

## **Statistical Data**

Population:	1,197 (U.S. Census estimate in 2005) 3% annual growth rate between 1990 and 2000
Elevation:	6,183 feet
Precipitation:	16 inches
Average Snowfall:	63 inches
Temperature Range – Fahrenheit:	
Spring:	25 to 52
Summer:	44 to 77
Fall:	27 to 57
Winter:	8 to 32
Sunshine Days:	Closest city with data is Pocatello
Frost Free Days:	90 days
County:	Teton

## ***Driggs Today***

In the City of Driggs the sun lights up the Big Hole Mountains in the morning and creates a colorful glow on the Teton Range of the Rocky Mountains in the evening. Driggs is located within a broad scenic valley in close proximity to Grand Teton National Park, Yellowstone National Park and the Jedediah Smith Wilderness Area.

From John Colter who explored the west with the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery and the early French Trappers who gathered at “Pierre’s Hole” for an annual rendezvous, to the Mormon settlers who followed, Driggs has acted as a magnet for visitors and settlers alike. With its natural beauty, abundance of recreational opportunities and easy pace of life, it is not hard to see why the area is the second fastest growing in the State of Idaho.

It is commonly said that Driggs offers “the best of both states” since there is a land-locked piece of Wyoming about three miles east from the center of town. Many visitors travel through Driggs on their way to Grand Targhee Ski and Summer Resort located in Alta, Wyoming.

## **Amenities and Attractions**

Driggs is located in the midst of an area with unparalleled outdoor recreational opportunities. The Teton River, a world-class trout stream, is born in the Tetons and winds its way near the eastern and southern borders of the city. Many rivers and streams flow into the valley from the Teton Mountains, the Snake River Range and the Big Hole Mountains. Because of this, the area also plays host to kayak and canoe enthusiasts.

Hundreds of miles of national forest trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding can be found moments away from the city. Many of these trails interconnect with trails in Grand Teton National Park. Miles of paved or gravel pathways are offered throughout the community. The paved Driggs-Victor trail connects these two cities.

Driggs and the surrounding area is quickly becoming a top golfing destination. Several championship 18-hole courses and several public courses with panoramic views can be enjoyed. Several more 18-hole courses are under development.

Winter in Driggs is just as exciting for the outdoor enthusiast. Many of the trails used for hiking and biking in the summer turn into groomed nordic skiing trails. The mountains surrounding Driggs are blanketed with light powder, making them a paradise for skiers and snowboarders. Grand Targhee Ski and Summer Resort is a 20-minute drive from the city. Backcountry skiing and snowmobile touring opportunities can easily be found in nearby public lands.

Driggs and the surrounding area boasts of a burgeoning arts community. The Teton Arts Council provides art shows, music performances, live theatrical performances and other artistic and cultural activities for the community. The Teton Valley Foundation also brings cultural, educational and recreational events to Driggs.

Many nonprofit groups in the area work to enrich the lives of local residents and protect cultural and natural values. Teton Valley Trails and Pathways greatly contributes to the upkeep of local trails. Friends of the Teton River and the Teton Regional Land Trust help maintain natural beauty and provide activities that allow people to experience the environment. The Teton Valley Recreation Association facilitates organized sports. This strong spirit of community is a unique local attraction.

The Driggs City Center and Senior's Center completed in 2008 is a community gathering place. A variety of community meetings and events are held in the facility. Seniors and their families and friends enjoy affordable lunches three times a week in the Senior's Center.

Visitors can get an in-depth experience of Teton Valley by visiting the Teton Valley Museum. Numerous exhibits get people in touch with local culture and the valley's pioneers, mountain men and Native Americans. Aviation enthusiasts can view the antique war plane collection at the Teton Aviation facility at the Driggs-Reed Memorial Airport.

A visit to the Driggs area would not be complete without eating a huckleberry shake or watching a movie at the Spud Drive-In Theater. The city is rapidly expanding, but still maintains its small town character, traditions and way of life.

### **Economy and Major Employers**

Agriculture used to be the predominant industry in the area, but due to the high amount of growth and development in Driggs, the industry currently employing the most people is the construction industry. In 2000, more than a quarter of all male employees were working in construction and 17% of all employees worked in construction businesses.

Growth in the construction sector was significant between 1998 and 2003, with the number of firms more than doubling in five years. Meanwhile, agriculturally related firms dropped to zero. Within the same time period, retailers declined by 22% in Driggs. The sluggish retail sector was probably attributable to several factors including: high real estate prices and higher rents, loss of the agricultural customer base and retail leakage to larger neighboring communities and the Internet.

Industries relating to tourism play a key role in the Driggs economy. Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services employ the second highest number of people in Driggs. According to the Idaho Division of Tourism Development, Teton County was second in the state only to Elmore County in the percent increase in tourism related spending from 2003 to 2004.

The educational, health and social services industries employ the third highest number of people in the city. Teton County School District and Teton Valley Hospital are the top two employers in the City of Driggs and its Area of Impact. The school district employs about 200 people and the hospital about 150.

Broulim's Food Store, Bergmeyer Manufacturing, a furniture production facility, and Teton Telecom are also major Driggs employers. Other large employers in the valley are Grand Targhee Ski and Summer Resort, MD Nursery, Teton County and the federal government.

Many people living in Driggs work in Wyoming. According to the 2000 Census, 34% of Driggs workers were commuting to jobs in another state while under half, 48%, of workers residing in Driggs were employed in Driggs. These numbers highlight the role of Driggs as a bedroom community for Jackson, Wyo., and a source of employees for Grand Targhee Resort.

The "index of industrial specialization" for Driggs in 2000 was 1,093, compared to the national average of 789. A lower number represents a more diverse economy, so the Driggs economy is considered less diverse than the national average.

### **Education**

Teton County School District #401, Eastern Idaho Headstart and three private schools provide K-12 education. Eastern Idaho Technical College, located 77 miles northwest of Driggs in Idaho Falls, offers numerous extension courses in the city.

National Outdoor Leadership School Teton Valley is located near Driggs. It offers adventure courses for 14- to 15-year-olds, winter courses and water courses. Brigham Young University-Idaho is located 45 miles west of Driggs in Rexburg. The BYU-Idaho Outdoor Learning Center, a site for outdoor programs sponsored by the university, is located in Teton County.

### **Healthcare**

Teton Valley Hospital, a 13-bed facility, is a county-owned primary healthcare organization located within Driggs. It has served as the heart of health services in the valley since it opened in 1938.

The hospital also offers the Driggs Health Clinic. Four Peaks Clinic and Urgent Care is located north of the city in the Area of Impact.

Family Safety Network, a nonprofit providing family violence and victim assistance, and the Joshua Smith Foundation, a developmental disability agency, are located within the city.

## **Transportation**

State Highway 33 intersects the city and is Main Street Driggs. State Highway 31 is located eight miles to the south in the City of Victor, and State Highway 32 can be found nine miles to the north near the City of Tetonia.

Public transportation was recently introduced to Driggs through a partnership with Teton County, Wyo. The START Bus picks up passengers at the Driggs Community Center and in other valley locations and travels over Teton Pass to various stops within the Town of Jackson, Wyo.

Driggs also is home to a top-notch, class B2 airport with a full service FBO. Light private aircraft can land on a 7,300 foot by 75 foot runway.

## **Utilities and Services**

The City of Driggs provides water and wastewater treatment to city residents and some residents of Teton County. Currently wastewater from the City of Victor is treated at the city's facility. Fall River Electric Co-Op provides electricity for the area. Voorhees Sanitation provides trash pick-up, and Teton County administrates a solid waste transfer station. Telephone, internet, cable and satellite television services are available through private companies.

Teton County provides police protection for the city. The Teton County Fire District and Teton County Ambulance District respond to fire and medical emergencies. A volunteer search and rescue organization also serves the area.

### ***History Prior to Incorporation***

John Colter of the epic Lewis and Clark expedition was the first white person to enter Teton Valley on a return trip to the western wilderness in 1808. At that time Native Americans referred to the basin where Driggs is located today as "broad valley." It was also called Tee-Win-At or Trois Tetons and was later known, for about a quarter of a century, as Pierre's Hole.

Soon after Colter crossed into the valley over Teton Pass, the first of many skirmishes fought here between Indians, whites and Indian allies erupted. While camped on a flat between Teton and Leigh creeks near Driggs, Colter and a village of about 800 Crow Indians were attacked by a war party of 1,500 Indians believed at the time to be Blackfeet. Colter's rifle was a decisive factor and the attacking Indians, in fact Gros Ventre Indians, fled, but not before Colter was wounded in the leg with an arrow. The incident was later referred to as the "Battle of the Flats."

Numerous tribes traversed and often clashed in the area in search of game. Among these were the Teton or Lakota Sioux, Crow Indians, Blackfeet, Nez Perce, Flatheads, Bannock, Gros Ventre and most predominantly the Wind River band of the Shoshone, which was the tribe of Sacagawea. Native Americans traveled here from as far away as northern Utah to hunt and trade with other tribes.

After the Battle of the Flats Colter traveled north and was the first to discover Yellowstone. About

six months following the fight, he ventured into Gros Ventre territory where he was discovered by Indians who recognized him as their adversary with the rifle. Colter was forced to strip naked and run for his life while the Indians threw spears at him. With some luck he outran them and eventually found his way to a camp of white traders. This great explorer of the west later died at his farm in Franklin County, Missouri.

French-Canadian trappers began arriving in the valley in about 1818. Trappers called any valley a “hole,” and this area was called Pierre’s Hole after an Iroquois Indian trapper named Vieux Pierre. While searching for beaver Pierre found the valley in 1818 and reported its existence to the Hudson Bay Company. This began the valley’s era of trappers and the rendezvous.

Because Pierre’s Hole was centrally located to trapping areas, it became a favored summer rendezvous for trappers in the entire northwest region. During a rendezvous, trappers traded beads, calicoes, bright colored cloth and other items with the Indians. These rowdy gatherings of mountain men were always marked by drinking, gambling, games and debauchery.

In 1832, it was estimated that about 1,000 Indians and trappers were camped in Pierre’s Hole with a main encampment southwest of Driggs. New York magnate John Jacob Astor’s American Fur Company and its rival the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, founded by famed explorers James Bridger, Jedediah Smith and William Sublette, maintained camps here at this time. A group of free traders and camps of Nez Perce and Flatheads, friendly to whites, were also living in the valley.

This year another battle with the Blackfeet called “The Battle of Pierre’s Hole” was fought. During this skirmish a group of about 42 men separated from the main encampment of trappers on an exploring expedition. While the group was camped on the eastern side of the valley, they observed a caravan of Blackfeet traveling into the valley on a trail leading to Jackson Hole. Two members of the expedition party who had suffered at the hands of the Blackfeet in the past, an Iroquois and a Flathead Indian, were sent to greet the Blackfoot messenger.

According to accounts of the incident the messenger gave a sign of peace, but the Flathead Indian shot him. The Blackfeet immediately began to fortify themselves by digging holes and stacking fallen timber around them. Mud from the holes was used to shore up the fortifications. While the Indians readied themselves, the group of trappers sent for reinforcements from the main camp.

The battle lasted all day, and in the evening the men, women and children of the tribe fled leaving most of their implements and supplies. In the end about 20 of the 200 Blackfeet were killed. Three whites were killed, eight badly wounded. Ten Nez Perce and Flatheads were killed or mortally wounded.

By 1840, beaver were becoming scarce and the fur trade was losing importance in the American economy. A new wave of opportunists began sweeping the West in search of gold. When precious metals were discovered in Montana in 1862, some prospectors found their way into the valley. While

gold mining pans have been found in some local streams and there were some small finds of gold, silver and copper, efforts here were relatively unsuccessful.

Noted artists Thomas and Peter Moran ventured into the Driggs area in August 1879. When Thomas Moran reached Teton Valley he wrote in his journal, “The Tetons here loomed up grandly against the sky and from this point it is perhaps the finest pictorial range in the United States or even in N. America.” In late summer 1879, the brothers both sketched watercolor versions of the Teton Range. Thomas Moran’s fresh, fluid watercolors of the mountain range inspired his oil painting *The Three Tetons*, a canvas that now hangs in the Oval Office of the White House.

After the early trapping companies left, there were still some trappers who would visit the area on an irregular basis. Richard Leigh, also known as “Beaver Dick,” was one of the most notable. He was referred to by this nickname because of his beaver trapping skills and because he had two large front teeth. Hiram C. Lapham, considered to be the valley’s first permanent settler, met Beaver Dick when he arrived on his first visit with his brother in 1882.

Lapham, his wife and children and his brother settled at the north end of the valley on June 1, 1882. They came west from southeastern Kansas to Burley, Idaho, and then to Teton Valley. Lapham wrote, “Being broke, as tenderfeet usually are, and as I had taught school in Kansas, was glad to accept the school at Albion during the winter of 1878-1879. This was my first introduction to the Mormons, and must say that they were very kind to me. In 1881 we went up Snake River to where Plano is now, and afterwards located there, but as there was no hay to be had, and wanting to raise stock, we moved to Teton Basin in 1882.”

These first sporadic settlers arrived before a wave of Mormon settlers in 1889. In the summer of 1882, Robert Benbrook and Sam Hill, their teenage “wives” and Chris Sorenson, a companion, built cabins just southwest of the Driggs town site at what was called the point of willows. These teenage women were allegedly “stolen wives” from the Bear Lake Valley. A posse searching for the young women chased Benbrook and Hill to Eagle Rock, now Idaho Falls, and lost track of them.

In 1883 half a dozen more families moved to the area from mid-western farms. Many chose to build cabins on Teton Creek near Driggs. These dwellings were log cabins with earthen floors and roofs covered with poles, brush and earth. Prior to 1888, the nearest town post office was in Rexburg.

After 1888, most of the settlers were Mormons from Utah and from other parts of Idaho. A glowing report about the valley from Oscar Young at Salt Lake motivated Mathoni Pratt and Thomas Wilson to investigate in 1888. Residents of Teton City warned Pratt and Wilson that Teton Valley was only “...a rendezvous for horse thieves and outlaws,” but they continued with their plans.

Acting on reports from Pratt and Wilson, B.W. Driggs arrived the same season for an inspection.

Isaac Waddell, Driggs' law partner, then became interested and told his neighbor Henry Wallace about Teton Valley. Later Wallace would plat and donate land for the Driggs town site.

Don C. Driggs, brother of B.W., Pratt and Wilson staked off claims in the valley. B.S. Driggs, Waddell and Wallace, E.B. Edelfsen and D.C. Driggs also claimed land for ranches. Reports from these early Mormon settlers initiated a larger, permanent migration.

A large colony of Mormons traveled north to Driggs from Salt Lake in 1889. "This wagon train of emigrants lined up in front of the temple block and started March 18 for a journey of nearly 400 miles. The party consisted of Thomas R. Wilson, Don C. Driggs, Leland M. Driggs, David Hilton, James Hilton, "Bish" Burt, Solomon Angel, Howard A. Wallace, Ebenezer Beesley, William M. Waddell and Angus M. Lambert. George S. Young joined the party and James T. Wilson."

Upon arriving they found few inhabitants, and they made their first homesteads near the swamps where they could cut wild hay. Land was first taken up in the Driggs vicinity. From 1888 to 1890 about 300 families migrated to the area. Before canals could be dug for irrigating crops, cattle and sheep ranching was the primary occupation.

Soon sawmills began springing up along local waterways, canals were built and people started breaking ground for farms. However, farming was impractical for some time because the nearest railroad shipping point was 75 miles away at Market Point, or what is now known as Roberts. Produce was not easily hauled this distance, but cattle could be easily driven. Farming did not become profitable until the railroad reached St. Anthony.

In 1893 Samuel Kunz established the valley's first cheese factory. In 1895 a cheese factory was established in Driggs. The dairy industry continued to expand, and in 1926 there were six cheese factories and a large amount of cream and butter exported.

The *Teton Valley News*, with its office in Driggs, published the first edition April 15, 1909. Some excerpts from this first edition read: "There is a sugar famine in Victor. One sack arrived the other night. The hotels were limited to \$1.00 worth and private families to 25 cents worth. Hay for sale = \$5.00 to \$7.00 per ton - S.E. of Victor. Hogs are bringing 4 ½ to 6 ½ cents on foot. Population of Teton Valley 3,500." An excerpt from the September 28, 1911 issue states that there were 21 students enrolled at the Driggs High School.

The first election was held at the E.B. Seymour home in 1888. Fourteen votes were cast. During the second election in 1890, which was a state and county election held at the Star Commercial Building just north of Driggs, 55 votes were cast.

### *Incorporation*

The name that was originally suggested for Driggs was Aline. The first LDS Ward organized in the valley was called the Aline Ward. When B.W. Driggs petitioned the postal department in Washington, D.C., for a post office located in the Driggs vicinity, the department named the post office Driggs because there were so many “Driggs” names on the petition. The first Driggs post office was established in 1894.

Prior to the dedication of the Driggs town site, buildings and businesses were erected on the west side of Main Street, on the D.C. Driggs homestead, and south of Little Avenue on the L.M. Driggs homestead on the east side of Main Street. B.W. Driggs of Salt Lake built the first commercial establishment a little south of where Corner Drug is currently located. This was a mercantile store called “The Teton Basin Supply Company.”

On December 21, 1901, Henry and Elen Harper Wallace of Salt Lake City, whose son Howard was one of the first settlers, donated 160 acres of land for the Driggs town site. Many streets, like Little, Wallace, Ashley, Howard and Harper were named after members of the Wallace family. According to “History of Teton Valley,” by B.W. Driggs, “The settlers selected the Driggs town site when they first came here; the land was entered as a desert entry by Henry Wallace and when he obtained title, he platted it, and on December 21, 1909, dedicated it as the town site of Driggs.”

The Village of Driggs was incorporated May 23, 1910, by petition to the Fremont County Board of County Commissioners. D.C. Driggs, J.D. Killpack Jr., H.L. Crandall, J.H. Fuller, and A.C. Miner were the first board of trustees. B.W. Driggs was the village attorney.

On January 26, 1915, Teton County was separated from Madison County by an act of legislature. Driggs was made the permanent county seat at the general election in 1916. The current Teton County courthouse was constructed at the corner of Little and Main in 1924 at a cost of \$25,000. Before the courthouse was constructed, a Young Men’s Hall was located at the site. It hosted public gatherings and dances and was later converted to a store. When the large log structure burned, the courthouse was erected.

### *Turning Points*

#### **Arrival of Oregon Short Line Railroad**

In 1912, the Oregon Short Line Railroad entered the valley. Trains carried tourists to the area for visits to Yellowstone National Park and later Grand Teton National Park. Local farmers could now ship out produce, livestock and limestone. With the arrival of tourists and an expedient way of shipping, the town prospered. After the arrival of the railroad, the Winger Building, a structure of cut stone where Corner Drug is now located, was built. The upper story was used for the high school and later for the district court. The bottom level was always used as a drug store.

E. Beesley, who was a noted fiddler in the valley, and Charles Carr, a local carpenter, built a two story building at the corner of Little and Main for a dance hall at this time. As an inducement for Beesley to build on the town site, the land was donated to him. A dance hall operated in the top story and the bottom level was used for business. This is currently the Key Bank building.

In “History of Teton Valley Idaho,” B.W. Driggs noted that music was always an important part of life in the valley. “The most beloved music of Teton Valley was undoubtedly its dance music. There was a dance somewhere every week.”

### **Construction of Teton Valley Hospital**

In the early years of its settlement, before there were doctors, midwives played a critical role. They often traveled long distances in dangerous weather and frequently were paid with food or produce. They were trained by the LDS Relief Society.

One memorable doctor who practiced in Driggs from 1906 to 1915 was Dr. Ora Keith, an unmarried woman physician. She would make house calls with a team of horses, even during a blizzard. In her honor, many people named their children Ora or Keith.

The first Teton Valley Hospital, sponsored by the City of Driggs and built with Works Progress Administration funds, was dedicated on May 9, 1939. Dr. O.D. Hoffman, the first physician at the hospital, explained that before the hospital opened house calls were made in a covered sleigh with a stove inside.

### **Arrival of Grand Targhee Resort and Development of Tourism-Based Economy**

In the early 1960s, the Driggs economy was in decline. Through a community effort aimed at stimulating the local economy and with state and federal aid, a road was cleared and Grand Targhee Ski Resort was constructed. It is located 12 miles east of Driggs within Caribou-Targhee National Forest in Teton County, Wyo. The resort opened December 26, 1969 with two lifts, the Targhee Lodge and day lodge. It was officially dedicated by Governor Samuelson February 2, 1970.

Over the years the resort has expanded. Currently it offers nearly 2,000 acres of terrain for skiing. More than 500 inches of light powdery snow falls on Fred’s Mountain each year. During the winter the resort offers a variety of activities including snowshoe and snowmobile tours, sleigh ride dinners and spa services. In the summer, the resort hosts two major music festivals, the annual Targhee Festival and Bluegrass Festival. Horseback riding, mountain bike races and marathons are other summer activities at Grand Targhee.

In part due to the success of Grand Targhee Ski & Summer Resort, the Driggs economy shifted from being agriculturally-based to one that is centered on tourism activities. With ever increasing business

and residential development in Driggs, efforts of local residents to help ensure the city's economic viability appear to have been successful. Planning has begun for the future development of Grand Targhee Resort including expansion of Peaked Mountain facilities and a proposed expanded base area with more lodging units.

### *Time Capsule Vision for 2050*

Thoughts on the future of Driggs were gathered during an update of the city's Comprehensive Plan in 2005 and 2006. Input was gathered through surveys distributed to local businesses and the public. Residents provided input through a visioning meeting that included dialogue in small groups about what people liked about the current community and what they wanted to see in the future. Neighborhood mapping meetings also were held as part of the process.

An active downtown area was of particular interest to the public. Residents envisioned an attractive, revitalized area diversified in its character. Creation of a pedestrian environment was seen as an important step in attracting retailers interested in operating shops and restaurants downtown that support Driggs' tourism-based economy. Redevelopment and conversion of office to retail uses on Main Street was identified as an important goal.

Community members wanted to encourage the development of residential units within walking distance of the downtown area, and overall desired a city that is more compact and interconnected. Mixed land uses and compact building design were seen as ways to achieve this goal. Distinctive and attractive neighborhoods with pathways and other amenities favorable to walking were envisioned.

Residents wanted to see a greater variety of occupations and housing opportunities in the city. This diversification will be critical for the city's long-term economic viability. The tourism-related industry will continue to play an important role in the future of Driggs.

An abundance of parks and recreational opportunities was identified as a shared vision for the city. The city's park system and associated recreational activities will continue to expand. This will ensure greater opportunities for the city's youth. The city's Master Plan also identifies the facilitation of the provision of school facilities as an overarching goal.

While moving forward, the city would like to keep its unique character. Residents want to preserve the city's natural beauty, critical environmental areas, open space and farmland. Through beautification, maintenance, restoration or demolition of structures and surroundings, a strong sense of place should be created or preserved.

The city will continue to balance growth with the scenic and small-town character that attract people to the area. With effective planning, cooperation between private and nonprofit groups and visionary leadership, the City of Driggs can move ahead to a future that is in harmony with the past.

## *Mayors*

1919 to May 1921: E.C. Dalby, Chairman, Village of Driggs Board of Trustees

May 1921 to January 1923: W.B. Stone, Chairman

February 1923 to May 1923: Ira R. Fowler, Chairman

May 1923 to May 1931: F.C. Madsen, Chairman

May 1931 to May 1933: H.L. Crandall, Chairman

May 1933 to May 1935: F.C. Madsen, Chairman

May 1935 to April 1937: J.H. Harper, Chairman

April 1937 to May 1938: E. Ralph Kearsley, Chairman

May 1938 to May 1949: V. Penfold, Chairman

May 1949 to May 1951: James Hunter, Chairman

May 1951 to May 1957: Don Choules, Chairman

May 1957 to May 1959: William Ellis, Chairman

May 1959 to January 1966: Reed Christensen, Chairman

January 1966 to March 1969: Don Choules, Chairman

March 1969 to January 1994: Alvin Dalley, Mayor, City of Driggs

January 1994 to January 1998: Velma Dustin, Mayor

January 1998 to January 2010: Louis B. Christensen, Mayor

January 2010 to Present: Dan Powers Mayor

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