

## Introduction

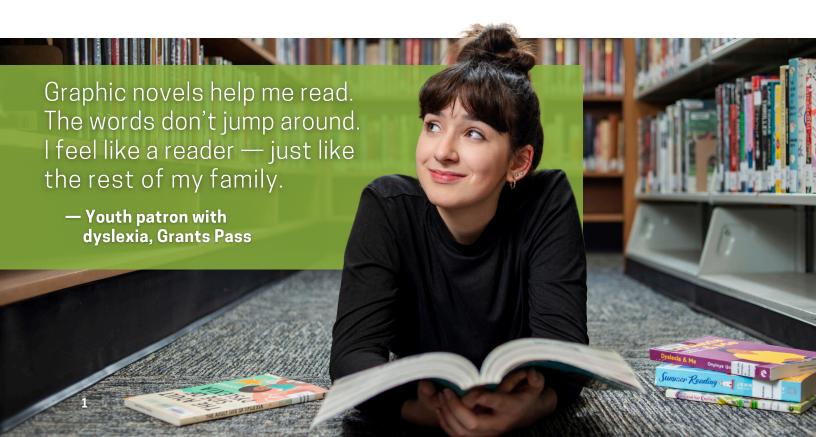
Public libraries are cornerstones of civic life, offering free access to knowledge, technology, and community connection. In Josephine County, that role is carried forward by the Josephine Community Library District, which serves residents through branches in Grants Pass, Illinois Valley, Williams, and Wolf Creek. This annual report shows how, in fiscal year 2024–25, the district advanced its mission to deliver 21st-century services while navigating opportunities and challenges.

Milestones included reopening the renovated Illinois Valley branch, launching the Computer Basics digital learning initiative, expanding early literacy programs, and progressing toward a new downtown Grants Pass library. At the same time, the district managed complex lease negotiations, invested in volunteer engagement, and strengthened partnerships to extend services countywide.

Through these efforts, the library remained a trusted hub for learning and connection. Residents borrowed nearly **300,000 items**, participated in thousands of programs and outreach events, and increasingly relied on the library for technology and support. Guided by its 2024–2027 Strategic Direction, the district worked to ensure that facilities, programs, and collections reflect community needs today and into the future.

## Services and resources

Josephine Community Library District continued to provide essential services and responsive resources across its four branches in FY 2024–25, maintaining its role as a foundation for lifelong learning, connection, and community strength. Despite a temporary branch closure and ongoing facility challenges, the library saw steady usage of both physical and digital collections, strong attendance at programs, and growing engagement with outreach and technology services.



## Library usage

In FY 2024–25, the library remained a vital gathering space and learning resource for residents of Josephine County. Circulation of physical items totaled **294,458 items**, a modest decrease from the previous year's **303,814 checkouts**. This decline was largely due to the temporary closure of the Illinois Valley branch for renovation between July and October 2024 of the fiscal year. With that branch now fully operational, the district anticipates a return to incremental growth beginning in FY 2025–26.

Electronic materials usage continued its upward trend, increasing by more than **2,000 digital loans** from **59,786** to **61,978 checkouts**, demonstrating patrons' growing interest in online access. Meanwhile, the total number of active library cards grew steadily, reaching **25,910** by year's end. This growth occurred even as the number of new cards issued declined slightly, due in part to a systemwide cleanup of inactive accounts to ensure accurate reporting.

The library's physical collection held **107,754 items** at the end of the fiscal year, aligning with the district's target range of **105,000** to **110,000 items** based on available shelf space. The district added **9,250 new physical materials** during FY 2024–25, a notable rebound after several years of decline and part of an intentional effort to restore balance and relevance to the collection. The systemwide turnover rate for physical items (the average number of times each item was borrowed) was **1.99**, down slightly from **2.14** in the prior year, again due to the Illinois Valley library closure. This number is expected to rise in FY 2025–26.

#### **Number of items borrowed**

	Pre-COVID	Post-COVID		
	FY19	FY23	FY24	FY25
<b>Grants Pass</b>	210,921	197,242	194,591	191,192
Illinois Valley	38,520	31,487	22,498	21,152
Williams	10,470	10,527	18,671	11,961
Wolf Creek	8,258	8,019	9,090	8,175
Electronic material	40,967	55,722	58,964	61,978
Total	309,136	302,997	303,814	294,458
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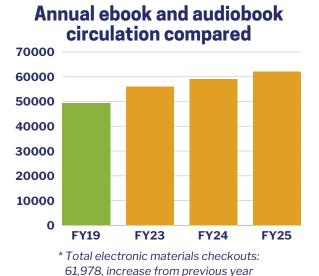
<sup>\*</sup> Illinois Valley library closed from July to October 2024 of the fiscal year for renovation.



#### **Annual turnover rates compared**

	FY23	FY24	FY25
Grants Pass	2.55	2.45	2.35
Illinois Valley	1.44	1.09	0.96
Williams	1.39	2.86	1.83
Wolf Creek	1.01	1.10	1.05
Overall	2.18	2.14	1.99

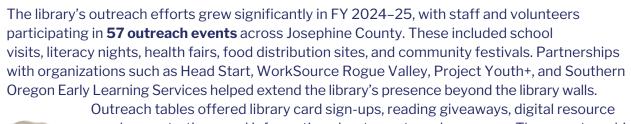
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Pre-COVID		Post-COVID			
	FY19	FY23	FY24	FY25	
Active library cards	23,570	23,342	24,976	27,527	
New library cards	2,953	3,179	2,956	2,818	
New materials added	13,469	9,087	7,949	9,250	
Total physical items	128,506	110,740	109,503	107,754	
Computer use	12,889	8,387	8,176	9,188	

The district delivered **523 children's programs** throughout the year, drawing more than **21,000 attendees**, a significant increase over FY 2023–24 and a clear reflection of growing community interest in early literacy and youth engagement. The 2025 Summer Reading Program, themed "Level Up at Your Library," engaged **883 participants** who collectively logged more than **535,000 minutes** of reading. Library staff hosted more than **50 events** systemwide, including interactive storytimes, STEAM crafts, and themed programs such as the Teen Bad Artists Club, Neighborhood Heroes Story Squad, and K9 Reading Buddies. Special events like Bugs-R-Us and astronomy science programs offered learning experiences for the whole family. The library also coordinated a Storybook Walk throughout the community, partnered with local food trucks through the Food for Thought outreach campaign, and provided bilingual programming, reading incentives, giveaways, and kick-off events. Altogether, more than **8,673 people** were reached through these summer activities and outreach efforts.

In FY24–25, the library hosted **89 adult programs** across all four branches, serving **1,920 participants** through events that promoted learning, connection, and civic engagement. A standout offering was the Everyday Civics series, "Civic Behavior: From Yesterday For Today," led by former Oregon Teacher of the Year Lois MacMillan. Held over three weeks in January, the series drew **255 participants** who explored classical virtues and civic responsibility, inspiring thoughtful dialogue and community reflection.





### **Technology**

Systemwide, the district prioritized technology upgrades to improve access and efficiency across all branches. All public and staff computers were upgraded to Windows 11 in preparation for Microsoft's end of support for earlier systems, and network infrastructure improvements enhanced speed and reliability systemwide. Patrons logged **9,188 public computer sessions** over the course of the year (excluding ebook and other online activity) highlighting the continued importance of digital access in the library's daily operations.

Online engagement also continued to grow. The library's website, **josephinelibrary.org**, recorded more than **110,000 user sessions**, an increase of **15 percent** over the previous year. Visitors and pageviews were also up, reaching over **65,000** and **216,000** respectively. In response to community needs, the library added a Spanish-language translation tool to the website, expanding access for non-English-speaking patrons.

One of the most notable changes was the **74 percent** increase in website traffic from social media, demonstrating the impact of expanded digital outreach. Half of all website visitors accessed the site from mobile devices, a trend that has remained consistent and reinforces the importance of mobile-first design.

Content related to services and programs saw notable gains. Pageviews for the newly reopened Illinois Valley Library increased by **58 percent**, reflecting high interest following the branch's renovation. The JosephineLINK community resource hub also saw a **13 percent** rise in traffic, and the Summer Reading Program page attracted significantly more visitors. Meanwhile, use of the library's online catalog remained steady with over **40,000 user logins**, underscoring the ongoing demand for self-service tools that allow patrons to browse materials, manage accounts, and access both digital and physical collections.

The library also offered access to a suite of online research databases, which provide authoritative information on topics such as health, education, history, and current events. These resources are made available at no cost to patrons through the State Library of Oregon, supported by federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Usage of these databases rose dramatically, with research searches increasing from **1,495** to **4,496**, a nearly threefold jump that reflects growing awareness and utilization of these high-quality tools.

Among the most popular digital resources is Mango Languages, an online platform that helps users learn more than 70 languages through interactive lessons. In FY 2024–25, Mango usage increased from **678** to **753 sessions**, indicating steady growth in community interest in language learning and cultural enrichment.

#### Website engagement: josephinelibrary.org

	FY23	FY24	FY25	Notable change
Visitors	35,761	57,990	65,807	+12.1%
Page views	118,978	196,225	216,797	+10.5%
Sessions	61,709	95,352	110,014	+15.4%
Catalog logins	41,099	40,000	40,048	+1%
JosephineLINK	1,879	4,177	4,706	+12.7%

# Community engagement and partnerships

In FY 2024–25, Josephine Community Library District strengthened its role as a connector in the community by working closely with local partners to expand access to services and learning opportunities. More than 40 organizations collaborated with the library to deliver programs, support outreach, and meet community needs in practical ways.

Key partners included Easter Seals Oregon, Project Youth+, UCAN's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, Southern Oregon Early Learning Services (SOELS), and WorkSource Rogue Valley. Together, these partnerships helped residents gain digital skills, prepare taxes, support early literacy at home, and access workforce training.



## Bridging the digital divide

In FY 2024–25, the district prioritized community engagement by building strong partnerships and removing barriers to access. One of the year's most impactful initiatives was the expansion of the Computer Basics program through the launch of Computer Basics, a yearlong initiative supported by a \$50,000 LSTA grant from the State Library of Oregon and a \$20,000 grant from Oregon Community Foundation.

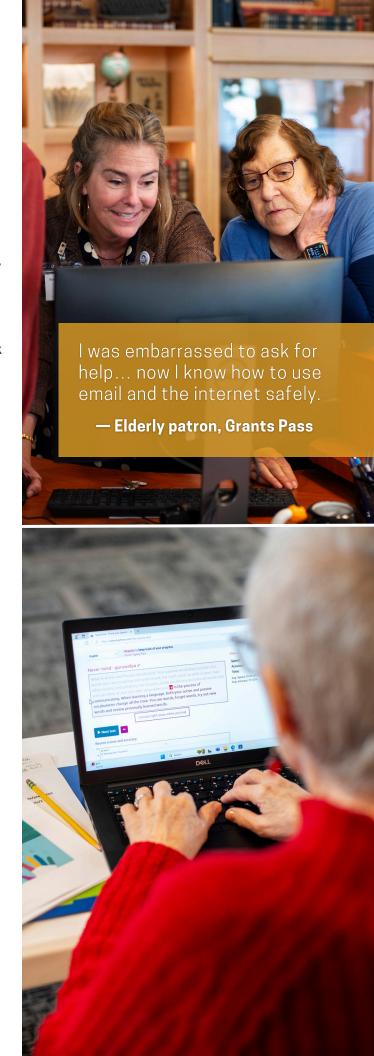
The core offering, Welcome to Computers, was a six-week course taught in English and Spanish at library branches and partner sites. Graduates received a refurbished laptop to support continued learning. In total, the district hosted more than **2,903 one-on-one tech help sessions** and served **192 participants** through targeted workshops on topics like Windows 11 and internet safety.

By year's end, the program reached more than **19,000 people** through **22 events**. Participant surveys showed **96 percent** learned something new and **88 percent** felt more confident using technology. Computer Basics was powered by strong partnerships with Project Youth+ tech interns, WorkSource Rogue Valley, Easter Seals Oregon, and local housing and health organizations, all helping connect residents to services and job readiness tools.

In recognition of the program's success and continued community need, the library was awarded a second year of LSTA grant funding to expand TechConnect in FY2025–26. Year 2 will build on the program's foundation and include a new partnership with Rogue Community College, opening up access to educational pathways for learners.

This program has been lifechanging. I finally feel like I can keep up with the world.

— Computer Basics graduate, Illinois Valley branch



## Early literacy expansion

With support from Southern Oregon Early Learning Services (SOELS), Josephine Community Library District expanded early literacy programming in FY 2024–25 to better serve families with young children.

At the heart of this initiative was the Sprout a Reader Program, a weekly lapsit storytime series designed for children ages 0–5. Families who attended regularly earned milestone rewards such as new books, storytime props, and early literacy activities to take home. The response was enthusiastic, with **40 children per month** actively participating by the end of the year. The program not only encouraged repeat attendance but also provided parents and caregivers with tools to support learning at home.

The district also installed an Early Literacy Parent Resource Wall at the Grants Pass branch, providing takehome materials about programs like Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, Vroom, and Read Aloud 15 Minutes. In addition, the grant funded 550 early literacy items, which families checked out within just three months.

To build internal capacity, staff, volunteers, and partners attended a virtual storytime training focused on engagement strategies and best practices. This expansion strengthened early learning support across the district, making it easier for families to access age-appropriate resources and programming.

In partnership with the four Rotary Clubs of Grants Pass, the library also facilitated Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, mailing a free book each month to children from birth to age five. This past year, **26,227 books** were delivered to Josephine County children, with **577 graduating** from the program. Since launching, **6,206 local children** have received a total of **170,424 books**, fostering a love of reading from the very beginning.



## Volunteer engagement

Volunteerism surged in FY 2024–25, with **21,176 hours** logged — the equivalent of 10 full-time positions — a **17 percent** increase over the previous year representing more than **\$500,000** in estimated value. Volunteers played a critical role in delivering library services, supporting everything from shelving and cataloging to storytimes, outreach events, and early literacy programs.

Volunteers supported high-impact programs such as the Illinois Valley reopening and Summer Reading Program. Their efforts included event setup, registration support, and direct engagement with patrons. Teen interns through Project Youth+, workforce placements through Easter Seals, and long-term volunteers contributed across all four branches. The district honored this vital support with two volunteer appreciation events (one in June and one in December) highlighting their dedication and reinforcing a culture of service and shared purpose.

#### **Volunteer hours**

	Pre-COVID	Post-COVID		
Branch	FY19	FY23	FY24	FY25
<b>Grants Pass</b>	22,860	13,136	15,353	16,681
Illinois Valley	2,765	1,929	1,502	2,960
Williams	711	812	929	954
Wolf Creek	354	354	447	626
Total	26,690	16,230	18,229	21,220

\* Illinois Valley library closed from July to October 2024 of the fiscal year for renovation.



## Youth internships

Through the library's partnership with Project Youth+ and Easter Seals, five youth interns contributed **1,427 hours** during FY 2024–25, supporting essential services while gaining valuable workplace experience. Interns took on a wide range of roles, from customer service and technical processing to communications and digital literacy.

Projects included Spanish-language cataloging, damaged book assessment, social media content creation, and development of the monthly patron newsletter. Interns also supported the six-week Welcome to Computers series, serving as bilingual tech buddies and helping to maintain the website and digital outreach tools. Their behind-the-scenes work included data entry, scheduling, and assisting with the design and distribution of library promotional materials. This internship program exemplifies how the library invests in youth through hands-on learning, mentoring, and meaningful service, helping teens build confidence and career readiness while enriching library operations.

# Capital projects and facilities

In FY 2024–25, Josephine Community Library District made meaningful progress toward creating safer, more accessible, and welcoming library facilities. From completing major renovations in Illinois Valley to advancing plans for a new downtown library in Grants Pass, these efforts were made possible through strong community support, volunteer commitment, and ongoing partnership with the Josephine Community Library Foundation. Facility improvements were guided by the district's 2024–2027 Strategic Direction and focused on meeting the needs of patrons across urban and rural areas.



#### **Grants Pass**

Planning progressed for a new library facility in downtown Grants Pass following the Josephine County Board of Commissioners' unexpected vote to terminate the district's lease for the current building in January 2025. The district responded by launching a public information campaign and entering negotiations with county officials. At the same time, the Josephine Community Library Foundation continued to lead fundraising and stakeholder engagement, hosting public forums and presenting updated building plans to strengthen community support.







#### **Williams**

At the Williams branch, continued facility improvements and strong community involvement helped enhance the library's role as a welcoming space for families, students, and local residents. Volunteers led the expansion of the outdoor lavender garden and completed installation of a new landscape irrigation system, ensuring easier maintenance and long-term sustainability. Patrons contributed drought-resistant plants and gardening expertise, creating an attractive lowmaintenance space for the community.

Facility upkeep also included volunteer-led maintenance of outdoor seating areas, refreshed woodchip paths, and the completion of a perimeter border and sprinkler system to support new grass installation. The Williams Friends of the Library organized and funded repairs to the community fire circle bench, preserving a popular gathering space used for library programs and school visits.

#### Illinois Valley

FY 2024-25 marked significant progress in improving library facilities across the district. The most transformative accomplishment was the completion of the Illinois Valley Library renovation. Reopened in November 2024, the updated facility now features a new 80-person meeting room with a modern community teaching kitchen, ADA-compliant entrances and restrooms. a newly renovated children's area, and upgraded technology and security systems. Outside, the grounds were redesigned with sustainable landscaping and an outdoor programming space. The grand reopening in November drew more than **300 community members**, underscoring broad community support for improved rural access and community development.

Since reopening, the Illinois Valley branch experienced a surge in use, with approximately **18,000 items** circulated and an estimated **450 patrons** attending events and programs in the new meeting space. The meeting room was booked more than **80 times** through the end of the fiscal.



#### **Wolf Creek**

At the Wolf Creek branch, facility maintenance focused on improving safety, comfort, and functionality for patrons and staff. With funding from the Josephine Community Library Foundation, a professional contractor completed a series of overdue repairs, addressing general wear and ensuring the building remained safe and accessible. The library also repaired and replaced the water heater and HVAC systems, which had limited functionality in the event room.

These upgrades support the branch's role as a vital resource for the surrounding rural community. The event room, in particular, sees heavy use during the Sunny Wolf Charter School's weekly visits, when classes gather for book checkout, reading programs, and group activities. It also serves as a meeting space for local organizations, making reliable infrastructure essential to sustaining the branch's high level of community use.

## Josephine Community Library Foundation

The foundation played a central role in all capital improvements during FY 2024–25. From securing funding for the Illinois Valley renovation to supporting facility updates in Williams and Wolf Creek, the foundation provided critical financial and strategic support. Its leadership on the downtown Grants Pass library project ensures that future library facilities will reflect the evolving needs and aspirations of the community.



## Governance and staff

The Josephine Community Library District Board of Directors provided strong leadership during a dynamic and transitional year. Board members included Gina Marie Agosta (President), Rachele Selvig (Vice President), Kelly Robinson, Pat Fahey, and Tina Gotchall. In early 2025, Laurel Samson resigned from Position 2, and Kelly Robinson was appointed to complete the term. In the May 2025 election, both Rachele Selvig and Kelly Robinson were elected to four-year terms beginning July 1, 2025, ensuring continuity in leadership and governance.

The district's management team worked diligently to adapt to changing needs and opportunities. In FY 2024–25, the library employed a staff of 19 who worked 12.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions across four branches, supporting public service delivery, programs, and operations. Library Director Kate Lasky was honored with two major recognitions: the 2025 Oregon Library Association's Librarian of the Year and the Zonta Club's Community Woman of the Year. These awards recognized her contributions to library service, community development, and leadership in a time of both challenge and growth.

Staff development was also a priority. During FY 2024–25, the team implemented a restructured organizational chart to streamline operations and better support public services and programming. A new youth services lead was hired to oversee both children's and teen programming. Staff across departments completed leadership training and digital literacy certification. This professional development effort supported a more responsive, innovative, and cross-functional library workforce prepared to meet the evolving needs of the community.

## Financial summary

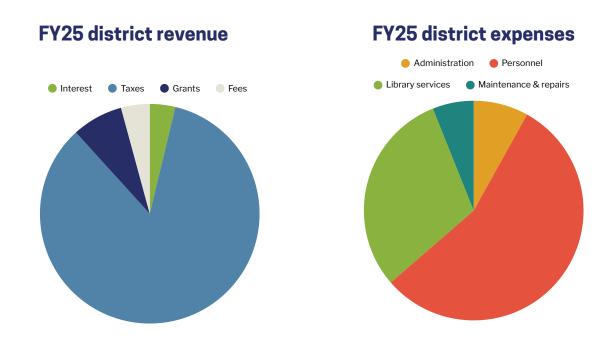
The library district concluded fiscal year 2024–25 in a strong financial position, with total revenue of **\$1,952,000** and operating expenses of **\$1,740,000**. This positive margin enabled the district to make key contributions to its reserves, positioning the organization for long-term sustainability and resilience.

By year-end, the district's total General Fund cash carryover was **\$1,273,750**. Of that, **\$810,000** was the Unappropriated Ending Fund Balance to meet the district's policy requirement for covering operations between July and November, before property tax revenues are received each year. The remaining balance was set aside to support anticipated operational cost increases in FY 2025–26 due to inflation and rising community demand for service.

In addition to this year-end balance, savings from lower-than-expected personnel costs allowed the district to transfer **\$150,000** to its Operations Reserve Fund and **\$122,800** to the Capital Reserve Fund. These strategic transfers support future staffing needs and capital improvements. Total FY 2024–25 expenditures plus transfers was supported by **\$65,700** in carryover from the prior fiscal year. While lower expenditures in FY 2024–25 allowed for substantial reserve contributions, future allocations may be constrained by ongoing operations and personnel priorities.

The district's revenues for the year were composed primarily of property tax receipts, augmented by grants and community donations. In addition to support from the Josephine Community Library Foundation, major funders to library projects included Oregon Humanities, State Library of Oregon, State of Oregon Cultural Resource Economic Fund, and many more listed in acknowledgments. Notably, a **\$1.5 million Community Development Block Grant** administered through the City of Cave Junction was instrumental in funding the Illinois Valley Library renovation.

Expenditures during the year supported core library services and staff salaries, including programming, collection development, volunteer support, and technology upgrades.



## Looking ahead

As the district enters FY 2025–26, it remains focused on expanding access, advancing capital plans, and stabilizing its downtown Grants Pass facility. Finalizing the lease or relocation agreement for the main branch remains a top priority, as does continued progress on building a new, modern library to meet long-term needs.

Other priorities include expanding mobile and rural outreach, growing teen leadership and internship programs, deepening the reach of digital literacy training, and aligning outreach and programming with the 2024–2027 Strategic Direction.

Challenges persist, especially in light uncertainty surrounding federal library funding and the future of the Grants Pass facility. However, the district is well-positioned to meet these challenges with strong community support, innovative staff, an engaged board, and a commitment to adaptability, service, and public access.

## Acknowledgments

The Josephine Community Library District extends heartfelt thanks to the individuals, partners, and organizations whose support made this year's progress possible.

Special recognition goes to the Josephine Community Library Foundation, whose leadership and generosity continue to drive major initiatives — from capital improvements and grant writing to public outreach and the vision for a new downtown Grants Pass library. Its commitment to the future of library services in Josephine County is both vital and inspiring.

We also offer thanks to the Grants Pass Friends of the Library for leading grassroots advocacy in support of lease negotiations for the main branch. As a volunteer-led group, its dedication elevated community voices and helped ensure public support for continued access to library services.

The following pages highlight the many community partners and funders who helped the library expand access, pilot new programs, and serve more people across Josephine County. Their collaboration made a lasting impact across rural and urban communities alike.

#### **Grant funders**

Business Oregon Community Development Block Grant
Carpenter Foundation
Chaney Family Foundation
City of Cave Junction
Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation
Dorothy Juszczyk gift
Dorothy Thompson Fund
Energy Trust of Oregon
Federal Communications Commission
Four Way Community Foundation

Josephine County Solid Waste Agency
Marie Lamfrom Foundation
Oregon Community Foundation
Oregon Humanities
Roundhouse Foundation
Southern Oregon Early Learning Services
Special Districts Association of Oregon
State Library of Oregon
State of Oregon CSFRF ARPA grant
State of Oregon Cultural Resource Economic Fund



#### **Partners and sponsors**

541 Fusion

AllCare Health

American Alpha Training

Asante Three Rivers Hospital

Autism Society of Oregon

Blaze-N-Monkeys

Brittney Young of John L. Scott Real Estate, Grants Pass

**Bridging Communities** 

Brownell's Electric

Chunna's Food Stop

Compassionate Dentistry

Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians

Cynthia Harelson, CPA

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Easterseals Oregon SCSEP

Elegance Antiques

Evergreen Federal Bank

Fields Home Center

Foster Grandparent Program of Southern Oregon

Four Rotary Clubs of Grants Pass

G. G. Sugarplum's Bakeshop

Gallop N Glitz

Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History

Grants Pass & Josephine County Chamber of Commerce

Grants Pass Astronomers Club

Grants Pass Daily Courier

Grants Pass District 7

Grants Pass Museum of Art

Grants Pass Parks & Recreation

Grants Pass Police Department

Grants Pass School District 7

Grants Pass Welcome Center

**Growing Together Family Community Center** 

Grip-N-Grub

**Head Start** 

Herb Pharm

House of Glory

Housing Authority of Jackson/Josephine County

Illinois River Valley Arts Council

Illinois Valley Chamber of Commerce

Illinois Valley News

Illinois Valley Senior Center

Indy Jo

Josephine Community Library Foundation

Josephine County Cultural Coalition

Josephine County Family Court

Josephine County Food Bank

Josephine County Jail

Josephine County Parks

Josephine County Public Health

KAJO/KLDR

The Kitchen Company

Latino Interagency Network Committee

Mad Dawgs

Mystic Valley Farm Tea Shop

My Island Kitchen

Oregon Books & Games

Oregon Caves Chevron

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Oregon Humanities

Oregon Pacific Financial Advisors

People's Bank

Plaza Sewing & Vac

Project Youth+

Robco, Inc.

Robinson Orthodontics

Robyn Lasky of RE/MAX Integrity

Rogue Florist & Gifts

Rogue Law Firm

Sandi's Candies

Scoop-N-Sips

Shoefly Oregon

SO Health-E

Something Weird

Soulwise Coffee

Southern Oregon Early Learning Services

State Library of Oregon

Sugarloaf Community Association

Sunny Wolf Charter School

Suzie Matney of Windermere Real Estate

Therapy Dogs International

The Food Lab

Three Rivers School District

**US Cellular** 

VITA tax assistance

Visit Grants Pass

Welch Investment Group

Williams Community Preschool

Williams Elementary School

Williams Fire Department

Women's Health Center of Southern Oregon

WorkSource Rogue Valley



#### **GRANTS PASS**

200 NW C St Grants Pass, OR 541-476-0571

#### **ILLINOIS VALLEY**

209 West Palmer Cave Junction, OR 541-592-4778

#### **WILLIAMS**

158 Tetherow Road Williams, OR 541-846-7020

#### **WOLF CREEK**

102 Ruth Ave Wolf Creek, OR 541-866-2606

