



THE COMMUNITY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jenny Davidson named Executive Director of Community Library

Ketchum/Sun Valley, Idaho, October 27, 2014 – Dr. Jennifer Emery Davidson will be the new Executive Director of the Community Library. Lyman Drake, Chair of the Board of Trustees, announced her appointment today. Dr. Davidson will begin her tenure on December 1, 2014.



Dr. Davidson is well known in the community, having served as Director of the College of Southern Idaho's Blaine County Center in Hailey from 2004 to 2013. She has taught Literature, Humanities, and English Composition at CSI for more than a decade. Her published work has appeared in venues ranging from peer-reviewed scholarly journals to High Country News.

As a recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship, she spent a semester teaching American literature at the Universidad de Guanajuato in Guanajuato, Mexico, in 2010. She used her time there to develop her proficiency in Spanish. Since 2011 she has served on the Board of the Idaho Humanities Council, and she currently serves on IHC's executive committee. (She was attending an IHC board meeting in Boise when she received the news of her appointment.) She also has served as a Trustee of the Community Library – a position that has brought her a deep understanding of the Library's role in the community.

"I am eager and honored to work with the Library's talented staff and dedicated trustees, and to be surrounded by such a tremendous collection of books and regional history in both the Library and the new Museum," Dr. Davidson said.

She continued, "The Library's recent series of public conversations on 'Re-Imagining Your Library' have illustrated how deeply connected so many people feel to it. I've been moved by those comments. The writer Wallace Stegner called for the West to develop a

THE COMMUNITY LIBRARY: *Bringing information, ideas, and individuals together to enhance the cultural life of the community.*

'civilization to match its scenery.' Here in the spectacular landscape of central Idaho, the Community Library helps make that happen."

After growing up in Twin Falls, Dr. Davidson attended Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, where she graduated *magna cum laude* and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. She then headed west again and earned a Ph.D. in American Studies at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. Her personal passion has been – and continues to be – the literature and history of the American West. She wrote much of her dissertation in a cabin on Silver Creek Preserve where her husband Mark had taken a position with The Nature Conservancy. That experience confirmed their desire to build their lives in the Wood River Valley. Mark is currently the Idaho Water Project Director for Trout Unlimited.

In making the announcement, Drake said, "We could not have hoped for a better candidate: an experienced educational leader with solid roots in this community. Jenny has a passionate intellectual curiosity and believes strongly in the Library's educational mission."

In applying for the position, Dr. Davidson stressed her commitment to the Wood River Valley and to Idaho. She has volunteered for many local nonprofits, serving as a "lunch buddy" within Blaine County School District and as a coach for Girls on the Run.

Dr. Davidson stated that the Library's civic responsibility is fundamental. "Every day, the Community Library has the wonderful opportunity to open the world to people," she explained. "Everyone can come through the Library's doors and disappear into a book or ask questions about computer resources or participate in a conversation around an evening program. I love that."

"My own library card is well-worn!" she stated.

Library Trustee and past Board Chair William B. Lowe led the committee formed to conduct the search for a successor to former Executive Director Cynthia Dillon, who left in August for personal reasons. Said Lowe, "We focused our search primarily on the local community, and received some strong applications. We consider the Library and the community very fortunate to have found a candidate of Jenny's stature right here in our midst."

Unlike most public libraries, the Community Library is privately funded; it receives no dedicated tax dollars. While the Gold Mine thrift and consignment stores provide an important source of its income, the Library depends on community generosity to fund the bulk of its \$1.3 million annual budget. The Library is committed to making its resources and services available free of charge to all patrons, regardless of where they reside. Private funding and free public access were vital core principles for the women who founded the Library in 1957.