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Recess at the library

Public libraries offer relief in challenging economic times

by *SABINA DANA PLASSE*

Even though library usage around the nation is up by about 10 percent from last year, many libraries are facing hard times. City and state budgets have been cut, and donors are feeling the pinch of the recession.

Libraries in the Wood River Valley are no exception.

The independently funded Community Library in Ketchum does not receive funding from the city or state, but from donors, fundraising events and proceeds from its partner, the Gold Mine thrift store.

"Our numbers of visitors is up, and we know the number of tourists visiting the area is down," said Executive Director Colleen Daly. "The number of locals coming into the library is much higher."

What many of them are coming for is the abundance of free resources, including Wi-Fi, databases, business help, research materials, DVDs, audio books and language tutorials.

Daly said the recession has changed people's habits. More books about economics are being ordered and there has been a 10 percent increase in attendance for free events such as lectures and film screenings.

There are a number of free resources at The Community Library that are handy tools for battling the economic downturn. Resumé updating and language courses—such as *Ingles sin Barreras*, a best-selling, self-study English course for Spanish speakers—can help in job searches.

In addition, Lynda.com, which offers tutorials and online training for computer software, is free at the library. Other free offerings including Rosetta Stone language instruction, Valueline.com investment research, newspaper and magazine databases, MP3 downloadable audio books, an eclectic DVD collection, e-books and a business workstation for small business information and entrepreneurial ideas. Idaho phone books, Idaho code reference books, a collection of Idaho maps, a regional history library, children's library and books in different languages are also available.

"Since August, there has been an increase in children using resources," said Kerry Bozza, the Ketchum library's children's librarian. "Parents are attending story times and will read to their children at the library. A couple of boys want to start a blog and do book reviews. It is a new way to think about the library."

Adults are reading more, too, said Circulation Director Cathy Butterfield. Among the 500 or so visitors a day, many are reading non-fiction and travel books, she said.

"We get new books monthly," Butterfield said. "Mysteries are very strong this spring and travel books are



The Community Library in Ketchum's Executive Director Colleen Daly stands in front the extensive audio book stacks.

very popular in this library. We try to update guidebooks every five years."

At the Hailey Public Library, managers are launching a weeklong celebration for National Library Week next week, April 13-17. The library is also offering Firewise programs with Wood River Fire & Rescue, classes designed to increase awareness about wildfire prevention and protecting private property from fires.

"I made a commitment to programming that we have not had in the past," said Hailey Library Circulation Manager Sandy Fahey. "PBS is doing a series on Native American history and we are tying that in with Native American Week. We want people to come out and talk about it."



Fahey said the library will continue to offer its lecture series and discussions throughout the year, including a monthlong program on environmental issues in May.

"In a recession, the library is a great way to pick up a book and not have to pay for it," Fahey said. "We want to reach out and try and get things going for the community and be a community partner."

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Check out the library

The Community Library in Ketchum

- Rosetta Stone self-taught language courses.
- DVDs, including valley film festivals and special screenings.
- Regional History Department offers oral and photography collections, including extensive Ernest Hemingway holdings.

- Children's Library "Dial-a-Story," with more than 90 stories.
- New York Times Book Review books.
- Story Time Saturdays at 10 a.m. and Science Time Tuesdays at 11 a.m., in Children's Library.
- Hours are Monday and Saturday from 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday from 12-9 p.m., Wednesday from 9 a.m.-9 p.m. and Friday, from 1-6 p.m.
- For more details and information, visit thecommunitylibrary.org or call 726-3493.

Hailey Library

- Books on tape and CD.
- Wi-Fi, computers, printers and a typewriter.
- Interlibrary loan service, videos, magazine and newspaper databases.
- Latest books and titles.
- Hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. and Tuesday and Thursday, from 11 a.m.-8 p.m.
- For more details and information, visit haileypubliclibrary.org or call 788-2036.

Bellevue Library

- For details and information, call 788-2128.

Stanley Library

- For details and information, call (208) 774-2470.

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