWA had aided materially in efforts to overcome this acute shortage of adequate school facilities. Since 1933 PWA has made allotments for 7,282 educational building projects costing \$1,161,118,000. These comprised over 40 percent of all the non-Federal projects for which PWA made allotments, indicating to some extent what the communities of the Nation have considered to be their prime need ...All in all, PWA accounted for more than 70 percent of all school construction carried on since 1933, adding 60,000 classrooms with seats for 2,500,000 pupils. ...It has been estimated that PWA projects have added to the educational plant of the Nation 4,300 auditoriums, 3,500 gymnasiums, 1,800 libraries, 1,350 shops, 890 cafeterias, and approximately 12,000 other units including laboratories, study halls, and science and commercial classrooms. ¹⁸

"Educational structures have been given a preference status wherever a need for them existed," explained Isakoff in his 1938 PWA report. According to Isakoff, all of the facts and data:

...were available to Congress when it was considering a bill, later enacted, to extend the life of the PWA until 1939. No criticism was offered with respect to the types of projects favored, and so it may perhaps be assumed that the distribution met with the approval of the national legislature. At any rate, in authorizing the approval of certain classes of projects as part of a liquidating program, Congress enumerated only one specific type of undertaking, school projects—a type that had long met favor from the establishment. ¹⁹

In his book *Back to Work: The Story of PWA*, Harold L. Ickes, PWA Administrator, reflected back to the agency's desire and vision for school facilities:

The amount of money asked for made no difference in our consideration of school allotments. It was our keen desire to spread the benefits of PWA to education as far as we possibly could. In addition to creating employment, ...it was

¹⁷ United States, Public Works Administration, *Public Works Administration Aids to Education*, by the Research Section of the Projects Division, (Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, Harold L. Ickes, Administrator, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1937), ix, 1-12.

¹⁸ United States, Public Works Administration, *America Builds: The Record of PWA*, 127-139. The sponsors of these school projects contributed \$588,068,908 of the total cost and PWA the balance of \$573,048,936, of which \$93,789,369 represents interest-bearing loans repayable to the government. (These figures address non-federal projects.)

¹⁹ Isakoff, 108-109.

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PWA's aim to place in every part of the Nation school structures that would stand long after the program was ended as monuments to its social vision. ²⁰

The educational buildings constructed in the United States between 1933 and 1939 were part of the PWA's "great legacy of public structures," according to McElvaine. ²¹

The comprehensive support that PWA school activities received at the local level derived not only from the need for new schools, but also from the extent to which PWA officials left decision-making in the hands of local school boards. Several schools boards in Central Oregon took advantage of the program and received PWA funding to build new schools. The schools were the Madras Union High School and Madras Grade School in Jefferson County, Crook County High School in Crook County (Prineville), and Sisters High School in Deschutes County. ²²

- *Madras Union High School.* On September 12, 1938, a new Madras Union High School was dedicated. The ceremony was opened by selections from the Bend High School orchestra, followed by speakers, including J. L. Campbell, chairman of the board of directors; C. C. Hockley, Oregon PWA administrator; and Marshall Dana of the Oregon Journal, who delivered the main address. In August of 1937 the high school district had been notified that it was to receive \$27,145 to go with \$23,500 received from insurance when the previous building burned, and with a \$19,000 bond issue that had passed. Roald and Schneider, Portland architects, drew the plans and Baldwin and Wheir of Hood River was the contractor. The new building was a one story of brick and tile. There were five classrooms, a study hall, a library, a music room and a gymnasium with a stage. The building is in use today as an elementary school, located on 4th Street in downtown Madras. ²³
- *Madras Grade School.* Dedication ceremonies for a new Madras grade school were held May 23, 1939 in connection with the graduation of eighth grade students. A PWA grant of \$17,496 was received in the fall of 1938 to go along with a bond issue of \$19,500 that school district taxpayers had favored 46 to 5. The dedication program included H. W. Poling, PWA representative; John L. Schneider, architect; Ivan Luman, principal; and Purl Lytle, school board chairman. Following the presentation of diplomas and brief statements, the building was opened for inspection by the public. It was a one story, built of brick and veneer. There were four classrooms, each with accommodation for 40 pupils, an assembly hall 66 by 42 feet with seating for 300, a library, an office, a health room, cloakrooms and lavatories. A plaque inside the front entrance reads: "Madras Grade School, Federal Emergency Administration of

²⁰ Ickes, Harold L., *Back to Work: The Story of PWA*, (Macmillan Company, New York, New York, 1935), 91-92.

²¹ McElvaine, 152-153.

²² United States, Public Works Administration, *Public Works Administration Aids to Education*, 3, Table 1. Figures for December 1, 1936 show 68 school construction project allotments in Oregon at that time. These were for 75 buildings, 412 classrooms, and 16,358 students. Estimated cost was \$6,057,447; Reitzes, Lisa Beth, *Moderately Modern: Interpreting the Architecture of the Public Works Administration*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Delaware, May 1989), 381.

²³ "Madras High to Open Sept. 12," *The Redmond Spokesman*, September 1, 1938), 10; "Madras Dedicates New High School," (*The Redmond Spokesman*, September 22, 1938), 10.

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Public Works, Project No ORE 1275-F." Though it has had additions and alterations over the years, the building still stands on 10th Street in Madras and remains in use as an elementary facility. ²⁴

- *Crook County High School.* On March 16, 1936, construction of the Crook High School, in Prineville, began, erected at a cost of \$48,655 with PWA funding. It was built on the site of the old school building that had just been razed by WPA crews. It was a single story, built of concrete and wood. The new facility was designed by the firm of Tourtellotte & Phillips, Portland architects, and built by Clyde Frazier, Portland contractor. This building is now known as the Crooked River Intermediate School, used for grades third through fifth. ²⁵
- *Sisters High School.* Late in the New Deal, a new high school was needed by Deschutes County School District No. 6 in Sisters, Oregon. In 1938-1939, construction was financed with a PWA grant of \$8,550 and a school district bond issue of \$14,000. The grant was one of the last to be awarded for educational facilities in 1938. *The Bend Bulletin* reported on October 7, 1938, "Applications received by the PWA ... indicate that communities in Oregon are primarily interested in building new schools. The ...PWA ... announced 58 applications for school construction projects [in Oregon were received] through September 30, [the] last day on which [they were] accepted." ²⁶

A New High School Is Needed

Education was considered vital and essential by the area's early residents and almost immediately became a cornerstone of the community that became Sisters, Oregon. In 1882 near present day Sisters, Crook County District No. 9 Camp Polk was organized; the first school district in what became Deschutes County in 1916. The first school in the district was a log cabin located two miles north of Sisters. The first school in the area that became the city of Sisters was a one-room building built about 1890 and located across the highway from the Sisters High School, the subject property. The building was replaced by a two-room school located on the Sisters grade school site in 1900. ²⁷

²⁴ "Madras Dedicates New Grade School," (*The Redmond Spokesman*, June 8, 1939), 8; "Grade School Favored by Madras: Vote 46 to 5," (*The Redmond Spokesman*, September 15, 1938), 1; "Madras Gets PWA Grant of \$17,496 for Grade School," (*The Redmond Spokesman*, August 25, 1938), 1.

²⁵ "Prineville School Building Is Started," (*The Bend Bulletin*, March 16, 1936), 1; "PWA Asked to Aid with New School," (*Central Oregonian*, September 5, 1935), 1; "Voters Will Decide High School 28th," (*Central Oregonian*, September 12, 1935), 1; "Hi School Bond Vote Carries," (*Central Oregonian*, October 3, 1935), 1; "School Bid to Be Settled Saturday," (*Central Oregonian*, November 21, 1935), 1; "New Offers Sought On High School" (*Central Oregonian*, November 28, 1935), 1; "PWA Work Started On School Job," (*Central Oregonian*, January 9, 1936), 1;

²⁶ "Schools Lead in PWA Applications," (*The Bend Bulletin*, October 7, 1938), 2. Construction value of the projects was approximately \$3,514,500.

²⁷ Deats, Jerry, *A History of Education In the Public Schools of Deschutes County Before 1925*, (Masters Thesis, Eastern Oregon State College, La Grande, Oregon, August, 1964), 8-10; Helms, Irene H., *Remembering - School Days of Old Crook County*, (Prineville Print Shop, Prineville, Oregon, First Printing, 1980), 1, 89-91; Hatton, Raymond R., Lawrence A. Chitwood, and Stuart G. Garrett, *Oregon's Sisters Country: A Portrait of Its Lands, Waters, and People*, (Geographical Books, Bend, Oregon, 1996), 42-45; Wilson, Tillie and Alice Scott, *That Was Yesterday*, (Midstate Printing, Redmond, Oregon, First Printing, November 1974), 13-18; Deats, 8-9.

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Soon, attention was needed to address the education of students beyond the 8th grade. In 1912, the two-room school was replaced by a two-story school with six rooms built to serve both grade and high school students. From 1912 to 1920, Sisters offered only a two-year high school. But, in the fall of 1920, a four-year high school called a "standard high school" was provided, still in the same building. Though only four students were enrolled, the new offering required that the building be remodeled, new equipment acquired, a principal selected, and a third teacher hired to teach the first two high school grades. The first graduating class from Sisters High School held commencement exercises in May 1924 with four graduates. In that year, boundaries changed and District No. 9 became Sisters, School District, No. 6. ²⁸

Though a small school, Sisters High School was a focal point of the community and received rich support. By the 1930s extracurricular activities were on the rise. Basketball had been established in 1924, with a strong team playing larger nearby schools. Music and drama were also appreciated. Throughout the decade music festivals were presented with parents and teachers uniting to help. An orchestra was formed as early as 1936. Comedies and other plays were regular events during the era. Dances and other social events, for both students and adults, were held at the school. Annual activities included the junior-senior banquet at the Pilot Butte Inn in Bend and a pilgrimage to the coast by students and teachers. ²⁹

By the opening of school September 14, 1938, growth was troubling district officials. School opened with 147 students, with more expected. The building which had served both grade and high school students since 1912 was no longer large enough. The grade school rooms in the lower floor were crowded. During the preceding summer the school board had wisely moved to address growth, change and new needs. A number of improvements had been made to upgrade the school. New library books had been added to the district's collection. A new 1939 Chevrolet twenty-passenger school bus was purchased and a bus driver hired to bring in pupils living outside the two-mile limit. Sisters High School was also experiencing increased enrollment. The high school started with 26 students. Of these, eleven were freshmen, one of which was new to the area. In addition, two sophomores and a junior were new to the school. ³⁰

An article at the time spoke of the area's growth that created challenges for the community and school board:

²⁸ Ibid.; "Sisters Will Open a Standard High School This Fall," (*The Bend Bulletin*, Bend, Oregon, August 3, 1920), 1; Deats, 108.

²⁹ Wilson and Scott, 13-18; Zasters, E. C., "Sisters," (*The Redmond Spokesman*, Redmond, Oregon, March 2, 1939), 6; Zasters, E. C., "Sisters," (*The Redmond Spokesman*, Redmond, Oregon, May 18, 1939), 3; Zasters, E. C., "Sisters," (*The Redmond Spokesman*, Redmond, Oregon, May 25, 1939), 3; Zasters, E. C., "Sisters," (*The Redmond Spokesman*, Redmond, Oregon, April 5 1939), 6; Hatton, et. al.; Wilson and Scott; "Sisters High to Give Comedy on Wednesday," (*The Redmond Spokesman*, (Redmond, Oregon, September 29, 1939), 4.

³⁰ "Sisters School Pupils Total 147," (*The Redmond Spokesman*, Redmond, Oregon, September 15, 1938), 5. About 25 students lived outside the two-mile limit. Though the school board would have preferred a used bus with capacity for more students, it found that secondhand busses did not comply with new regulations, so a new, but smaller, bus was purchased. Prior to buying a bus, the district paid parents mileage for transporting their children and that may have continued to be the case in some instances. "State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company, Automobile Policy No. ORE. 2826181," February 16, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). The bus was a six-cylinder vehicle. It was insured for the actual cost of \$1,985. The membership fee was six dollars and the premium was sixteen dollars (apparently for the school year). Coverage was \$5,000 each person, \$25,000 each accident. School Board Chairman Leedy was named as the insured.

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Gateway to the McKenzie and Santiam Cascades of Oregon, center of a recreation area second to none in the northwest and headquarters for many lumber mills. Sisters ... in 1938 experienced its best year in history. Tourists found the scenic mountain passes of intriguing interest, the Metolius river area attracted vacationists from many parts of the west ... Activity in the Sisters area was principally reflected by building work. Numerous homes were erected, new places of business came into existence. ... [P]eople ... feel that far better [tourist] seasons are ahead [due to] the completion of the Santiam highways into ... Albany ... and down the Detroit river to Salem and Portland. The North Santiam ... will open up [Sisters to the] populated ... Willamette Valley. ... Although growing rapidly, Sisters is not yet incorporated, and it appears that no attempt will be made to incorporate for many years to come. ... However, Sisters has had to make provisions to care for its growing school population... [T]his was done through approval of the high school project.³¹

Preparing for a New High School

The Sisters community was genuinely behind the idea of building a new high school. On June 30, 1938, fifteen legal voters submitted a petition to the Board of Directors of District No. 6, requesting the Board to call a district bond election to submit to the voters the question of contracting bonded indebtedness in the sum not to exceed \$14,000 for the purpose of acquiring a site and erecting and equipping a high school in the district. Only three weeks later, the Board convened a Special Meeting on July 23rd to consider the matter, decided with the petitioners and set a \$14,000 bond election for August 10th. Should the election pass, it also authorized issuance of the bonds according to provisions of the applicable Oregon Code and agreed the interest rate would be set at no more than five percent. Present at that meeting were Frank M. Zumwalt, Chairman, Charles T. Leedy and Ray Rickert, Directors. Helen Lou Baker was District Clerk. She was directed to post notices of the election in three conspicuous places since there was no newspaper published in the District. Baker signed a Certificate of Posting, indicating that the School District Bond Election Notices were posted on July 24th, "one on the wall of the post office at Sisters Oregon [,] one on the front of the building known as the Pastime in Sisters and one [on] the front door of the school house at Sisters Oreg[on]."³² On Wednesday, August 10, 1938, prior to the opening of the polls, a School District meeting of voters was held by the Board. Its purpose was to read and file the Election Notice and Certificate of Posting, and to elect three election judges and a Clerk of Election all of whom would conduct the election, canvass the vote and certify the results to the Board, the County Treasurer and the County School Superintendent. C. N. Sorenson, Bill Doolin and Ellis Edgington were elected as judges, and Nellie Swartz was elected Clerk of the Election. All four then took their oath of office and signed the Oath. Following the oath, the polls were opened at 1:55 p.m. to conduct the election beginning at 2:00 p.m. Official Ballots were furnished to each legal voter, the question being:

Shall Bonds in an amount not to exceed \$14,000.00 with interest at not to exceed 5% be authorized and issued by School District No. 6 of Deschutes County, Oregon for the purpose of acquiring a site, erecting and equipping a high school in said district?

³¹ "Sisters Making Big Growth; Town Gateway to Mountains," (*The Bend Bulletin*, Bend, Oregon, September 22, 1938), 8.

³² "Exhibit 6," P.W.C.A Form No. 123, Sheet 1 of 2, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). Each judge and the clerk received \$3.00 for serving; "Sisters in Favor of High School Close to Grades," (*The Redmond Spokesman*, Redmond, Oregon, August 25, 1938), 1.; "Bond Petition," June 30, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Board Minutes of Special Meeting," July 23, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Certificate of Posting," August 10, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "School District Bond Election Notice," July 24, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon)

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Voters were to "place a cross (X) between the word bonds, and the word, yes [BONDS ____ YES], or between the word, bonds, and the word, no, [BONDS ____ NO], which indicates his choice." When the polls closed, the judges and clerk counted the ballots and found 71 votes had been cast, with 61 "Yes" votes and 10 "No" votes. They then certified that the majority favored the bond issue. A Certificate of Results of Election was provided to the Board, the County Treasurer and the County School Superintendent. Several days later, on August 12th, the District received two letters needed before bonds were sold. The first from W.F. Hammer, the Deschutes County Assessor, stating that, "The assessed valuation of School District # 6 ... is \$522, 750 according to the last tax roll, for the year 1938." The second from Ruth M. Shearer, Deschutes County Treasurer, stating that, "...School District No. 6 ... has no bond issue at the present time and therefore no bonds outstanding." ³³

With the strong support shown by the community in the bond election and the two letters proof of the District's strong financial position, the Board was ready to take action. On August 15th, Frank Zumwalt, Director, was authorized to apply on behalf of the District to the federal government for a grant "to aid in financing the construction of a high school building." In addition, John E. Isted, a Bend architect, was authorized to provide the information as needed to the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (PWA) in connection with the grant application. The Board also retained the Bend Law Firm of Upton & DeArmond to advise it in connection with the bond issue. ³⁴

The Board met on October 5th in a special session, attended by Charles T. Leedy, Chairman, and Directors, Roy Rickert and Maurice G. Hitchcock. A resolution for the District to issue negotiable bonds in the sum of \$14,000, bearing interest at the rate not to exceed 4 percent per annum, payable semi-annually, due serially, beginning November 1, 1940, and the interest payable semi-annually on May 1st and November 1st of each year, was passed. Bonds were to be in denominations of \$500 each, numbered from 1 to 28, inclusive, and maturities to be \$2,500 due each November 1st beginning 1940 through 1942 and \$3,500 due each November 1st 1943 and 1944, and were to bear interest coupons. A Bond and a Coupon were attached to the minutes outlining these and other details and specifics. Another resolution was passed pledging the school district to each holder and guaranteeing to levy taxes to pay the bonds' interest and principal as each became due. Bids were to be opened October 25th. ³⁵

In the meantime, on October 11th, the Board purchased Block One of Davidson's Addition to Sisters for \$500 from the Oregon & Western Colonization Company, a corporation registered in South Dakota. The block held lots one through twelve. It was

³³ "Invoice (unknown number)," The Bend Bulletin, August 9, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). One-hundred fifty ballots were purchased for \$4.25; "Invoice 24102," West Coast Printing & Binding, November 10, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). Twenty-eight School District Bonds were purchased for \$49.40; "Minutes of Meeting of Legal Voters," August 10, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Certificate of Minutes, Clerk of Election," August 10, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Election Judge and Clerk of Election Oath," August 10, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Official Ballot," August 10, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Certificate of Results of Election," August 10, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Certificate of Transmittal of Result of Election," August 11, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Letter to Jay H. Upton from W. F. Hammer," August 12, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Letter to Upton & DeArmond from Ruth M. Shearer," (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon).

³⁴ "Board Resolution to Apply for PWA Grant," August 15, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Board Resolution to Engage Law Firm of Upton & DeArmond," August 15, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon).

³⁵ "Minutes of Board Meeting," October 5, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Bond," October 5, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Coupon," October 5, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). Leedy was chosen as the Chairman at the beginning of the school year.

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understood by the Board that the Willamette Valley and Cascade Mountain Wagon Road right-of-way, as laid out, would pass over, or pass within twenty-five feet of the property, and that the part of Block One crossed by the road was exempted from the property deed. Watson P. Davidson, President, and William F. Davidson, Secretary, signed for the corporation. Signing for the Board was Chairman Charles Leedy. J. M. Chase, a Notary Public in Ramsey County, Minnesota, witnessed the transaction. District officials soon had high school boys out on the property clearing ground. ³⁶

Also in the intervening time, on October 19th, a Special Board Meeting was held regarding an offer, received that day, of grant financing from the PWA to aid in the construction of a new high school. Director Zumwalt and Isted had been successful in their endeavor to obtain a grant. In a letter to the District dated October 12, 1938, the PWA made the offer which included not only construction but necessary equipment and the acquisition of land and rights of way. The amount would be 45 percent of the cost of the project upon completion, but not to exceed \$8,550. This number had been determined by using an estimate of \$19,000 to accomplish the project. At the meeting were Chairman Leedy, Directors Rickert and Hitchcock, and Helen Lou Baker, District Clerk. After discussion of the offer, a Resolution entitled "A Resolution Accepting the Offer of the United States to School District No. 6 to Aid by Way of Grant Financing the Construction of a High School Building" was proposed by Rickert. The Resolution was seconded by Hitchcock and adopted, with Leedy, Hitchcock and Rickert voting aye, and none voting nay. The Chairman then declared the Resolution carried and the board members signed the Resolution in approval. The Board had taken the community's wishes—demonstrated by the petition and the highly favorable bond election—seriously and was moving quickly. The project was given Docket No. Oreg. 1344-F. ³⁷

Preparing for the bond sale according to the requirements of Oregon Code, the District published a Notice of Sale for the bonds for two consecutive weeks in *The Bend Bulletin*, a local newspaper, in the October 7th and October 14th issues, stating the details consistent with the decisions made in the October 5th Board meeting. At the Board meeting of October 25th, the District and its attorneys, Upton & DeArmond, examined the bids submitted, which were to be unconditional. The bids received were:

Bank of Bend, 100.54, 3 ¾ percent interest;
Baker, Fordyce Company, 100.27, 3 percent interest;
E. M. Adams Company, 100.07, 3 percent interest; and
Jaxtheimer & Company, 100.03, 3 ¾ percent interest.

³⁶ "Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of School District No. 6," n. d., (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). Sometime in October, at an undated board meeting, a wage scale for workers was adopted, presumably under rules of the PWA, and included wages for more than thirty jobs; "Deed No. 1174," State of Minnesota, October 11, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon).

³⁷ "Acceptance Record Memorandum, Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works," October 19, 1938, PWA Form No. 181, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Letter to School District No. 6 from E.W. Clark, Assistant Administrator, Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works to Offer Aid in Financing the Construction of a School Building," October 12, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Public Voucher—Payment of Final Grant," Form No. P.W.C.A. 21-Ca, n.d., (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); Exhibit 6," P.W.C.A Form No. 123, Sheet 1 of 2, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon).

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At the meeting, all bids except that from the Bank of Bend were found to be conditional by the attorneys and Board. Therefore, the bank's bid was accepted. The decision of the Board to undertake a bond issue increased the District's indebtedness from \$5,815.16 to \$19,815.16, an increase of 241 percent. ³⁸

Building the New High School

The District was ready to build a school of which the community would be proud. On November 15th, in less than three weeks after selling the bonds, the District had an Approved Estimate from the PWA. The project costs were broken down broadly, showing total costs at \$19,000. Following the bond election, Isted had worked with the PWA; he essentially served as project architect. He had provided the information needed to receive approval from the PWA for a grant. This would have included an estimate of costs and plans, though no plans have been identified. Typically, a PWA engineer would meet with the school board, architect and local citizens. He would help them determine what they wanted and, importantly, needed to build, how it would be financed, and would help them prepare an application that would include a local architect's sketch of the proposed building. Therefore, it appears plans were prepared early in the process as an estimate, based on plans, was needed by the Board and PWA to determine both the bond issue and grant amounts. The District advertised for bids in two newspapers, Portland's *Daily Journal of Commerce* and *The Bend Bulletin*—on November 18th and 25th. Then, bids, based on Isted's plans and specifications, were submitted to the District by contractors. The known bids were from two local contractors, experienced and respected in the area, Hart Building and Fred Van Metre. The two builders had provided bids for the Board to consider: a base bid, and ten alternatives that the Board apparently had requested for its consideration, depending on various factors, such as costs. At 1:00 p.m. on December 5th the bids were opened. Hart's base bid was \$22,138.15. Van Metre's base bid was \$23,977.00. Hart's bid was accepted. ³⁹

³⁸ "Bank of Bend to Open Tomorrow: New Institution for Bend Chartered," (*The Bend Bulletin*, September 30, 1936), 1; "Notice of Sale," October 7 and 14, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Notice of Sale," *The Bend Bulletin*, October 7, 1938), 6; "Notice of Sale," *The Bend Bulletin*, October 14, 1938), 6; "Affidavit of Publication," October 15, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Minutes of Meeting," October 25, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon.); "Certificate of Indebtedness," October 8, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon).

³⁹ "Original Approved Estimate," P.W.A. Form 231, November 15, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). The costs were shown as \$100 for preliminary expenses, \$500 for the land (already purchased), \$17,035 for construction, \$965 for architectural fees, and \$400 for inspection, for a total estimated cost of \$19,000; "Detailed Estimate," PWA Form No. 96, January 3, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). This detailed estimate of costs is signed by Hart, builder, Isted, architect and E. R. Hoffman, Regional Director, P.W.A., dated January 3rd and stamped January 7, 1939;. Total costs shown are \$19,631.80, with \$5,856.75 in labor, \$11,766.30 in materials and \$2,006.75 in other costs; "Check No. 2," Bank of Bend, December 12, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). Isted was the first one to receive a check from the District. Check No. 1 was paid to the District's construction fund (\$500) to reimburse it for the property costs. The District's regular account was used until the construction account was set up about January 12, 1939; "Advertisement for Bids," (*The Bend Bulletin*, November 18, 1938), 10; "Advertisement for Bids," (*The Bend Bulletin*, November 25, 1938), 7; "Invoice 1525," *The Bend Bulletin*, November 25, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). The bill was \$8.70 for 58 lines two times; "Statement," *Daily Journal of Commerce*, January 2, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). The date shown on the statement is November 25, 1938 and services are "Bids for Sisters High School Bldg.," The charge: \$20.65. Isted had signed for the services, apparently getting the bid information published on his name and reputation, and then the newspaper billed the District which paid the bill on January 16, 1939. "Bid Sheet," (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). It is unknown if other contractors bid, but Hart and Van Metre were the only two shown on this document. If there were others, then these two contractors were finalists. Alternatives, or options, included: (a) a change in brick, (b) wider windows, (c) staining the roof, (d) additional work on the ceiling joists, (e) a change in floor covering, (f) kalomine and paint, (g) shelving in the office and library, (h) a cupola, (i) student desks, etc. omitted, and (j) wood construction. Kalomine appears to possibly be a heat resistant coating that may have been put on surfaces like paint; "Invoice, Aubrey E. Perry," December 7,

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The project was moving quickly before New Year 1939 arrived, as Isted was overseeing a number of matters. On the day following the awarding of the project to Hart, Aubrey E. Perry, surveyed for six hours and then came back the next day with his helper, Art Richards, and surveyed two more hours. Walter Jacobs submitted a billing to the District on January 3rd for three and three-fourth days for "inspecting cement job. Beginning Thursday morning Dec. 29, 1938." This suggests that Hart poured concrete Thursday, December 29th; Friday the 30th; took Saturday the 31st, New Year's Eve off; took Sunday, January 1st, New Year's Day off; then poured Monday, January 2nd; and poured most of Tuesday, January 3rd. This is likely given the mild winter temperatures and lack of precipitation during the period. ⁴⁰

Other work was also being completed swiftly. The PWA's estimate of work completed by January 7th included about 90 percent of the excavation and grading. This work was the digging of the basement for the building, probably requiring blasting, and construction of the concrete foundations and some leveling of the site. At this time, about three-fourths of the concrete was poured and the steel and iron to reinforce it had been placed. The hardware and lumber to complete the project was on site, or at least payment for it had been made. Ordered was another \$12,830.30 of materials, including brick, sheet metal (for heating), plumbing, a heating system, wiring (electrical), light fixtures, plaster, paint, steel lockers, blackboards, window shades, linoleum, millwork, flooring, and roofing. Material suppliers as of early January included Columbia Brick Works, Pamela Shingle Co., Idanha Lumber Co., Tite Knot Pine Mill and Beaver-Portland Cement. The project was considered fifteen percent completed by January 1st. *The Redmond Spokesman* of January 13th reported Hart as saying "The new Sisters high school building will be completed early this spring and furnished for use for the fall term." "Steel has been placed and the foundation all poured," the newspaper said. "To protect the wet concrete during the weather of the season, it was covered with building paper which was covered with sand," according to Hart. The foundation and basement were built with a significant amount of concrete and steel. Moreover, steel-reinforced framing in the walls was used, consistent with PWA guidelines that construction be fireproof. Seth Lind of Redmond served as Hart's superintendent for the project and William Montgomery of Bend had the plumbing and sheet metal sub-contract, while Fredrickson Linoleum Company of Portland had the sub-contract to lay the floor covering. The wiring (electrical) was also sub-contracted to an unknown contractor. On January 16th, Hart's first check was \$4,828.68, or 90 percent of the amount he was owed at that time, \$5,365.20. ⁴¹

1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). Perry received \$10.00 for 8 hours of work. "Note, Art Richards," December 7, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). Richards earned 60 cents per hour; "Check No. 5," Bank of Bend, January 16, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); United States, Public Works Administration, *America Builds: The Record of PWA*, 61-83.

⁴⁰ "Invoice, Aubrey E. Perry," December 7, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). Perry received \$10.00 for 8 hours of work. "Note, Art Richards," December 7, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). Richards earned 60 cents per hour; "Sisters High School Job," Invoice from Walter Jacobs, January 3, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). Walters was paid \$18.75 for 3 ¼ days of work at \$5 per day; Oregon State University. Oregon Climate Service. June 16, 2005. Temperatures and precipitation reported at the Redmond 2 W Station from December 29, 1938 to January 3, 1939 show a mild winter period. High temperatures were 49, 51, 56, 60, 49, and 48 degrees F.; low temperatures were 30, 32, 37, 42, 33, and 31 degrees F.; and there was no precipitation reported during the period with only .07" reported for all of January 1939.

⁴¹ "Periodical Estimate for Partial Payment No. 1," PWA Form No. I-23, December 7, 1938 to January 1, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Detailed Estimate," PWA Form No. 96, January 3, 1939. The estimate for partial payment showed 86% of 235 yards of excavation and grading complete, or about 200 yards. Seventy-seven percent of the concrete had been poured and ninety percent of the steel and iron (reinforcement) for the project had been used; Reitzes, 442. PWA guidelines insisted (when ever possible) construction was to be fireproof; masonry veneers over steel-reinforced frames were the rule; "Bid Sheet." The Bid Sheet shows a separate cost for wood construction, suggesting additional costs for the material; "Check No. 4," Bank of Bend, January 16, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Exhibit No. 6," Sheet 1 of 2, P.W.C.A. Form 123. Ten percent was always retained until the project was

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Though it is difficult to determine exactly what steps were taken when, some observations may be made. By the first of February, the PWA estimated the project was 38 percent complete—slightly over one-third finished. One-hundred percent of the lumber and roofing work was completed by February. This suggests that Hart's crew worked quickly to get walls around them and a roof overhead to protect them from the cold and wet winter weather of Central Oregon. Suppliers during this period were Columbia Brick Works, Beaver-Portland Cement, and Hawley Gilbert Co.⁴²

By March 1st it was considered 59 percent finished, or about three-fifths done. The furnace and fan were purchased and installed during February, though half or more of the heating system was not yet finished. Also in this period, seventy percent of the wiring (electrical) was installed. It was also at this time that about half of the millwork (moldings, woodwork) was installed. This may have included the knotty pine wainscoting in the corridor. Project costs to date, including materials, labor and other costs, totaled \$10,744.83 at this time.⁴³

By April 1st—just three months from the pouring of concrete—it was judged 98 percent complete. Though a very small portion of brickwork appears to have been done early, almost all of the brick work appears to have been done in this period between March 1st and April 1st. The plastering of the interior walls was all done and completed during March. Plumbing seems to have been done a little at a time, with 80 percent of it done by April. Nearly all of the light fixtures were installed at this time and three-fourths of the painting was finished. Nearly all of the Mastipave tile, a type or brand of linoleum, was laid during this period.⁴⁴

By May 1st the Board and the community had to have felt very pleased with the project. Nearly everything was completed. This included excavation and grading; concrete work, with its steel reinforcement; wiring and lighting; plastering; millwork; and the lumber was gone, the floors were laid, there was a roof overhead, and the furnace was running. The remainder of work was considered 95 percent complete and included some plumbing, a few heating chores, a little painting, and completion of the

completed.; "Owner's Monthly Statement of Project Funds and Costs," P.W.C.A. Form No. 333, Report 1, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "New Sisters Building to Be Completed Soon," (*The Bend Bulletin*, Bend, Oregon, January 13, 1939), 1; "Bond and Insurance Coverage," P.W.C.A. Form No. 139, March 9, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon).

⁴² "Periodical Estimate for Partial Payment No. 2," PWA Form No. I-23, January 1, 1939 to February 1, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon).

⁴³ "Periodical Estimate for Partial Payment No. 1." This document shows lumber from Tite Knot Pine Mills; Deschutes County Historical Society, *A History of Deschutes County in Oregon*, (Deschutes County Historical Society. Bend, Oregon, 1986), 41, 301. The Tite Knot Mill operated in Sisters from 1933 to 1943 when operations moved to Redmond. Built by Bert Peterson, it was a band mill about four miles south of Sisters. Samuel S. Johnson and his father obtained a half-interest in the later 1930s. Samuel Johnson served seven terms in the Oregon House of Representatives, from 1965-1978, and was Mayor of Redmond for two terms, from 1978-1982. Some of the lumber used in the school was from this mill. It is likely that the knotty pine wainscoting in the corridor was from this mill; "Material Estimate for School House, Sisters, Oregon," n. d., (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). See the long list of electrical components for additional information on electrical installations of the period; "Periodical Estimate for Partial Payment No. 3," PWA Form No. I-23, February 1, 1939 to March 1, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon).

⁴⁴ "Periodical Estimate for Partial Payment No. 4," PWA Form No. I-23, March 1, 1939 to April 1, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon).

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installation of the steel lockers, window shades, and linoleum. Also installed toward the end of the project were venetian blinds on the entire front of the building, with both upper transom and lower window blinds. ⁴⁵

The PWA's contract price was \$19,631.80. Hart was paid slightly more, \$20,085.55, for the project, which included labor, materials and other costs. He paid the sub-contractors and purchased the materials. He was required to be bonded and insured and the coverage was to cover all sub-contractors and all workers on the job. His coverage was \$20,000 on each person and \$200,000 for each accident. All of Hart's employees as well as his sub-contractors were covered by Oregon's Workman's Compensation Act. No accidents are known to have occurred. Isted's earnings for architectural work and project management came to \$1,224.68. PWA representatives were working with school officials from the beginning of the project and were following its progress to completion. ⁴⁶

Finally the building was ready to be furnished. Three "#201 Teachers' Desks" were purchased at a cost of \$29.50 each from Northern School Supply of Portland (total \$88.50). Locally, from the Bend Furniture Company, "30 only No 7147 Student Chairs @ 5.75 each" were purchased (total \$172.50). In addition, unknown equipment was purchased from the Pacific Stationary Company for \$17.25 and from City Drug Company of Bend for \$47.25. ⁴⁷

⁴⁵ "Periodical Estimate for Partial Payment No. 5," PWA Form No. I-23, April 1, 1939 to May 1, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Letter to Charles Leedy, Chairman from Harold W. Poling, PWA Resident Engineer Inspector, May 2, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon).

⁴⁶ "Periodical Estimate for Partial Payment No. 4;" "Check No. 4;" "Check No. 9," Bank of Bend, February 15, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Check No. 11," Bank of Bend, March 14, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Check No. 12," Bank of Bend, April 17, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Check No. 14," Bank of Bend, May 9, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Exhibit No. 6," Sheet 1 of 2, P.W.C.A. Form 123; "Hart Building Co." Invoice, October 23, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "School Building, Sisters, Oregon, Ore.-1344-F," (Worksheet, Final Bills), August 9, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). Hart's payments were \$4,8268.68 (#4), \$2,211.27 (#9), \$3,355.67 (#11), \$4,196.93 (#12), \$3,246.79 (#14), and a final amount due June 5 of \$2,246.21 for which he billed on October 23rd. It included the retained earnings of \$2,088.55 and the final billing due May 5th of \$237.66; "Isted Billing," December 5, 1938, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). On December 5th Isted billed the District \$575.00 for "Plans and Specifications, Sisters High School;" "Isted Billing," February 13, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Isted Billing," April 14, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Isted Billing," June 28, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Exhibit No. 6, Sheet 1 and 2 of 2," P.W.C.A. Form 123; "Check No. 2;" "Check No. 8," Bank of Bend, February 15, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Check No. 13," Bank of Bend, April 17, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon). Isted's check amounts, respectively, were \$575.00, \$200.00, \$300.00 and a final payment of \$149.66 (not represented by a check). His fee was six percent of \$20,411.05.. "Owner's Monthly Statement of Project Funds and Costs," P.W.C.A. Form No. 333, Report 1, January 16, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Letter to Charles Leedy, Chairman from Harold W. Poling, PWA Resident Engineer Inspector, May 2, 1939;" "Detailed Estimate," PWA Form No. 96, January 3, 1939; "Letter to School District No. 6 from E. W. Clark, Assistant Administrator, Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works to Offer Aid in Financing the Construction of a School Building." Officials known to be involved to some degree include E. R. Hoffman, Regional Director, PWA; R. J. Donovan, Regional Auditor; Harold W. Poling, Regional Engineer; W. W. Clark, Assistant Administrator, PWA and several others.

⁴⁷ "Northern School Supply Memorandum, Invoice, District 6 Account Sheet," May 11, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Bend Furniture Co.," October 19, 1939, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon); "Exhibit 6," P.W.C.A Form No. 123, Sheet 2 of 2, (1939 High School, District 6, Sisters, Oregon).

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The new high school opened September 6, 1939 with twenty students and more expected. Harold Y. Smith continued as principal. He also taught, assisted by Miss Florence Stone. Principal Smith had served in 1938-1939 as vice-president of the newly-formed Central Oregon Schoolmasters, an organization which addressed both local and state educational issues. The June 1940 records indicate that the school spent \$2,970.00 for tuition (teacher salaries), \$111.02 for supplies, and \$240.30 for textbooks, for a total of \$3,321.32 the first school year. The cost of operating the high school plant reported in June 1940 was \$919.84. Maintenance costs were \$489.28. The valuation of the property in the district was \$467,580, with a tax levy of 36.8 mills, up from 27.9 mills the previous year. ⁴⁸

Sisters High School carried on a rich tradition of excellence in the community for nearly three decades after it was built until education clashed with economics in the late 1960s. *The Bend Bulletin* editorialized on April 1, 1967 that a "Merger May Be Only Answer to Sisters School Dilemma." The article pointed out that district property values had not increased, but education costs had. In addition, it noted that small school systems face inherent difficulties; that is, it is often hard to offer a full and complete educational program to a small number of students, due to limited resources in a small community. Options suggested were to merge with the Bend or Redmond school system. In May the school budget was defeated and consolidation foes were elected. Another budget vote in June also lost. And, during this period, a vote to consolidate with Bend was narrowly defeated. Finally, in August, the Sisters School Board accepted a tuition plan to send approximately sixty-five students to Redmond High School. In May 1969 the high school was deleted from District No. 6's budget. ⁴⁹

A new Sisters High School was opened in the fall of 1992. Today, the high school is one of the most successful and highly acclaimed in the state of Oregon – not only for academics, activities and sports, but also for community, parent, and business partnership support. Following rehabilitation in 2005, the former high school building began a new life as Sisters School District No. 6's District Office, continuing to be a school building of which the community is proud.

John Elwood Isted, Architect

John Elwood Isted, a Bend architect, designed the Sisters High School and served as project manager on it. He is known to have designed several Bend buildings and some especially significant Oregon State Park public spaces designated as National Historic Districts. He also is associated with three other Bend buildings. ⁵⁰

His Bend buildings include the Square Deal Furniture Store (1935), First Christian Church (1938) and Bend City Hall (1939), which was funded by the PWA. The Square Deal Furniture Store was built on the northwest corner of Bond and Minnesota and opened June 22, 1935. Constructed of brick, it had large windows facing both Bond and Minnesota with entrances on these two

⁴⁸ "Sisters Schools Open Wednesday With 149 Present;" "Nelson President of Schoolmasters," (*The Redmond Spokesman*, Redmond, Oregon, December 8, 1938), 1; "Certificate of Transmittal, District Clerk's Annual Report-State of Oregon," Sisters School District, No. 6, June 1939, June 1940, June 1941. (High Desert Education Service District, Redmond, Oregon).

⁴⁹ "Merger May Be Only Answer to Sisters School Dilemma," (Editorial, *The Bend Bulletin*, April 1, 1967), 4; "Sisters Snows Under Budget, Consolidation Foes Elected," (*The Bend Bulletin*, Bend, Oregon, May 2, 1967), 1; "Vote Spells End to Sisters High School," (*The Bend Bulletin*, July 20, 1967), 1; "Vote Spells End to Sisters High School," (*The Bend Bulletin*, July 20, 1967), 1; "Board Accepts Tuition Plan for Former Sisters Students," (*The Bend Bulletin*, August 2, 1967), 3; "School Deleted from Defeated Sisters Budget," (*The Bend Bulletin*, May 13, 1969), 1.

⁵⁰ *Polk's Directory, Bend, 1938*. Isted's address is given as 707 Delaware Avenue, Bend, Oregon. His wife was Alice H. He ran a "Buyer's Guide" advertisement in *Polk's* stating "Residence and Building Plans, Estimates."

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facades, and was "characterized by its abundance of floor space, its three-winged balcony and its fine lighting system," according to *The Bend Bulletin*. Fred Van Metre was the contractor. The building is extant and in retail use. The First Christian Church was built on Newport Avenue in 1939. It was constructed of wood and characterized by a tall, towering steeple. According to a report, "the church [was to] include the main auditorium, Sunday school rooms, a dining room, and a heating plant. ...A social hall was constructed to open off the auditorium to provide additional room for the congregation." The builder is unknown. The building is extant. Isted also served as the architect for the Bend City Hall in 1938-1939, as discussed previously.⁵¹

Two Oregon State Park facilities designed by Isted and built by the CCC are recognized as National Historic Districts by the National Park Service (NPS). They are the Silver Falls State Park Concession Area, also known as Silver Falls Lodge, and the Jessie M. Honeyman Memorial State Park's Bath House and associated structures. The large public space at Silver Falls consists of 96 acres, five buildings, and one structure (the Lodge). It is located in Marion County near Sublimity. "NPS officials ...approved project plans which were developed in cooperation with State and Park officials. Plans and specifications for the Concession Building ensemble were provided by the NPS, with J. Elwood Isted acting as principal designer and draftsman," according to the agency. Upon completion of the lodge, Isted destroyed his plans to avoid future duplication. The Honeyman Bath House was built by the CCC in 1939 and is considered the park's most significant structure. The 1213th company of the CCC stationed at Woahink Lake made Honeyman Park a reality. The camp, which was home to about 200 men from 1935 to 1940, was set up similar to a military base. The men constructed buildings, roads, trails and bridges, and their crowning achievement, the lodge at Cleawox Lake. The building opened in 1939 as a bathhouse, and now serves as the camp store. The building was constructed of wood and stone hauled from a nearby quarry.⁵²

As previously stated, Isted is associated with several other projects in Bend, including the Deschutes County Courthouse, the Deschutes County Library and Kenwood School's gymnasium. Isted was at the time of his involvement with the Sisters High School, or just shortly afterward, Deschutes County's general inspector of construction, overseeing construction of the Deschutes County Courthouse through 1941. *The Bend Bulletin* article of November 20, 1940 suggests he was not only in charge of overseeing work, but in keeping track of costs and other building-related data. In addition, he also held a position with the Deschutes County Library Board with respect to the construction of the library in 1938. In this role he apparently was the liaison between both the board and the architects and the board and the PWA. Moreover, he had prepared plans for Kenwood School's gymnasium in 1935 and had applied for PWA funding on behalf of the school.⁵³

⁵¹ "New Building is Planned on Site of Ruins," (*The Bend Bulletin*, May 1, 1935), 3; "New Store to Be Opened Saturday," (*The Bend Bulletin*, Bend, Oregon, June 21, 1935), 3. Quote; "Church Building Plans Approved," (*The Bend Bulletin*, August 25, 1938), Quote; "City Sells Bonds for New Building;" "City Hall Work Well Under Way."

⁵² National Register of Historic Places.com, "Oregon-Marion County-Historic Districts," (May 13, 2005); "5 Buildings Nominated to National Register," (Silverton Appeal-Tribune/Mt. Angel News, July 21, 1983). Isted's act of destroying his plans offers a possible clue as to what happened to the Sisters High School plans, the only key document not found; Oregon State Parks, *History of the Oregon State Parks*, (Oregon State Parks, Compiled by Chester H. Armstrong, July 1, 1965), 22-25, 144-145. In Oregon, forty-five state parks received improvement from the CCC. Seventeen CCC camps were established in or near state parks, including Silver Falls and Honeyman; *History of the Oregon State Parks*, 191-194.

⁵³ "Crews Build Courthouse;" "Concrete Works Starts on County Courthouse," (*The Bend Bulletin*, May 24, 1940), 1; "Forms Built for New Courthouse," (*The Bend Bulletin*, June 3, 1940), 1; "Wall Forms Go Up on Deschutes Courthouse," (*The Bend Bulletin*, July 6, 1940), 3; "Library Building Costs May Be Cut." The article reported that "The request for the changes was made by J. Elwood Isted, clerk of the works for the Library Board;" "Plan New Gymnasium for Kenwood School: WPA [sic: PWA] Grant is Sought by School District," 1, 5. Isted is named as the architect who prepared the first plans for the gym in 1935.

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Isted's roles indicate he had a broad array of skills, knowledge and experience. Moreover, he had the federal government on his side as an architect. The public works program under FDR put significant new emphasis on local authority in directing government funds for local public buildings. In addition, the government stressed that the lack of projects rather than a lack of funding would limit the program, so that the initiative of local architects would help determine the amount of work rather than the federal government. Under the act that created the PWA architects in private practice were commissioned to design public buildings for the first time. Previously, it had been done by federal architects. Private architects could obtain work on public buildings through two channels: either by signing on with a Supervising Architect's Office or through commissions from state, county and local agencies whose public projects could be funded by federal grants and loans. The choice of an architect for a non-federal project was made by the local body.⁵⁴

Though not completely clear, it appears that Isted may have signed on with a Supervising Architect's Office. The PWA documents for the Sisters High School show Isted as certifying and verifying Periodical Estimates by signing for Leslie E. Poole, "...Owner's Supervising Engineer or Architect in Charge." However, in school design, "certain architects garnered ample business from PWA-funded projects in their town or region," according to Reitzes. Whatever the relationships were with the high school, city hall, school gym, library and courthouse projects, it is reasonable to presume he probably deserves credit for initiating one or more of them.⁵⁵

O.C. (Bud) Hart, Hart Building, Builder

Hart Building, owned and operated by O. C. (Bud) Hart of Redmond, built the Sisters High School. His wife, Hortense, played an active role in the enterprise, managing its office while Bud oversaw a number of ongoing projects.⁵⁶

Hart Building, a fairly new business in Redmond at the time, apparently had gained respect and credibility quite rapidly after arriving in Central Oregon from Portland in early 1938 where he also operated Hart Building. This appears to be due to quality construction using the latest methods and materials and the use of local labor and material suppliers. The firm quickly acquired clients with significant projects. In June 1938, Hart was busy on the Butler building in Redmond. At the same time, it was constructing a grade school and a theatre in Prineville, and 41 buildings at the new town of Crescent for the Gilchrist Timber company. In June of 1939 *The Redmond Spokesman* wrote:

In the little more than a year's time that the Hart Building company has been established in Redmond this concern has completed \$45,000 worth of new construction in Gilchrist, built schools at Prineville and Sisters, erected a ...building for Moty and Van Dyke in Bend, constructed a service station in Prineville for Standard Oil ... and one in Bend for ... Shell Oil ..., put up the Butler building in Redmond and ...the Pine Theatre in Prineville. ...Other work includes eight new residences in Redmond, and new dry kiln for the Ochoco Lumber company of Prineville, installation of a modern front for the Mermel Shoe company of Bend and re-construction for the Mt. Hood Stages in Bend.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Reitzes, 382-415, 443.

⁵⁵ Ibid.; "Periodical Estimate for Partial Payment No. 1." Isted signed all five Periodical Estimates.

⁵⁶ "New Sisters Building to Be Completed Soon."

⁵⁷ "Hart Building Co. Has Many Projects in Central Oregon," (*The Redmond Spokesman*, Redmond, Oregon, June 1, 1939), sec. 2, 1. Quote; "Construction Took 3 Months: Hart Building Firm Does General Work," (*The Bend Bulletin*, August 8, 1940), sec. 3, 1. Two of the residences built in Redmond were for Mr. and Mrs. Hart and

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Hart was competent in constructing all types of buildings. Other buildings constructed include the Lew Franks and Walt Franks buildings in Redmond, a duplex apartment in Prineville, a school gymnasium in Powell Butte, the Piggly Wiggly Store in Bend, the Safeway stores in Bend and Redmond, the Redmond Funeral Home, the L. R. Down House, and the Hart Duplex. In addition, his obituary indicates Hart built Camp Abbot, a \$4 million military facility south of Bend completed in spring of 1943 for more than 100,000 troops to use as they engaged in war games.⁵⁸

Hart's reputation was of a firm using the most modern methods and materials for construction available at the time. He constructed buildings to last, using significant amounts of concrete with steel reinforcement. The firm's specialties included methods that enhanced appearance, increased fire-proofing capabilities and improved insulating qualities. Hart played an essential role in the economy as the nation began to emerge from the Depression. Consistent with PWA objectives, Hart, by contracting to build a public work, sustained his business and provided jobs and material orders, thereby stimulating an important sector of the economy targeted by the PWA. In addition, his employees, workers in the construction and allied trades, were employed and fulfilled their consumer needs. To the extent possible, both local skilled and unskilled labor was used. Building materials were obtained from Oregon firms, including Tite Knot Pine Mill (Sisters), Columbia Brick Works, Beaver-Portland Cement, Idanha Lumber Co. and others. This spurring of the economy was duplicated by his subcontractors, Montgomery of Bend and Fredrickson of Portland, and their employees. Though Hart was a small part of the economy as a whole, his role in the Sisters High School is instructive as to how the PWA bolstered purchasing power and strengthened the economy through its projects.⁵⁹

Conclusion

Sisters High School is significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of Government for its direct association with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, a political and legislative response to the Great Depression, and specifically its connection to the PWA. As a defining moment for an entire generation, the Great Depression is recognized as few other events in the 20th century, along with the Pearl Harbor attack and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Its influence and might cut across all social, economic, political, and racial sectors of the American population, profoundly impacting individuals and the nation as a whole. The New Deal, however, was a turning point in American history, an era of dynamic change in the nature of the federal government's role. It was an unprecedented intervention of the federal government into the economic life of the country and into the welfare of its citizens.

one for Dr. and Mrs. Howard Wells; "Portland Firm Low Bidder on Grade School," (*Central Oregonian*, April 21, 1938), 1; "Work Progresses on Butler Building," (*The Redmond Spokesman*, Redmond, Oregon, June 30, 1938.), 1.

⁵⁸ Ibid.; "Building Service Opened by Harts," *The Redmond Spokesman*, Redmond, Oregon, September 29, 1938), 1; "New Sisters Building to Be Completed Soon;" "Powell Butte Gym to be Ready Soon," (*The Redmond Spokesman*, August 24, 1939), 1; "Death Takes Bud Hart, 60," (*The Redmond Spokesman*, September 1, 1955), 1. Hart lived in Redmond until about 1945 and died in Eugene in September 1955.

⁵⁹ United States, Public Works Administration, *Public Works Administration Aids to Education*, 17. In the average PWA school building project, 32 percent of the total costs went to salaries and wages at the construction site; "Franks Building Has New Features," (*The Redmond Spokesman*, Redmond, Oregon, June 1, 1939), sec. 2, 1; United States, Public Works Administration, *America Builds: The Record of PWA*, 7-8.

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More than any other New Deal program, the Public Works Administration epitomized the Rooseveltian notion of "priming the pump" to encourage economic growth. The PWA's actions provided employment, stabilized purchasing power, improved public welfare, and contributed to a revival of American industry. Moreover, in both character and composition, it changed our institutions, including schools, libraries, courthouses, hospitals, public housing, and others. The impact was not only structural, but social in nature. Americans viewed themselves differently, individually and as a society, after the New Deal and the ideal attained by the PWA. The PWA left a legacy of public structures and a new spirit in America.

The high school building, an artifact of the New Deal, gives us a glimpse of the Public Works Administration created at a time when the educational plant of the nation suffered not only acute shortages of adequate new facilities, but included an inventory that was unsafe, obsolete and unsanitary. When parents had no choice but to send their children to these schools, the PWA stepped forward to correct the deficiencies and built schools the nation was proud of and could look upon as its future. It placed in every part of our country schools of enduring character and lasting benefit that would stand long after the program was ended as monuments to that generation's vision.

The Sisters High School captures the spirit of the New Deal. It represents a small community who wanted to provide the best education possible for its children and partnered with the federal government to accomplish that goal. The building exhibits a high level of integrity in all aspects of the quality. Marking a place in the community of Sisters for nearly seventy years, it sits in its own space, bordered by a campus of other school buildings, an athletic field and a playground. The path of the old wagon road taken by early settlers crosses its southwestern corner. Changes to the immediate surroundings—the City of Sisters—have not affected the relationship of the resource to its setting, or its connection to the community. The historic location, complemented by its campus of educational facilities, readily recaptures the essence of its extraordinary beginnings in School District No. 6 as fifteen voters brought forth a petition to build a new high school. In addition, the design, materials and workmanship remain at a high level. The design retains the features and the essential elements of a PWA high school, designed to meet the needs of the Sisters community without pretense or extravagance. It boasts little, but its simple lines and modest shape speak for a generation who had little. Original materials of historic importance remain and have not been distorted or changed by time. The combination of key materials and architecture provide an immediate visual impact. The exterior red brick and the straightforward fenestrations remain as originally constructed. On the interior, original pine wainscoting wraps the corridor adjacent to original steel lockers, both existing as they did during the PWA era. Moreover, the workmanship of the original craftsmen is preserved, maintained and highly interpretable. Further, the physical condition and structural integrity of the building are remarkable. Finally, the feeling and association are high, to a certain extent, due to the notable levels of the other aspects of its integrity. The property thoroughly communicates a sense of what it was like during the historic period. One can easily imagine students at their lockers, chatting in the corridor, and getting ready for class or extracurricular activities. Distinguished and innately monumental, the property meets Criterion A in the area of Government for its association with the New Deal, and specifically its place in PWA legacy. It is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

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Sisters High School
Name of Property

Deschutes, Oregon
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.955 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 10 616219 4905022
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael A. Hall, consultant

organization _____ date November 2005

street & number 134 S.W. H Street telephone 541-475-6020

city or town Madras state OR zip code 97741-1131

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation sheets

Maps: A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs: Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name Sisters School District No. 6

street & number 525 E. Cascade Avenue; P.O. Box 5099 telephone 541-549-8521

city or town Sisters state OR zip code 97759

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Verbal Boundary Description

A parcel of land situated in the northwest quarter of Section 9, Township 15 South, Range 10 East, Willamette Meridian, City of Sisters, Deschutes County, Oregon being more particularly described as follows:

Block 1, Davidson Addition to Sisters, a Subdivision of Record, lying northerly of the north right-of-way line of the McKenzie Highway.

Together with the vacated alley segregating said Block 1, bounded on the east by the west right-of-way line of Locust Street and on the west by the east right-of-way line of Cedar Street (vacated).

And also together with that portion of the vacated right-of-way of Cedar Street bounded on the west by the centerline of said Cedar Street, bounded on the east by the east right-of-way line of Cedar Street, bounded on the north by the south right-of-way line of Cascade Avenue and bounded on the south by the northerly right-of-way line of the McKenzie Highway. ¹

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses but does not exceed the full extent of the resource. The nominated property is that site that has been occupied by the Sisters High School building since 1939.

¹ Ask, Fred, "E-Mail to Michael Hall," (June 6, 2005. Notes in possession of Michael Hall, Madras, Oregon). According to the District's surveyor, "The status of the triangular piece, together with 40' of Locust Street on the east side has not been formally vacated. Commissioners Journal 3, Page 573, (1941) reports that the feasibility of vacating these portions of Hood and Locust were to be examined. No follow-up entries were noted in the Journal for the actual vacation." The district has occupied the two areas for more than sixty-five years, maintaining the lawn and landscaping.

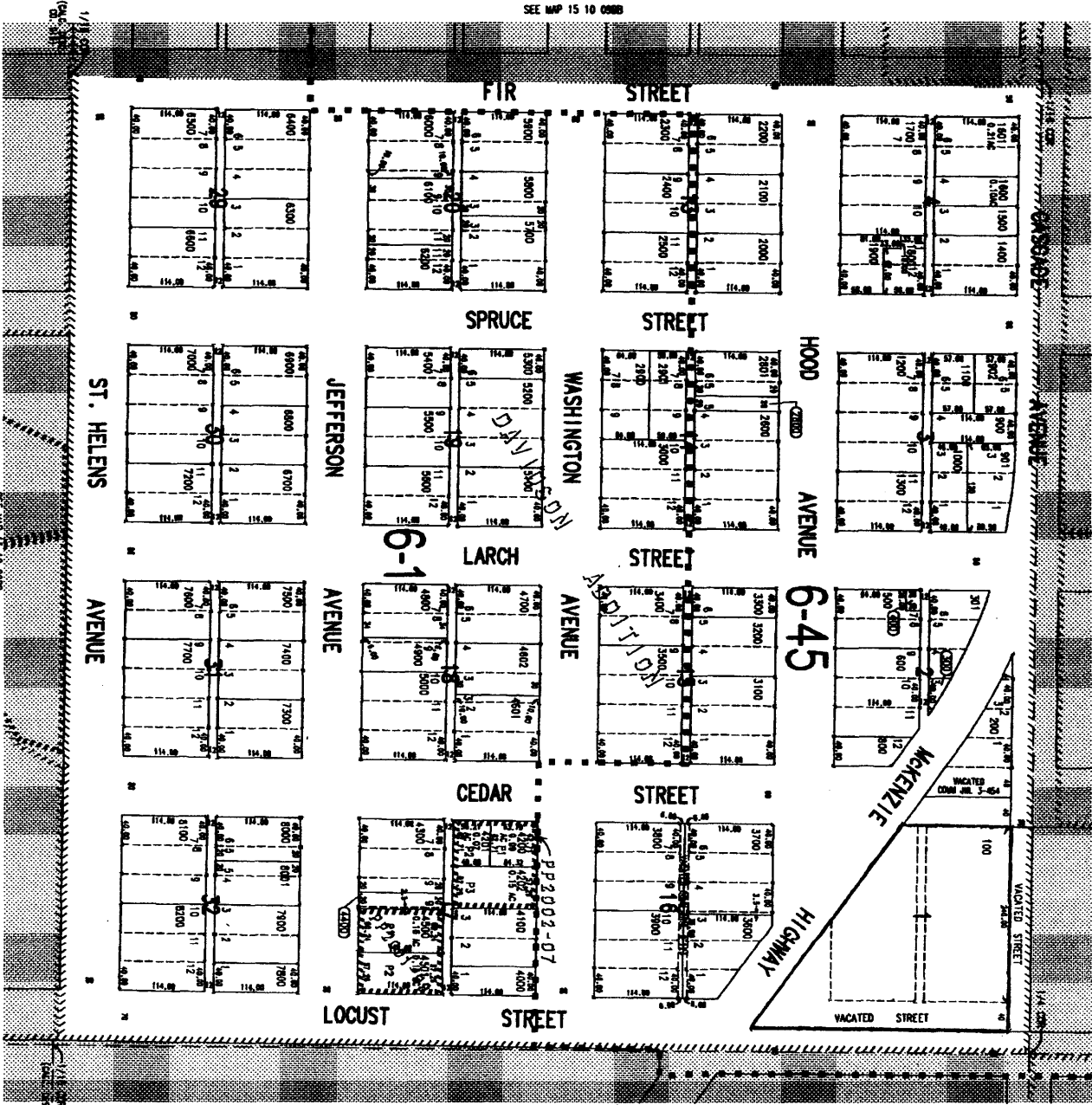
Sisters High School
Deschutes County, Oregon

THIS MAP WAS PREPARED FOR
ASSESSMENT PURPOSE ONLY
REVISED: 04/04/2004

NE1/4 NW1/4 SEC. 09 T. 15S. R. 10E. W.M.
DESCHUTES COUNTY
1" = 100'

15 10 098A

General Lot Nos.
7700
7720
7740
4600
7001
7100



SEE MAP 15 10 098B

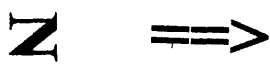
SEE MAP 15 10 098D

SEE MAP 15 10 098C

SEE MAP 15 10 09

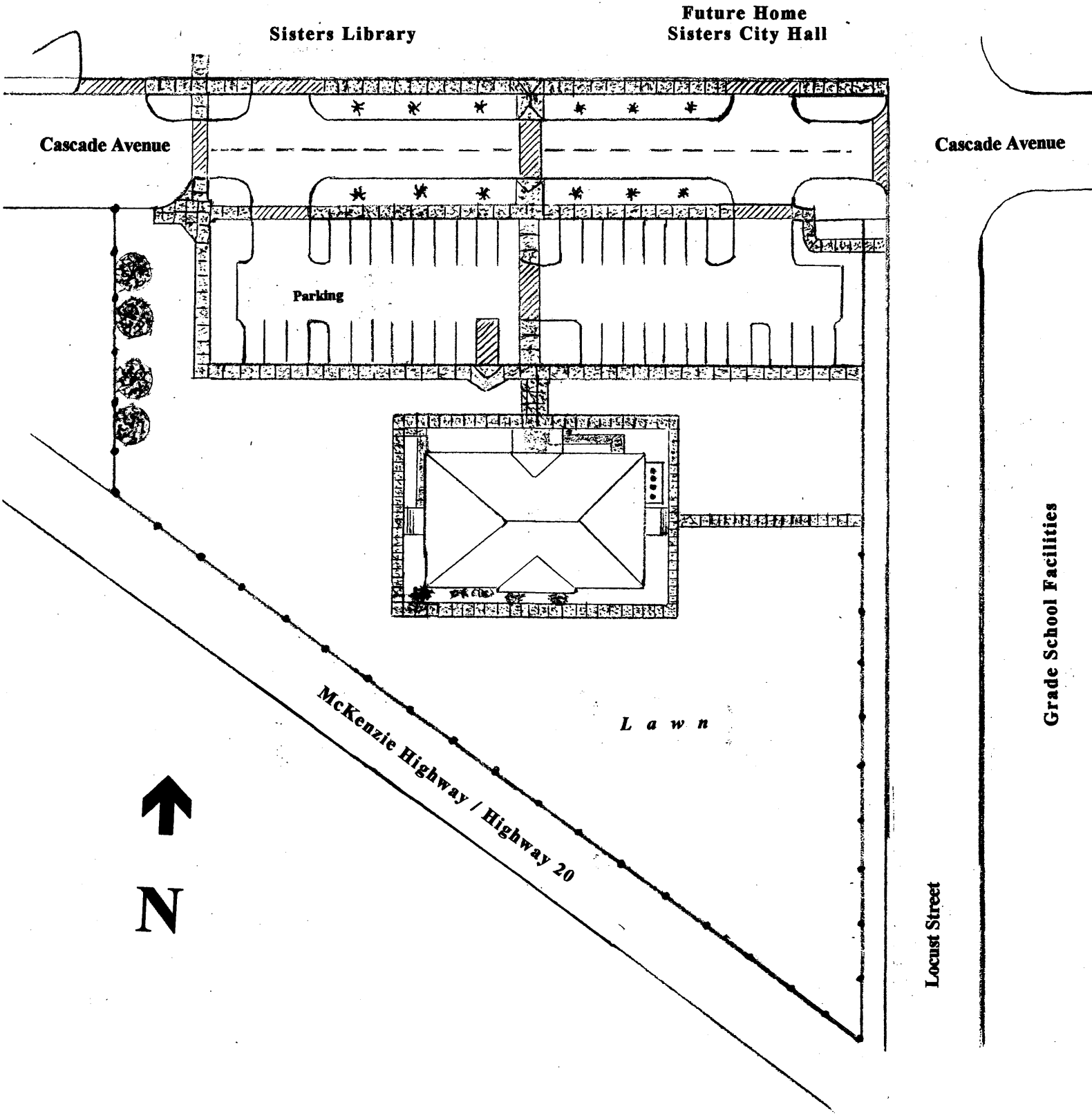
SEE MAP 15 10 098B

15 10 098A



**Sisters High School
Deschutes County, Oregon**

Site Plan Sketch



Sisters Library

**Future Home
Sisters City Hall**

Cascade Avenue

Cascade Avenue

Parking

L a w n

McKenzie Highway / Highway 20

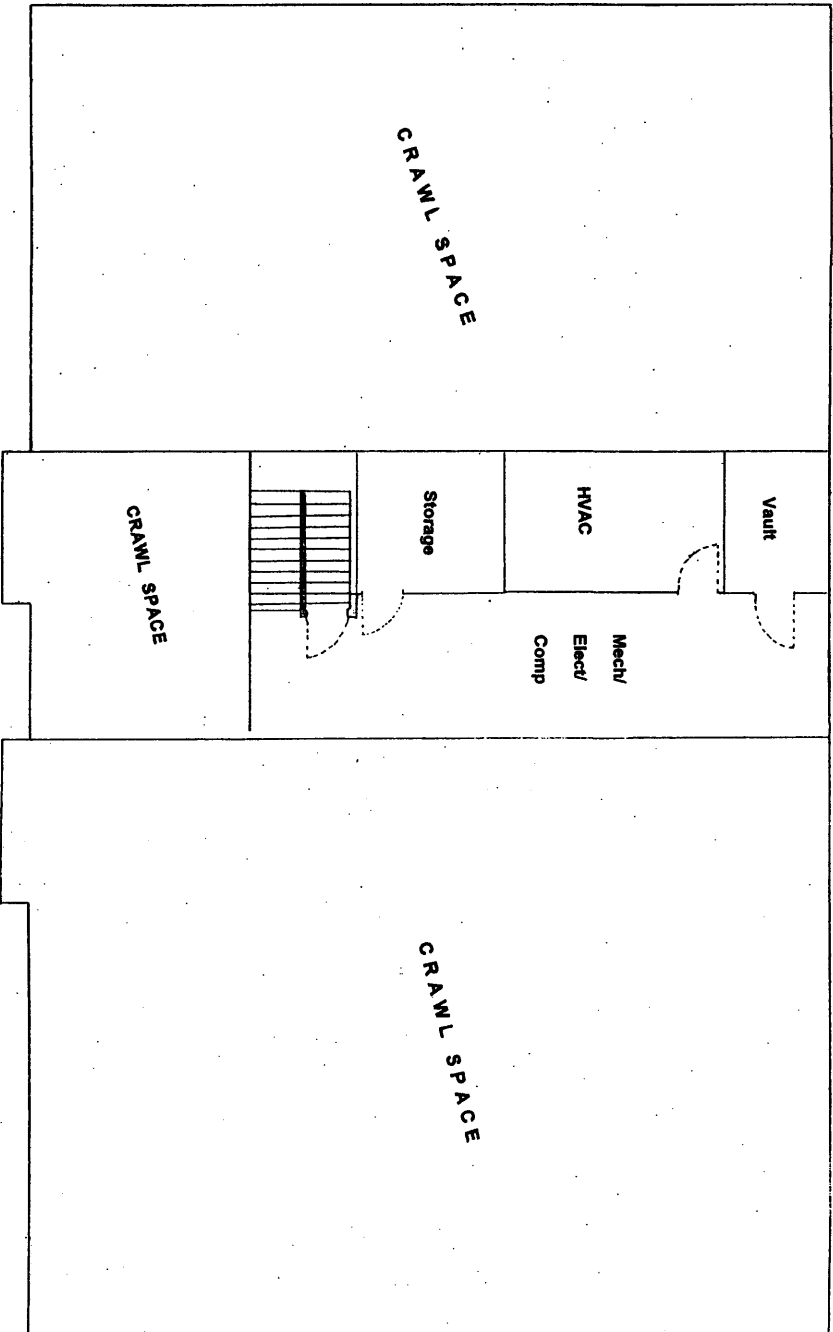


Grade School Facilities

Locust Street

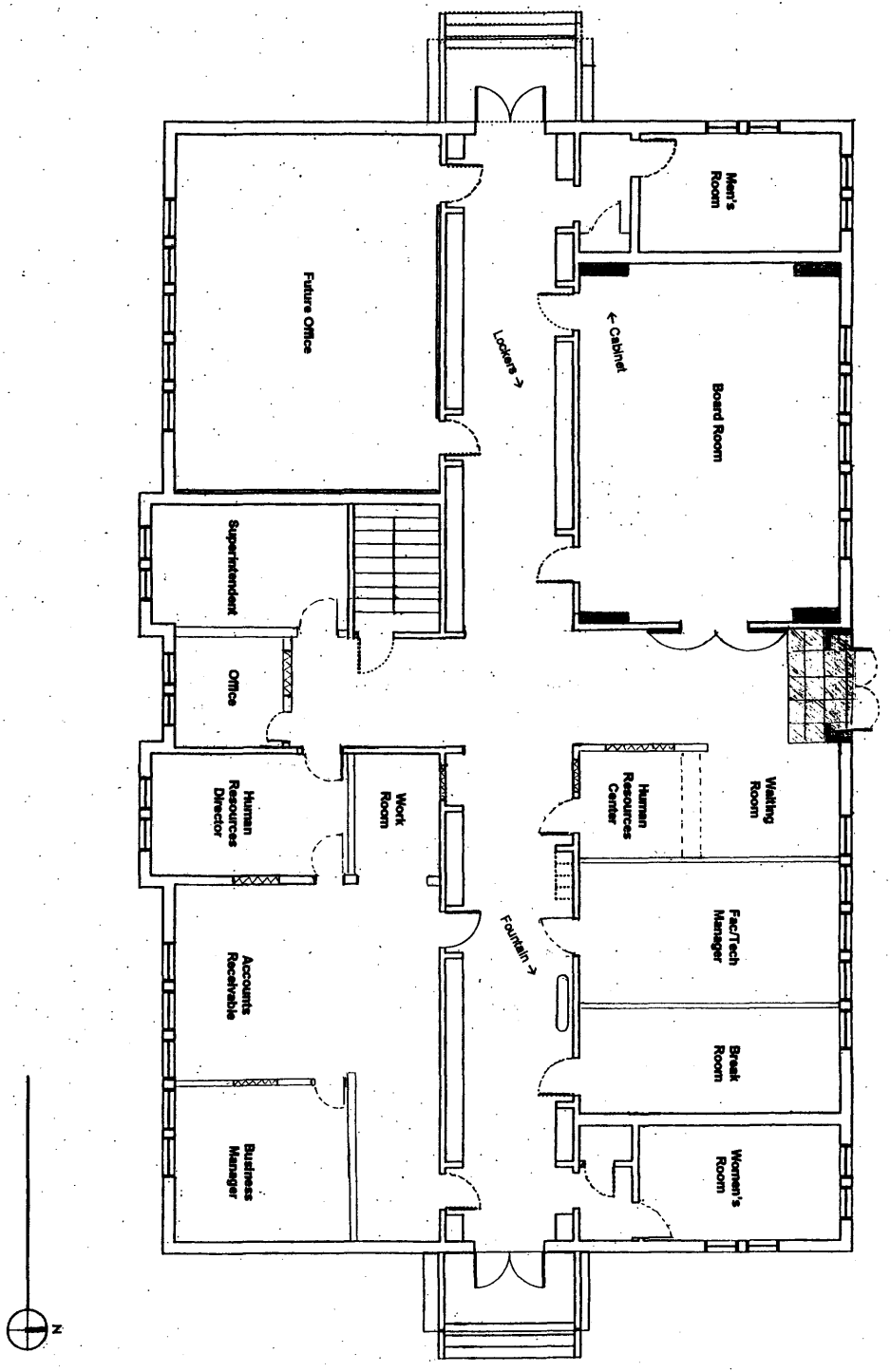
Sisters High School
Deschutes County
Sisters, Oregon

Floor Plan Sketch
-Basement-



**Sisters High School
Deschutes County
Sisters, Oregon**

Floor Plan Sketch



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Sisters High School
Deschutes County, Oregon

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All photographs taken by Michael A. Hall on June 6, 2005. Negatives in possession of Sisters School District No.6, Sisters, Oregon.

1. Original wood/glass case, looking through doorway to original pine wainscoting, black board on right. Classroom.
2. Eight-over-eight double-hung windows. Wood/glass case. Hanging florescent light on ceiling. Classroom.
3. Eight-over-eight, double-hung wood windows with four-pane awning windows. Classroom. Hanging florescent light.
4. West façade, double door entrance with multi-pane window above. Pine wainscoting on right.
5. Original steel lockers.
6. Basement, looking toward north door leading outside to step. Main room, three doors on left go to smaller storage rooms and heating system room.
7. Pine wainscoting in hallway, principal's office, water fountain.
8. Original steel lockers, pine wainscoting.
9. Close up of original wood/glass case in classroom.
10. Blackboard, hanging florescent light, eight-over-eight, double-hung wood window with four-pane awning window. Classroom.
11. Another original wood/glass case in classroom, with doors removed.
12. Original wood/glass case.
13. Eight-over-eight, double-hung wood window with four-pane awning window. Four of five. (Close range did not allow for photograph of all five.) Pull down shade is in upper left hand corner or photo. Hanging light. Classroom.
14. Former original entrance on south elevation. Eight-over-eight, double-hung wood window. (See additional documentation for photograph of building with original front facade/entry.)

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Deschutes County, Oregon

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15. One of two sets of five eight-over-eight, double-hung wood windows with four-pane awning windows above. This is the east end of the front façade, south elevation. Probably the greatest weather/sun damage is here, but as you can see it is not significant. Composition roof.
16. The rear exterior entrance shed roof over a set of stairs leading down. Set of two and set of five eight-over-eight, double-hung wood windows with four-pane awning windows above. This is the rear of the building/north elevation, looking at west end of the building.
17. This is the other set of five eight-over-eight, double-hung wood windows with four-pane awning windows above on the rear/north of the building (east end).
18. Close up of set of five eight-over-eight, double-hung wood windows with four-pane awning windows above on the rear/north of the building (west end).
19. West facade, double door entrance with a metal shed roof supported by metal posts, with four steps leading up. Smaller set of eight-over-eight windows. Handicapped ramp. Lawn in foreground.
20. East facade, double door entrance with a metal shed roof supported by metal posts, with four steps leading up. Smaller set of eight-over-eight windows. Lawn and Locust Street in foreground.
21. Front facade (former front entrance) / south elevation, looking northwest from across the highway/street. Lawn in front. Simple hip-roofed PWA school with small gable peaking out over former entrance.
22. Front facade (former front entrance) / south elevation, looking northwest. Similar as previous, but closer, looking more directly north.
23. Closer front facade (former front entrance) / south elevation, looking northwest.
24. Northwest corner of building, showing west entrance, sidewalk, lawn, Alternative High School teacher.
25. Rear facade / north elevation. Windows, roof, chimney, covering of basement entrance, gravel parking area.