

# TALKING BOOKS OF OREGON

By Heather Estrada

*For Go! Eastern Oregon*

If you live in Eastern Oregon, you have access to a library catalog that includes 77 libraries across the eastern half of the state. You can request a book at your local library, and it will be delivered from another location.

Additionally, you have access to thousands of e-books, audiobooks and electronic magazines through a similar agreement with the Libraries of Eastern Oregon. Access these items through an app called Libby.

But did you know that each citizen of Oregon is also a member of another library with a slew of services? The State Library of Oregon has an amazing and not well-known service called Talking Books and the Braille Library.

Talking Books is housed in Salem, where the state library and its excellent staff are physically located, but it's for all Oregon residents. Services are offered through mail or electronic download with the State Library of Oregon funding costs associated with these resources.

The Talking Books and Braille Library functions very much like your local library. They have books that are read to you and

offered in a variety of formats, depending on your needs.

One method is through a player, similar to an old cassette player, which is sent free of charge. It plays cartridges that hold up to eight books, and you can have multiple cartridges at a time. After listening to the books, return the cartridge and the Talking Books staff will load the next books you want and send it back to you.

Another option is to download books to your phone or computer through their BART app.

And finally, through an agreement with the State Library of Utah, Oregon residents can also request and use books in braille.

This amazing free service is available to legally blind people and anyone who finds holding and reading a book physically challenging. This includes those with visual impairments, such as macular degeneration, cataracts or glaucoma; physical impairment related to Parkinson's disease, stroke or severe arthritis and reading impairments, including dyslexia or dysphasia.

This is not an exhaustive list. The bottom line is, if you have anything that prevents you from sitting down and holding a book, the Talking Books library is for



Heather Estrada/Contributed Photo

**The State Library of Oregon offers Talking Books and the Braille Library for those who have visual, physical or reading impairments. For information, visit your local library.**

you! If you, or someone you know, would benefit from this service, visit your nearest library or the Talking Books website at [TalkingBooks.Oregon.gov](http://TalkingBooks.Oregon.gov).

Matt Roach, who is the new face of the Talking Books and Braille Library, recently

visited Umatilla County to share about the program with library staff. His message was one of passion and excitement in serving everyone across Oregon. All 12 libraries in Umatilla County are trained to help anyone who needs the service to get started. Also, librarians in all counties can help.

The Talking Books and Braille Library is one more example of the multitude of ways that libraries work with their communities to provide free services that would be difficult to have otherwise.