



Our county is fortunate to have a public library system, Valley of the Tetons Library (VTL). Below is some compelling data on the usage and demand for VTL in our rural community.

- In 2023, VTL had over **6,000** library card holders —**52%** of Teton Valley’s population.
- VTL had about **46,500** total visits, with over **143,000** items borrowed.
  - Nearly **30,000** more items were borrowed compared to last year (2022).
  - Items borrowed included books, hotspots, laptops, power tools, and sunlamps for our dark winters.
- VTL had a total of **3,222** participants who attended library programs, an increase of **44%** over last year (2022).
  - These programs included: Language Café, Writing Workshops, Storytime, Book Clubs, Summer Reading Program, PAW Pals (reading with an animal), among others.
- VTL also has an amazing team of **15** staff members, all living right here in Teton Valley.

### **Community**

Teton County averages just 26 people per square mile. Thus, connectivity is an important factor in building a sense of community in rural counties like ours.

*“In the solitude of rural living, libraries also play an essential role in fostering a sense of community and connection since they often partner with local organizations and host community events. These gatherings bring people together to discuss important issues, celebrate local culture, and promote collaboration.”*

—Watson-Hampton, S. (2023). Why Rural Communities Need Libraries. *Lancaster Farming*

### **The Need for Additional Space and Permanent Home**

To further the vision of VTL as a community hub for our entire county, VTL has been moving forward to replace the current branch in Driggs. While VTL has grown and adapted to the changing needs of our community, our physical spaces have not. Today, the Driggs Branch and the adjoining locations are rented spaces. Rent has increased over 67% in the past two years.

Currently in Teton County there is no central focal point for gatherings and connection. A new library building in Driggs would serve as a vitally important community hub that connects a rural community like ours. As VTL moves forward, we are in a position to seek federal grants to contribute to the funding of our future library building. **And to do this, we need your help.**

We are asking all residents of Teton Valley to write a letter of support which will be used as direct evidence of community support with our federal grant applications. The purpose of the letter is to share what your library means to you and request funding for a new branch library in Driggs that will enrich our entire valley. All ages are welcome to write letters. Will you kindly support VTL’s next chapter by sending a letter before March 1 to:

Review Committee  
VTL % Susan Strayer  
79 N Main St  
Driggs, ID 83422

RE: FY25 Community Project Funding Request – The Next Chapter: Teton Valley’s 21<sup>st</sup> Century Library