



**April 2024**

## **Countywide Expansion**

Teton County is growing and Valley of the Tetons Library must grow with it. VTL saw a 44% increase in library programs participation from 2022 to 2023, and an 11% increase in library card holders since 2022. More than half of county residents, 52%, have a Valley of the Tetons Library card, which is higher than the average of 46% of all Idaho residents with library cards. VTL's collection of 85,276 physical and digital items including books, hotspots, laptops, power tools and more circulated over 143,000 times in 2023.

Valley of the Tetons Library has the unique ability to reach people of all ages, demographics, and backgrounds, and act as a community hub to build bridges throughout our community, connecting people to people. Our mission is to inspire lifelong learning, encourage exploration and creativity and enrich our community. While we make our best efforts to provide library services to everyone, we know there are still ways to grow.

Recently Valley of the Tetons Library conducted an extensive [community needs assessment](#) and found that residents living in more rural areas of the county, including the communities of Tetonia and Felt, feel as though the library services and resources are inaccessible for them. This corresponds with a 2017 survey conducted by the Tetonia City Council and then-Mayor Gloria Hoopes which found that 73% of respondents stated that they would like to see a library in Tetonia.

To address this need, the City of Tetonia installed a library building in Ruby Carson Park in 2019. Over the last 5 years it has operated off and on with the help of donations and volunteers. Valley of the Tetons Library is now in a position to integrate this space as a third branch of Valley of the Tetons Library.

The Tetonia Branch will include a permanent collection of 1,300 books and kits, a 24/7 book return and book hold lockers, public computer, internet and printer access, research assistance, and after school and year round programs for all ages. This is in addition to VTL services already offered countywide including book delivery, digital content available through the Libby app, Talking Book Service, loaner laptops and hotspots, programs available via ZOOM and more.

Additionally, the Tetonia Branch will serve as a safe, warm, welcoming space. In 2024, VTL is guiding our programs and services based on the themes of Literacy and Relationships. Literacy encompasses more than simply reading and writing. It can include digital literacy, health and

food literacy, financial literacy, and more. A Tetonia Branch will allow more residents the opportunity to expand their literacy skills with research assistance, access to our collections, public internet access and year round programs. Some of those programs include Gloria's Literary Lounge monthly book club, after school activities like Word Wizards Mondays in May, a county-wide summer reading program, and ongoing Tetonia community programs and activities.

Relationships is not only a theme for VTL for 2024, it is one of our core values. To VTL, valuing relationships means building bridges with sincere interactions throughout our community and serving as a hub for what is happening in our valley and our world beyond. We welcome partnerships with local non-profits and community groups. In Tetonia this looks like collaboration with the City of Tetonia and Tetonia City Council, outreach to Tetonia Elementary School, designing our open hours to correspond with the Community Resource Center of Teton Valley's Food for Good Tetonia drop off and participating in Tetonia community events like the Tetonia Celebrates America summer festival.

VTL is excited to address current and future citizen needs through county-wide expansion. This project will support our ability to address the 21st Century literacy needs for every resident in our community, while building strong relationships that connect our community.