

SHARE:  [Join Our Email List](#)

When viewing on a mobile device- please scroll down and click on "view entire message" to view Buffalo Bytes in correct formatting

To be included in Buffalo Bytes, please email your items to bytes@custersd.com. Submissions must be received by Wednesday at 5:00 PM to be included in that week's issue. Thank you!





Customer expectations are changing faster than ever and with back-to-school and gift-giving fast approaching, it's now more important than ever to understand what's driving buying decisions. Customers are shopping more intentionally, comparing prices more carefully, and expecting a seamless, personalized experience wherever they choose to buy.

The latest retail outlook suggests, as you might expect, that businesses that adapt to these shifts will be in a stronger position going into 2027 and beyond, while those relying on yesterday's playbook may find it harder to compete.

At the same time, retailers continue to face higher operating costs, workforce challenges, and rapidly changing technology.

So, what can retailers do to meet changing needs in the market without going broke?

Here's what you need to know about buyers and where the biggest opportunities are.

Consumers Are More Selective

Recent industry forecasts point to a consumer who's still spending—but spending more carefully. Shoppers are comparing prices, looking for convenience, and expecting a seamless experience whether they shop in-store, online, or both.

Many households remain budget-conscious, making every purchase more deliberate. Thankfully, that doesn't *necessarily* mean customers are buying less. It means they're looking for the best combination of price, quality, and experience before deciding.

For local retailers, that creates an opportunity to emphasize what national chains often can't such as personalized service, knowledgeable staff neighbors know, community connections/support, and unique products and experiences.

These advantages continue to be powerful differentiators.

Convenience Is Now Expected

Today's customers want flexibility. Whether they're browsing online before visiting your store, ordering for pickup, or shopping entirely in person, convenience influences buying decisions almost as much as pricing.

While you don't need every new technology to stay competitive, having accurate business information online, an easy-to-navigate website, and active social media can help customers choose your business first.

However...

Technology Is a Competitive Advantage

Artificial intelligence, inventory management tools, and customer data platforms are becoming more accessible for businesses of every size. While large retailers may have bigger budgets, many affordable tools now help independent businesses automate routine tasks, improve marketing, and better understand customer behavior.

But don't adopt technology for its own sake. Find tools that save time so you can improve the customer experience.

Inflation Is Tops

Inflation, supply chain disruptions, and operating expenses continue to challenge many businesses. Recent surveys show inflation remains one of the top concerns among small business owners, affecting everything from pricing decisions to hiring plans.

It's also a top concern for buyers, who are caught between being able to afford a purchase now and waiting knowing prices may increase.

Regularly reviewing inventory, vendor relationships, and pricing strategies can help protect margins without sacrificing customer satisfaction.

Additionally, you can use concerns over cost increases to encourage your potential customers to buy now.

Looking Ahead

The retail outlook isn't all positive or all negative. Businesses that understand their customers and stay flexible, focusing on delivering a great experience are in the strongest position to navigate whatever comes next.

If you need additional help understanding the economic drivers and challenges in your area, the chamber is committed to sharing timely business insights and resources to help members make informed decisions.

Whether you're preparing for seasonal demand, exploring new technology, or looking for ways to strengthen customer loyalty, the chamber is here to support your success.

*Christina Metcalf is a writer and women's speaker who believes in the power of story. She works with small businesses, chambers of commerce, and business professionals who want to make an impression and grow a loyal customer/member base. She is the author of *The Glinda Principle*, rediscovering the magic within.*

Facebook: @metcalfwriting

Instagram: @christinametcalfauthor

LinkedIn: @christinametcalf5



Dawn Murray
Executive Director

2026 EVENTS CALENDAR

A full list of 2026 events by the Chamber and other organizations.

[Click to download calendar](#)



August 7-14
Custer Cruisin'

August 21-22
Custer Crazy Days

August 22
Community-Wide Rummage Sale

September 10
Mixer at Camp Bob Marshal
5pm

September 17
Mickelson Trail Trek Reception

September 18-20
Mickelson Trail Trek



SOUTH DAKOTA RETAILERS ASSOCIATION NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: August 13, 2026

Contact: Laureen Klapka, 605.224.5050 lklapka@sdra.org

Educational Seminars: Credit Card Surcharging

PIERRE, SD – After labor, most retailers' highest operating cost is credit card swipe fees. This has many South Dakota businesses wondering about the best way to handle the increasing costs and allowable options for counteracting those increases.

“Credit card brand rules dictate when and if a business can pass on a swipe fee and also dictate the amount the business must absorb,” said Nathan Sanderson, Executive Director of the South Dakota Retailers Association. “Surcharging rules can be both tricky and confusing to navigate.”

Sanderson added that there are also significant financial and business implications if surcharges are applied incorrectly.

To help South Dakota businesses understand the rules governing swipe fees, the Retailers Association is on the road providing free educational forums on the topic. They'll feature a brief presentation followed by an opportunity for questions and answers. The forums are open to all South Dakota businesses.

LOCATIONS & DATES

Chamberlain

Berry + Basil, 123 S Main St
Tuesday, Aug. 18
9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. (CT)

Custer

Sage Creek Grille, 611 Mt Rushmore Rd
Thursday, Aug. 20
3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. (MT)

Milbank

The Bank, 301 Main St.
Tuesday, Aug. 25
9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. (CT)

Canton

Chamber of Commerce, 600 W. 5th St.
Wed., Sept. 23
9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. (CT)

Time permitting, the Retailers Assoc. will also provide information about a variety of other business-related topics including property tax, sales tax, and new nicotine sales regulations





Forest Service News Release

Media Contact: Krista Landreneau, Program Specialist
(605) 673-9201
krista.landreneau@usda.gov
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/ro2/blackhills>

Safety Alert: Closure for Pactola Loop B & Osprey Trail during construction

(Rapid City, SD, August 5, 2026) — The Black Hills National Forest has issued a temporary closure order for the Pactola Loop B Campground, the Osprey Trailhead, and National Forest System (NFS) Trail #58 (Osprey Trail) to ensure public safety during active construction in the area. The closure will take effect August 16, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. and remain in place through June 23, 2027, at 11:59 p.m., unless rescinded earlier.

Construction activities in and around Pactola Loop B and the Osprey Trail include improvements that require heavy equipment, restricted work zones and ongoing site modifications. The closure is necessary to prevent injury or harm to individuals and protect public health and safety while crews conduct work within and along Pactola Loop B.

Forest Service personnel have attempted to address safety concerns through on-site education and public notification; however, the nature of the construction work requires fully restricting access. The Forest will post closure maps and signs at all practical locations near the area and trailheads.

The Forest is committed to reopening the area as soon as construction is completed. For more information on this temporary closure, contact the Black Hills National Forest Supervisor's Office at (605) 673-9200 or visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/ro2/blackhills>.

About the Forest Service: The Forest Service has brought people and communities together to answer the call of conservation for more than 100 years. Grounded in world-class science and technology — and rooted in communities — the Forest Service connects people to nature and recreation opportunities. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, supports the nation's forest industry and energy needs, and operates the largest and most respected wildland fire and forestry research organizations in the world. By providing assistance to state and private landowners and working with tribes and other partners, the Forest Service also helps steward an additional 900 million forested acres within the U.S.

###

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.




Forest Service
 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Black Hills National Forest



STAGE
FIRE
RESTRICTIONS

The current restrictions are in effect starting 12:01 a.m. on Monday, July 27, 2026, through December 27, 2026, unless rescinded earlier.

Fires, Campfires, and Stove Fires



PROHIBITED: Building, maintaining, attending or using a fire, campfire, or stove fire, including charcoal and briquettes.

Vehicles



PROHIBITED: Possessing or using a motor vehicle off established roads, motorized trails or established parking areas, except when parking in an area devoid of vegetation within 10 feet of the vehicle.

Explosives



ALWAYS PROHIBITED: Using explosives, including fireworks, flares, exploding targets, or other incendiary devices.

Propane and Liquid Petroleum Devices



PERMITTED: Devices fueled by liquid petroleum or LPG fuels that can be turned on and off. Such devices can only be used in an area that is barren or cleared of all overhead and surrounding flammable materials within 3 feet of the device.

Smoking



PROHIBITED: Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle, or building.

Welding



PROHIBITED: Welding or operating an acetylene or other torch with open flame.

Black Hills National Forest
 1019 N. 5th Street
 Custer, SD 57730
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r02/blackhills>
 (605) 673-9200

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

[Printable Copy](#)

<https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Buffalo-Bytes-August-13--2026.html?oid=1116591913941&aid=t0GB3MDob-8>

7/96



FINALIST

HELP US WIN A \$100K RESCUE TRUCK!



**We are 1 of 5
National Finalists!**

- Vote Daily: July 29 – Aug 14
- 1 Vote Per Email every 24 hours
- 100% Free

SCAN ME



SCAN HERE

VOTE DAILY!

[Vote Now](#)

BUSES ARE COMING

August Schedule

COLLETTE BUS TOUR BUS TIMES

11:15 AM - 12:45 PM

THURSDAY & SATURDAY

1:00 PM - 2:15 PM

TUESDAY & SUNDAY

INSIGHT VACATION BUS TIMES

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

FRIDAY



CHAMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

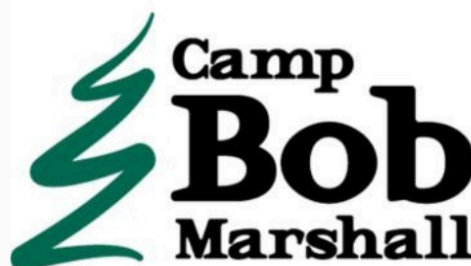


Sign up Today!

Chamber Mixer



Hosted By:



September 10th from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Held at Camp Bob Marshall

25007 Camp Bob Marshall Rd, Custer, SD

MIXERS ARE A GREAT WAY TO MEET, MIX, AND MINGLE PLEASE
BRING A FRIEND AND ENJOY SOME REFRESHMENTS

Help Us Roll Out the Welcome!

The Mickelson Trail Trek returns to Custer September 18–20, bringing more than 600 cyclists to our community to experience the beauty of the Black Hills and the George S. Mickelson Trail.

To welcome riders to Custer, the Custer Chamber is hosting a Welcome Banquet & Hospitality Night on Thursday, September 17. We're looking for local businesses and community supporters to help make this a memorable start to their Trek experience.

Fat Tire Sponsor — \$300

Help us create an unforgettable Custer welcome for our visiting riders.

Road Bike Sponsor — \$200

Support the event and help showcase Custer's welcoming spirit to cyclists from across the region and beyond.

Hospitality Night Sponsor — \$100

Help us provide a fun and welcoming evening for riders before they hit the trail.

A Reminder for Our Local Businesses

2026 MIXER DATES

JANUARY 29-GOLD PAN
FEBRUARY 19-PREMIER EYE CARE
MARCH 19- CUSTER'S RENDEZVOUS
MAY 21- LEWIS REALTY
SEPTEMBER 10-CAMP BOB MARSHALL
NOVEMBER 19- BRADEEN REAL ESTATE
DECEMBER 10- STARR INSURANCE



Follow Us on Facebook & Instagram



August 19th



*Built Right Roofing & Construction
Network Troubleshooting & Installation LLC
John's Handyman Service
The Black Hills Bakery- Gluten Free
Black Hills Disc Golf Club
Hobo's Healing Heart
Black Hills Roofing
Wolff's Plumbing & Heating
Aardvark Pest Management
Custer Reloading Center
Fort Welikeit Campground
Black Hills Sewer and Drain Solutions
KND Accounting Solutions
Weather Tite Exteriors
Black Hills Lifestyle Magazine
Wild Spruce Market
Fly Badlands
PDQ Specialty Products
Xtreme Sports Simulators
The Christians Team-Broker Heath Shields
The Hills Finest-Bridal by Michelle
Don't Panic, LLC*



2026 Custer
Chamber

Member
Spotlight

**THIS
COULD BE
YOU!**

Our Chamber is powered by people like you—passionate, dedicated, and committed to making Custer a stronger, more vibrant community. Whether you're a local business owner, entrepreneur, or community advocate, there's a place for you here!

Join today and be our next Member Spotlight!

✦ THIS COULD BE YOU! ✦

Every week, the Custer Area Chamber of Commerce shines the spotlight on one of our incredible members—and your business could be next!

Our members are the heart of our business community. From local shops and restaurants to service providers, entrepreneurs, organizations, and community champions, we love showcasing the people who make Custer special. ❤️

Want to see YOUR business featured? Join the Custer Area Chamber of Commerce and become part of a network dedicated to supporting, promoting, and growing our local business community.

☀️ Join today. Be our next Member Spotlight! ☀️

We love shining a light on the amazing businesses that make our community great! ❤️

Would you like to see your business in the spotlight? ✨

Send a short write-up and a few photos to assistant@custersd.com — we can't wait to feature YOU! 📷





Workforce Knowledge Series

Discover opportunities and programs to help your business/organization.

Guarding the Gate:

Cybersecurity Essentials for Protecting Employee Data

Thursday, Aug. 13 | 11:30 a.m. CDT/10:30 a.m. MDT | Microsoft Teams

Learn ways to keep employee information safe. We'll share:

- Why this data matters
- Types of online threats to look for
- Security habits to use at work
- Policies and responsibilities employers should know
- What to do if something goes wrong
- Tools to protect information

Registration required.



Scan QR code or go to link. Click on calendar listing to register.

tinyurl.com/dlr-workshops



Equal Opportunity Program

Crossroads Church & Guests

Online Auction - Custer, SD

Online Bidding Closes Tuesday Aug. 18th, 2026, 4:00 PM

Properties located at 1): Bradeen Auction Facility 9 W. Mt. Rushmore Rd. & 12480 US Hwy 16A, Custer, SD

Featuring: 2017 Ranger Reata boat and trailer, NICE!, '74 Stoddard 2 horse trailer; '97 Chevy 1500, Long box, 4x4, ex-cab; 640 Suzuki Motorcycle; 350 Yamaha Motorcycle; Emotion "Tandamonium" 16' kayak, nice; DR Promax52T, only 4hrs of run time; Electric wheelchair lift, 700lbs lift & weather resistant; Little Giant ladder system; Dewalt folding table for chop saw/table saw, etc.; Stihl gas trimmer; DR pull behind gas mower; Champion 400 Watt generator; Outland "Firebowl" propane fire pit; Craftsman deluxe power miter saw; Galvanized exhaust fan, new; Remington electric pole saw, new; Central Machine mini metal lathe; Pro-Tech table saw; large Dremel scroll saw; Tech Life mini power saw; leather love seat; leather sofa/sleeper; Craftsman 6.0 lawn mower, like new; B&D electric leaf blower; 2 Western saddles and pack saddle; Sony 36" flatscreen TV; Wicker living room set & Wicker Trundle bed & mattress, both nice!; another kayak; computer desk; hutch; 6-drawer dresser; rocking chair; 12 gauge Remington shotgun; .22 bolt action rifle; Viper pool cue & case; Snow blower, gas; outdoor wheel chair lift; 2 lifting recliners and so MUCH MORE! **Auctioneers Note:** Crossroads Church members and friends have donated some exceptional items for this auction! Many are new or like new condition. Quality donations are still being accepted through Friday. Please support this wonderful event. .bid your BEST!



Note from BJ Shipp & Crossroads Church: Crossroads Church is excited to announce our Online Auction Fundraiser! This is a wonderful opportunity to support our church while bidding on a variety of unique items. Every bid helps us continue the mission and ministry of Crossroads Church. Your participation directly supports our church's programs, outreach efforts, and new ministry center expansion. Thank you for your generosity and for being a part of what God is doing through Crossroads Church. Happy bidding and thank you for your support.

OWNER:

Crossroads Church
& Guests
Custer, SD



See complete details & photos on www.bradeenauction.com



THE BLUEPRINT

Custer County Democratic Party



August Breakfast Get-together

Saturday, August 1st 9:30AM @ Maria's Mexican Restaurant

216 W Mt Rushmore Road, Custer

RSVP by Friday noon, July 31st to ccsddp21info@gmail.com



Order your Custer County Democrat shirt and grab some Summer Raffle tickets to pass along in the community.



CCDP Parade Float at the Custer County Fair in Hermosa

Sunday, August 9 10:00 AM Line-up & Judging / 11:00 AM Parade

If you're able to volunteer as a walker, please let us know. We'd love to have you with us.

August Business Meeting

Thursday, August 20th : 5:30 PM Potluck Hors d'oeuvres 6:00 PM Meeting

Custer County Library – Pine room - 447 Crook St, Custer, SD 57730

Custer Rummage Sale
Saturday, August 22nd

MORE INFORMATION
COMING SOON!

DemsWork: Medical Debt
Relief Through Oct 1

Custer County Democrats of SD
PO Box 5065 - Custer, SD 57730
ccsddp21info@gmail.com
@custercountymdemocratsouthdakota

"Let the people rule." ~ Theodore Roosevelt
a lifelong naturalist, he protected lands by establishing monuments
and refuges that helped launch modern conservation.

The Custer County Democrats invite everyone who values and supports our vision to promote Democracy, Economic Justice, Universal Human Rights, Environmentalism, and a Culture of Peace to join our growing community.



**SAVE THE
DATE** **FREE
SEMINAR**

20

**AUGUST
2026**

TOPICS:

CREDIT CARD SURCHARGING, OWNER
OCCUPIED PROPERTY TAX RELIEF, AND MORE



BLACK HILLS NATURE SHOP

DISCONTIUED APPAREL · VENDOR SAMPLES · BOOKS

Custer's famous sidewalk sale event,
now with more LOCAL PARK MERCHANDISE!





August
21-22



833
MT. RUSHMORE
CUSTER, SD
57730

Friday 8/21:
Crazy Days I

9:00am-5:00pm

Everything priced to move!

Saturday 8/22:
Crazy Days 2

9:00am-2:00pm

Last hour sale - fill a bag for \$2 !!





On the tables:

- Adult & youth apparel
- Books
- Puzzles & games
- Household goods
- Plush animals



Black Hills Parks and Forests Association is a non-profit organization supporting wonder and exploration through stewardship of YOUR public lands..



South Dakota Enhanced Conceal Carry Class

This is a One day Class

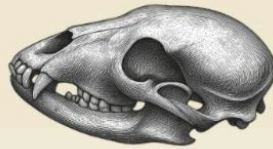
Saturday Aug 22nd 2026 9:00am to 4:30pm

The Enhanced Permit allows you carry in 39 states including MN, NE, WI, NV, NH, WA, NM and SC

Class size is limited so register early.

For additional information or to register for the class you may contact the instructor at echo.ft.sd@gmail.com, contact us at 605-673-3222 or by e-mail at southernhillstactical@gwtc.net

BLACK HILLS PARKS & FORESTS ASSOCIATION PRESENTS



Field Notes

Escape the *Rally*... Find the *Wild*



Animal Tracking

• Black Hills Flora & Fauna •

Wildlife Signs & Calls



With Tom Tonkin, Education Specialist

1.5 hours

\$10 per person

Family rate option

Interactive

Whether you're here for the rally or in spite of it, this is your chance to discover the Black Hills in a way that few see it.

WHAT WE'LL EXPLORE

Animal tracking and survival techniques explained through real-world examples

The plants and wildlife of the Black Hills and surrounding ecosystems

Hidden meanings behind animal calls and signs

Interactive Q&A where you can test your knowledge and curiosity



BLACK HILLS
PARKS &
FORESTS
ASSOCIATION

-Purchase tickets here-



August 14th • 5PM-6:30PM • 833 Mt Rushmore Rd



BHPFA.ORG • BLACK HILLS, SOUTH DAKOTA



South Dakota Enhanced Conceal Carry Class

This is a One day Class

Saturday Aug 29th 2026 9:00am to 4:30pm

The Enhanced Permit allows you carry in 39 states including
MN, NE, WI, NV, NH, WA, NM and SC

Class size is limited so register early.

For additional information or to register for the class you may
contact the instructor at www.sodakian.com, contact us at
605-673-3222 or by e-mail at
southernhillstactical@gwtc.net

BLACK HILLS PARKS & FORESTS ASSOCIATION PRESENTS



Field Notes

An Introduction to the Art of Nature Observation



Animal Tracking

· *Black Hills Flora & Fauna* ·

Wildlife Signs & Calls



With Tom Tonkin, Education Specialist

1.5 hours

\$10 per person

Family rate option

Interactive

Through photos, videos, and stories, you'll discover how naturalist skills can deepen your understanding of the natural world around us.

WHAT WE'LL EXPLORE

Animal tracking and survival techniques explained through real-world examples

The plants and wildlife of the Black Hills and surrounding ecosystems

Hidden meanings behind animal calls and signs

Interactive Q&A where you can test your knowledge and curiosity



Find event information and
purchase tickets here



September 4th • 5PM-6:30PM • 833 Mt Rushmore Rd



BHPFA.ORG · BLACK HILLS, SOUTH DAKOTA

Music in Harbach Park

Summer 2026

Custer, SD

Live Looping with
QUAKEQUATION

June 23rd

August 11th

September 8th

6:30-8:30 PM

Sponsored by



Dementia Dialogues®

Dementia Dialogues® is a 5-module, evidence-informed nationally registered training course designed to educate community members and caregivers for persons who exhibit signs and symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD).

JOIN US FOR THIS **FREE** TRAINING WORKSHOP
HOSTED BY
CUSTER SENIOR CENTER

Continuing education approved for EMS, Dental, Long Term Care Administrators, Social Work, Occupational Therapy, Chiropractor and CHW/CHR professionals



Location: Custer Senior Center 538 Mt. Rushmore Rd. | Custer, SD 57730



Scan the QR
Code to Register
Today

Part 1 -September 10, 2026 9:00am to 1:00pm

Module 1 - The Basic Facts: An Overview of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias

Module 2 - Keep the Dialogue Going: Strategies for Effective Communication

Part 2 - September 11, 2026 9:00am to 1:00pm

Module 3 - It's a Different World: Understanding the Impact of the Environment & Ways to Promote Independence

Module 4 - It's Nothing Personal: Addressing Challenging Behaviors

Module 5 - Now What Do We Do? Creative Problem Solving

For more information: Contact Tonya Moschell email: tonya.moschell@sdfmc.org

SOUTH DAKOTA
Foundation for Medical Care



Office for the Study of Aging
Arnold School of Public Health
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

R.I.S.E.

SUICIDE PREVENTION & REMEMBRANCE WALK



*Sometimes the bravest thing we can do is simply show up—
for ourselves and for each other.*



TOGETHER, WE WALK.
TOGETHER, WE HEAL.
TOGETHER, **WE RISE.**

Join us for a morning of hope, healing, remembrance, and community as we come together to honor loved ones, support one another, and raise awareness for suicide prevention.

SEPTEMBER 12, 2026

The R.I.S.E. Suicide Prevention & Remembrance Walk is more than a walk—it's an opportunity to remind one another that no one has to face life's struggles alone.

Together we'll enjoy a peaceful walk around the beautiful shoreline of Stockade Lake, taking time to reflect, remember, encourage one another, and celebrate the lives that continue to inspire us.



EVENT SCHEDULE



Custer Lutheran Fellowship
12622 US Hwy 16A
Custer, South Dakota



7:00 a.m. – Registration Opens
8:15 a.m. – Walk Begins



Whether you're walking in memory of someone you've lost, supporting a friend or family member, or simply standing alongside your community, every step helps send a powerful message:

Hope is real. Help is available. You are never alone.



Together, we can make a difference—one conversation, one connection, and one step at a time.



MEMORIAL BUTTONS

We invite you to honor someone special with a memorial button during the walk. If you would like a memorial button created for a loved one, please complete the memorial button request form and email it (along with a photo and the name of your loved one). We'll have your button ready for you before the walk begins.

(Visit Rise-Custer.com for form)



LEARN MORE AT RISE-CUSTER.COM

You are not alone. Help is here. 

September 12, 2026



Black Hills Rails to Ales

George S. Mickelson Trail



from Hill City to Custer

16 Scenic Miles on

The George S. Mickelson Trail

starts at Tracy Park in Hill City ends in Custer at:

Mt. Rushmore Brewing Company

\$79 registration includes:

Lunch at Mt. Rushmore Brewing Company

Live Music & Door Prizes • Branded Beer Glass

event details & registration: MickelsonTrailAffiliates.com

YOU'RE INVITED TO

CUSTER COUNTY HEALTHCARE TOWN HALL

★ YOUR VOICE. OUR COMMUNITY. BETTER HEALTHCARE FOR SOUTH DAKOTA ★



MONDAY,
AUGUST 17



6:00 PM TO
7:30 PM MT



CUSTER COUNTY LIBRARY
PINE ROOM
447 CROOK ST #4, CUSTER,
SD 57730



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

CALLIE STAINBROOK-DEWAR

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE ORGANIZER

✉ callie@unitedtoday.org

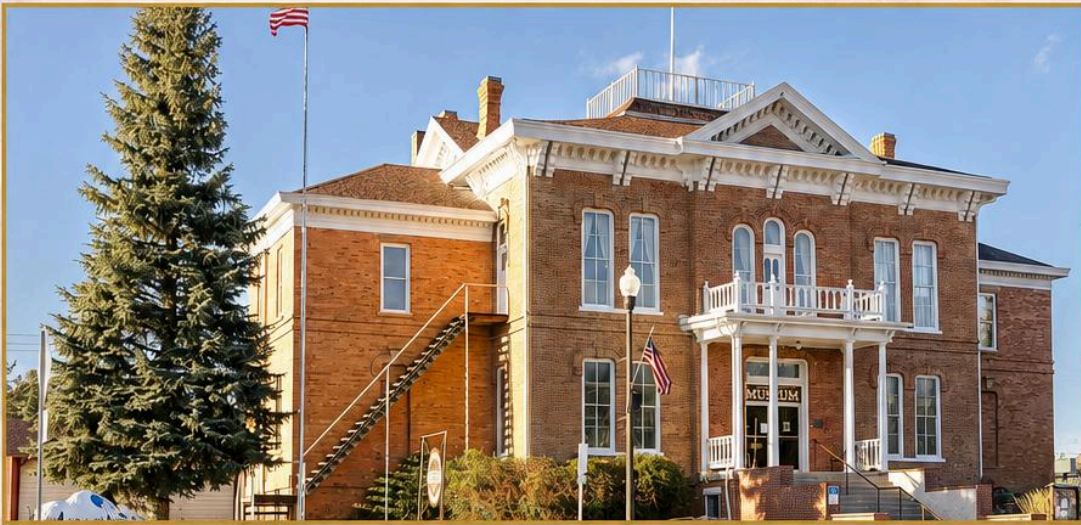
UNITED
TODAY
STRONGER
TOMORROW

CONSTITUTION BEE

A FUN, FRIENDLY TEST OF CONSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Celebrating America's 250th Year

FRIDAY • SEPTEMBER 18, 2026
1881 COURTHOUSE MUSEUM



AGES 8-11
PRIZES!



AGES 12-15+
PRIZES!



Open to youth in Custer County.

Come test your knowledge of the U.S. Constitution
in a fun, friendly competition.

Costumes encouraged!

FREE TO ENTER

Pre-registration encouraged • Name, age & parent contact information

1881courthousemuseum@gwtc.net • 605-673-2443

Day-of registration & check-in: 10:30–10:45 AM • Competition begins at 11:00 AM

Sponsored by **LEWIS REALTY**



PAGEANT HILL THURSDAY LEAGUE



Join us every Thursday for competition
and fun!

 **THURSDAYS**  **ROUND STARTS
5:30 PM**

**MEET AT:
THE PAVILION**

Every Thursday,
April-October

Contact:
✉ jellis0836@me.com

Sponsored by: 

Custer Writers Group

Thursdays at 5:45pm

Pine Room
•
Custer Library

July 30
August 13
August 27
September 10
September 24
October 8
October 22
November 12
November 24
December 10
December 22

Sponsored by:



*Stories
matter.*

... Free & Open to the Public ...

Debunking five common Social Security myths

*Reported by Jared Slagle MBA,
Edward Jones, Member SIPC*

Social Security is often one of the most important income sources in retirement. Yet widespread myths about how it works can lead to confusion, unnecessary worry and poor planning decisions. Here's the truth behind five of the most common misconceptions.

Myth 1: Social Security is going broke.

You've probably heard this one, but the full picture is more nuanced. According to the 2026 Social Security Board of Trustees Report, if Congress does nothing, the program would need to reduce benefits starting in 2032, paying roughly 78 cents for every dollar owed.

But that's just one scenario. Congress could raise the combined payroll tax from 12.4% to 16.65%, which the trustees estimate would secure full benefits through 2100. Other options include eliminating the earnings cap subject to payroll tax or adjusting retirement ages. Lawmakers have tools to address this.

Myth 2: Social Security will cover all your retirement needs. Think of Social Security as a financial foundation, not the full building. According to the Social Security Administration, benefits replace only about 40% of pre-retirement income for a median earner. That means you'll likely need to account for most of your retirement income yourself. Building a strong personal savings strategy now can help close that gap.

Myth 3: You lose benefits permanently if you keep working. Not true. Social Security does have an "earnings test" that can temporarily reduce benefits for people who claim early and keep working. If your earnings exceed a set annual cap - which changes each year - Social

Security will withhold a portion of your benefits. But once you reach full retirement age, the Social Security Administration adjusts your monthly check higher to repay those withheld amounts over time.

Myth 4: An ex-spouse's benefits come out of your own. If you were married for at least 10 years and are currently unmarried, your former spouse may be eligible to collect on your earnings record, or you may be able to collect on theirs. Divorced spouse benefits can be up to 50% of the other person's full retirement benefit. But those payments don't affect yours. Your monthly benefit is not reduced by anything paid to an ex-spouse or even a current spouse.

Myth 5: Social Security benefits are no longer taxed. Recent legislation caused some confusion here. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act did not eliminate taxes on Social Security benefits. If your combined income exceeds certain thresholds, you'll still owe taxes on a portion of your benefits.

The law also created a temporary deduction (available through 2028) for people 65 and older. Eligible taxpayers can deduct \$6,000 per qualifying filer if their modified adjusted gross income is \$75,000 or less for singles or \$150,000 for couples. The deduction phases out at \$175,000 for singles and \$250,000 for joint filers.

The more you understand Social Security, the more control you have over your retirement outcome. Grounding your decisions in facts rather than assumptions can make a meaningful difference in your long-term financial security.



Jared Slagle is a Financial Advisor with Edward Jones in Custer, SD. He can be reached at (605) 673-2198 or www.edwardjones.com/jared-slagle

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones and its financial advisors cannot provide tax advice. You should consult your qualified tax professional regarding your situation. Edward Jones, Member SIPC

[illegible]

I can help simplify life insurance



Steve Engelbrecht
Agent
750 West Mt. Rushmore Rd, Unit 6
Custer, SD 57730

Bus: 605-673-4141
www.protectcuster.com
steve@protectcuster.com

Talking about life insurance can be intimidating. That's where I come in. I can help you determine how life insurance will best fit your individual needs, and there's no guesswork with policy type, amount or budget. Contact me today.

Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.®

State Farm Life Insurance Company (Not licensed in MA, NY or WI)
State Farm Life and Accident Assurance Company (Licensed in NY and WI)
Bloomington, IL



Media Release



FREEDOM 250 AT MOUNT RUSHMORE DELIVERS MILLIONS IN ECONOMIC IMPACT AND GLOBAL EXPOSURE FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Mon., Aug. 10, 2026

CONTACT: *Katlyn Svendsen*, Global Public Relations & Content Services Senior Director, Travel South Dakota

PIERRE, S.D. – The Freedom 250 at Mount Rushmore celebration generated millions of dollars in economic activity while showcasing the state to audiences around the world.

A post-event analysis done by research firm Tourism Economics found the event generated an estimated **\$2.35 million in total economic impact**, including **nearly \$1.5 million in direct visitor spending**, while supporting area businesses, hotels, and local tax revenue.

More than **4,000 attendees** attended the event, with **87.7% traveling from overnight destinations** and representing **more than 40 states**.

The event's significance extended well beyond those attending in person and those that left their tax dollars in local communities. It also was viewed by millions across the world.

Broadcast and digital media coverage reached an estimated **53.7 billion audience impressions**, generating an estimated **\$50.7 million in publicity value**. Online interest also surged, with Travel South Dakota's website recording **146,535 sessions** during the event period—a **66% increase** over the previous week—and the livestream being viewed more than 107,000 times.

“The Freedom 250 at Mount Rushmore event demonstrated what happens when South Dakota has the opportunity to showcase one of America's most iconic landmarks on an international stage,” said James Hagen, Secretary of the South

Dakota Department of Tourism. "The economic benefits to our communities, combined with the extraordinary global exposure for South Dakota, will continue to pay dividends well into the future."

The Tourism Economics analysis also found the event immediately generated:

- **\$2.35 million** in total economic impact.
- **\$1.49 million** in direct visitor spending.
- More than **4,100 hotel room nights**.
- More than **\$1 million in lodging revenue**.
- Approximately **\$162,000** in combined state and local tax revenue.

The celebration also produced one of the strongest tourism weekends in recent Rapid City history. During the event, **hotel occupancy increased 5.5% year-over-year**, and Friday, July 3 recorded the highest single-day hotel revenue year-to-date as well as the top single day revenue-per-available room in the last two years.

The event was made possible through a partnership between the State of South Dakota, the U.S. Department of the Interior, the National Park Service and numerous federal, state and local partners. Following a five-year absence, the return of fireworks to Mount Rushmore National Memorial served as a centerpiece of the nation's 250th anniversary celebration.

The State of South Dakota invested \$2.8 million in planning and producing the Freedom 250 at Mount Rushmore celebration. This generated a return on investment that has already paid tremendous dividends and will continue to do so for years to come, thanks to the billions of earned media impressions. The costs include the pyrotechnics and lighting, media production, shuttle bus contracts, and cost recovery payments to the National Park Service.

"This event generated an estimated **\$2.35 million in direct economic impact** while delivering more than **53 billion media impressions** globally, introducing South Dakota to new and familiar audiences," Hagen said. "It's an investment that strengthened our tourism economy while reinforcing South Dakota's place as one of America's most iconic destinations."

The South Dakota Department of Tourism is comprised of Travel South Dakota and the South Dakota Arts Council. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen.

-30-

- **Media Notes:** Economic impact numbers are reported from Tourism Economic, an Oxford Economics Company.



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Black Hills National Forest

Forest Service News Release

Media Contact: Krista Landreneau, Program Specialist

(605) 673-9201

krista.landreneau@usda.gov

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/ro2/blackhills>

Black Hills National Forest issues new special order expanding camping opportunities

(Rapid City, SD, August 6, 2026) — The Black Hills National Forest has issued a new special order that expands public access for dispersed camping by updating the previous stay limit requirement. Under the former order, visitors were restricted to a maximum of 14 days of camping within any 60-day period. The newly issued order broadens this allowance to 14 collective days within a 28-day period, providing campers with increased flexibility and improved opportunities to enjoy National Forest lands.

This change reflects the Forest's ongoing commitment to supporting diverse recreation experiences while ensuring sustainable use of natural resources. The expanded stay limits were developed in response to public feedback, recreation

trends and land management needs across the Forest.

Forest officials emphasize that all visitors must continue to follow established regulations designed to protect natural and cultural resources, maintain public safety and preserve high-quality recreation conditions. Campers are encouraged to practice Leave No Trace principles and to consult current Forest guidelines before planning extended stays. The full special order and a detailed description of updated camping requirements are available on the Black Hills National Forest website.

For more information, contact the Black Hills National Forest Supervisor's Office at (605) 673-9200 or visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/ro2/blackhills>.

About the Forest Service: The Forest Service has brought people and communities together to answer the call of conservation for more than 100 years. Grounded in world-class science and technology — and rooted in communities — the Forest Service connects people to nature and recreation opportunities. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, supports the nation's forest industry and energy needs, and operates the largest and most respected wildland fire and forestry research organizations in the world. By providing assistance to state and private landowners and working with tribes and other partners, the Forest Service also helps steward an additional 900 million forested acres within the U.S.

###

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.



Black Hills National Forest

Forest Service News Release

Media Contact: Krista Landreneau, Program Specialist
(605) 673-9201
krista.landreneau@usda.gov
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/ro2/blackhills>

Safety Alert: Veteran's Point Area and Trail temporarily closed

(Rapid City, SD, August 10, 2026) — Beginning August 16, 2026, through May 20, 2027, the Veteran's Point Area and Veteran's Point Trail will be closed to public for safety due to construction associated with the Veteran's Point Trail Rehabilitation Project. This project includes asphalt and handrail repairs, construction of retaining walls, erosion control and overall trail improvements to enhance public access and safety.

The closure is necessary due to recurring safety concerns, including the public passing barricades, entering active construction areas, damaging construction materials, blocking access with unauthorized vehicles and causing interruptions to project operations. These issues have made it unsafe for the site to remain open during construction.

The contractor began mobilization on June 11, 2026, and project completion is now anticipated by mid-May 2027.- For more information on the Black Hills National Forest, call the Recreation Program at (605) 673-9200 or visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/ro2/blackhills>.

About the Forest Service: The Forest Service has brought people and communities together to answer the call of conservation for more than 100 years. Grounded in world-class science and technology — and rooted in communities — the Forest Service connects people to nature and recreation opportunities. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, supports the nation's forest industry and energy needs, and operates the largest and most respected wildland fire and forestry research organizations in the world. By providing assistance to state and private landowners and working with tribes and other partners, the Forest Service also helps steward an additional 900 million forested acres within the U.S.

###

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.



THEATRE 605

BLACK HILLS PLAYHOUSE

Theatre 605 Black Hills Playhouse Presents *What the Constitution Means to Me*

Tickets are [On Sale](#) Now!

For Immediate Release

Black Hills, S.D. — Theatre 605 **Black Hills Playhouse** presents its final production of the season, *What the Constitution Means to Me*, the boundary-breaking play breathing new life into our Constitution. *What the Constitution Means to Me* opens **August 9 and runs through August 15**, featuring 8 performances.

Playwright Heidi Schreck's thought-provoking play breathes new life into our Constitution and imagines how it will shape the next generation of Americans. Fifteen-year-old Heidi earned her college tuition by winning Constitutional debate competitions across the United States. In this hilarious, hopeful, and achingly human new play, she resurrects her teenage self in order to trace the profound relationship between four generations of women and the founding document that shaped their lives.

A special panel discussion in partnership with South Dakota News Watch will be held after the 2:00 pm opening matinee. Audience members are invited to join in on a conversation about the role journalists and news organizations play in protecting our freedoms.

A Pay-What-You-Can performance will be held on **August 8 at 7:30 pm. Plan to arrive early**, as this is expected to be a well-attended preview performance, and seating is first-come, first-served. Concessions available on site.

[Click here for more information](#), or call the friendly box office staff at 605-255-4141.

Play by Heidi Schreck

***Custer State Park passes are required and can be purchased in the snack bar.**

****8 PERFORMANCES. 14+, SOME STRONG LANGUAGE AND MATURE THEMES. DOCUDRAMA. THERE IS NO INTERMISSION FOR THIS PLAY.**

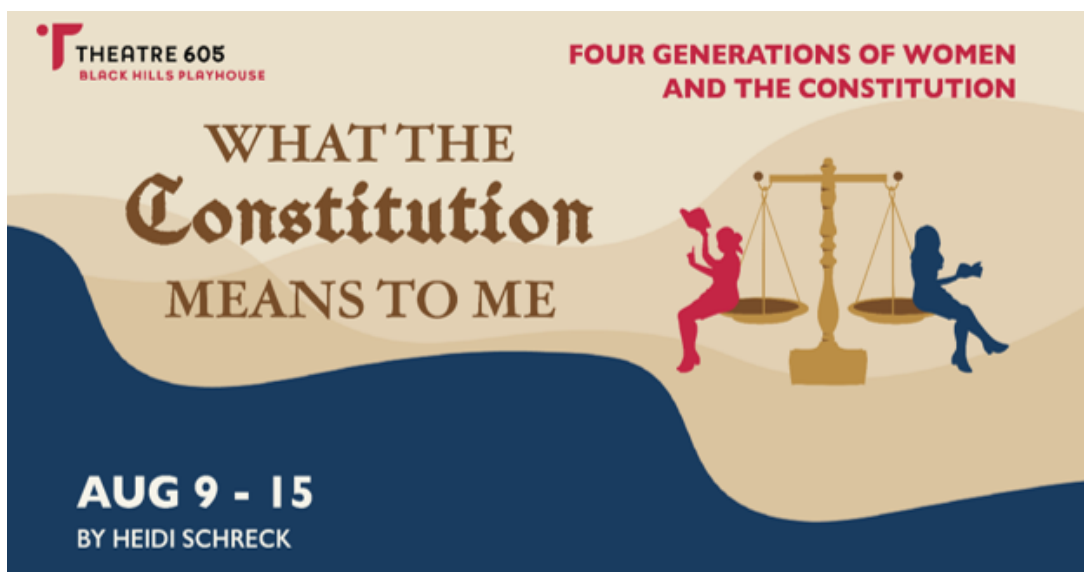
###

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW:

Linda Anderson
Executive Director
605 939-5271
linda@theatre605.org

About the Black Hills Playhouse
Telling Stories. Changing Lives.

Live theatre in Custer State Park.





BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK DESIGNATED INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY PARK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thurs., July 23, 2026

CONTACT: *Katlyn Svendsen*, Global Public Relations & Content Services Senior Director, Travel South Dakota, (605) 773-3301

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota is gaining international recognition as one of the world's premier destinations for experiencing the night sky.

Badlands National Park was designated an International Dark Sky Park by DarkSky International at a special evening ceremony Friday, July 17, becoming the first and only International Dark Sky Park in South Dakota and **one of only two in the National Park Service's Midwest Region.**

The internationally recognized designation places the park among an elite group of only 40 National Park Service units nationwide celebrated for protecting some of the world's darkest and most pristine night skies.

The designation is one of the most prestigious recognitions a place can receive for night sky conservation and visitor experience. Earning the designation requires years of planning, collaboration and investment to meet rigorous standards for sky quality, responsible lighting, public education and long-term stewardship.

"This designation is more than an incredible achievement for Badlands National Park. It's a milestone for South Dakota," said **James Hagen, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Tourism.** "It reinforces what visitors have long known: South Dakota's wide-open spaces offer experiences that are becoming increasingly rare. Standing beneath an unspoiled sky, watching the Milky Way stretch overhead, spotting the International Space Station, viewing constellations and planets, and experiencing true darkness is something travelers from around the world are actively seeking."

The recognition comes as interest in astrotourism continues to grow, with travelers planning vacations around destinations known for exceptional stargazing, astrophotography and nighttime outdoor experiences. The designation elevates South Dakota's profile among both domestic and international travelers while adding another world-class experience to the state's renowned outdoor recreation opportunities.

"This designation reflects years of collaboration and a shared commitment to protecting one of our most valuable natural and cultural resources," said **Eric Veach, Badlands National Park Superintendent.** "It also represents an opportunity to expand how visitors experience the park, through science, storytelling and a deeper connection to the night sky."

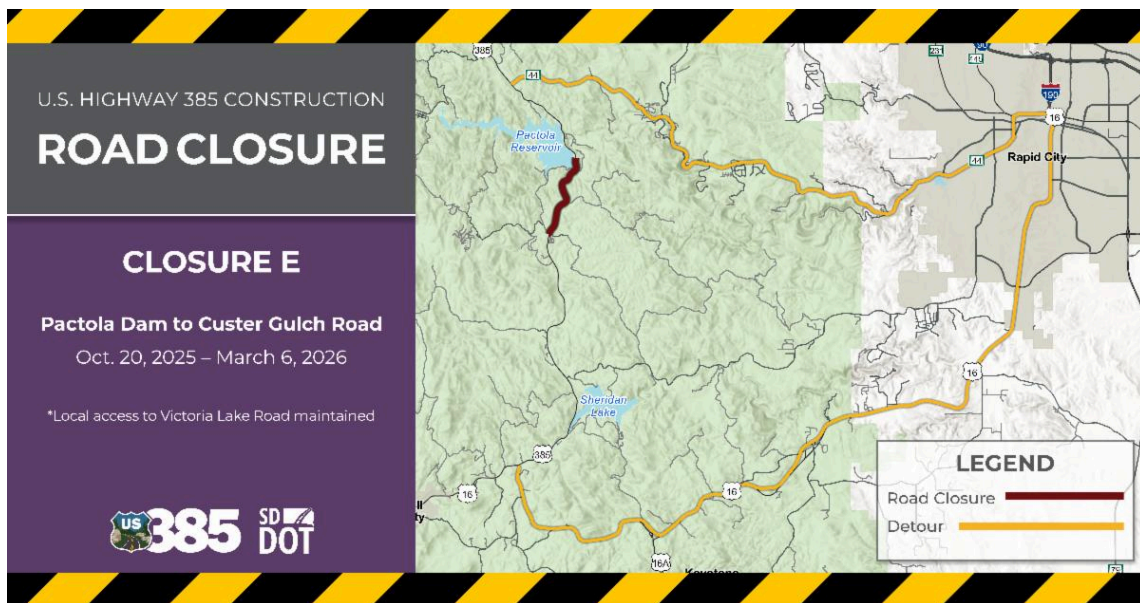
Few places are better suited for the honor than Badlands National Park. Its rugged buttes and pinnacles, remote setting, and exceptionally low levels of artificial light create an unforgettable backdrop for viewing the Milky Way, meteor showers, and thousands of stars with remarkable clarity. Combined with the park's rich paleontological resources, wildlife, Indigenous cultural significance, and breathtaking scenery and scenic drives, the Badlands offers visitors an experience unlike anywhere else in the region.

"This accomplishment is deeply personal to me. I grew up on a farm in the middle of South Dakota, where seeing the Milky Way each night felt ordinary," said **Marissa Marshall, executive director of the Badlands National Park Conservancy.** "It wasn't until recently that I realized how rare that experience has become. Protecting our night skies ensures future generations can experience that same sense of wonder."

Badlands National Park now joins more than 250 International Dark Sky Places around the world—an exclusive network of destinations recognized for preserving one of the planet's increasingly rare natural resources: truly dark skies.

For Travel South Dakota, the recognition reinforces the state's growing reputation for outdoor recreation and authentic experiences, encouraging visitors to extend their stays and discover South Dakota after sunset.

The South Dakota Department of Tourism is comprised of Travel South Dakota and the South Dakota Arts Council. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen.



Project Update

Friday, August 7, 2026

Sturgis Motorcycle Rally Construction Impacts:

- **Construction Activity Paused During Sturgis Motorcycle Rally:** Construction activities will be paused in the U.S. Highway 385 construction area (Pactola Dam to Calumet Road) starting on Wednesday, Aug. 5, 2026, and will resume on Tuesday, Aug. 18, 2026.
- **Sturgis Motorcycle Rally Traveler Information:** Find additional information, including frequently asked questions, on the [SDDOT Rally Traveler Information page](#).

Current Construction Area Road Conditions:

- Currently, the driving surface within the construction area is oiled blotter (a hard, packed surface that resembles asphalt) with pavement markings. The surface may feel slick, so drivers are encouraged to be cautious and allow additional stopping time, especially in wet conditions.



Upcoming Construction Updates:

- Final Surfacing: Final surfacing from Pactola Dam to Calumet Road is expected to be completed in the summer of 2027.

[View Construction Updates](#)



Construction Zone Reminders



- Follow posted speed limits in construction zones.
- Be aware of flaggers and other construction workers in the construction area.
- If you are following a pilot car, stay with the line, and do not stop or exit your vehicle in the project area.
- It is illegal to go beyond cones and barriers within construction zones even when the contractor is not working.

Stay Connected

Take a moment now to share this email with neighbors, friends, coworkers, and anyone else who might be interested in the U.S. Highway 385 Construction Project. Then encourage them to sign up for these project email updates at <https://us-385.com>.

A free text-in service is being used to communicate any major traffic changes. To subscribe, simply text "US385" to 605-566-4041. Subscribers can unsubscribe at any time.

HWY 385 ROUTING INITIATIVE



BH&B is sharing information related to the upcoming *Hwy 385 infrastructure improvement project* that will include *routing options* and continuous business promotion. BH&B's goal is to educate and to explain that this simple detour will not prevent, nor should it discourage visitors from enjoying their vacation in the Black Hills.

Visit Route Reimagined

A free text-in service is being used to communicate major traffic changes.

To subscribe, simply text "US385" to 605-566-4041.

Subscribers can unsubscribe at any time.

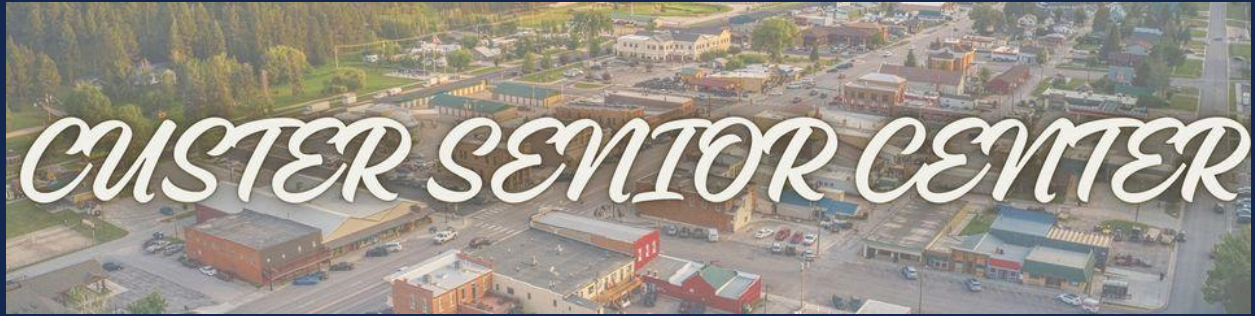


**U.S. HIGHWAY 385
CONSTRUCTION**
PENNINGTON-LAWRENCE COUNTY LINE TO SHERIDAN LAKE

Thank you for joining the SDDOT U.S. Highway 385 Text Update List! You will now receive the latest updates on this project via your mobile device. Thank you!

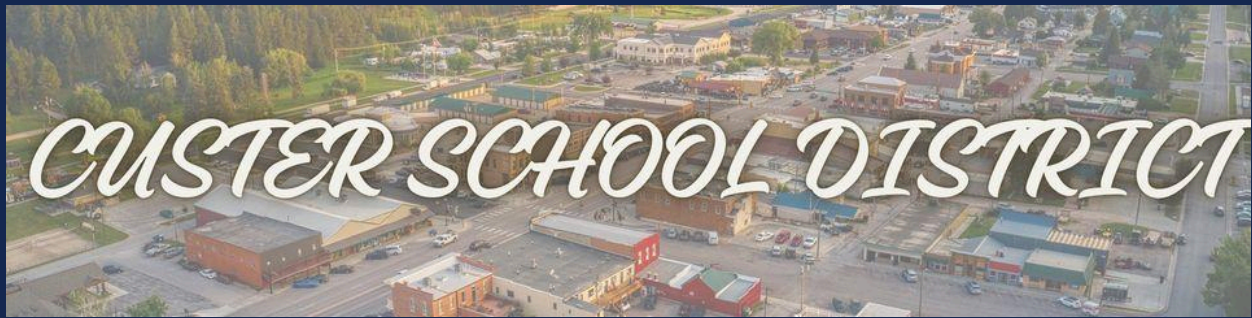
FREE TEXT ALERTS:
Text "US385" to 605-566-4041



June Activities





Schools Out For SUMMER!!



Job Available;

Custer Senior Center

Gift Shop Manager/Center Assistant

This job is for someone 55 years or older
as it is a grant from NICOA.

35- 40 hours a week

10 AM until 5 PM

Monday through Friday

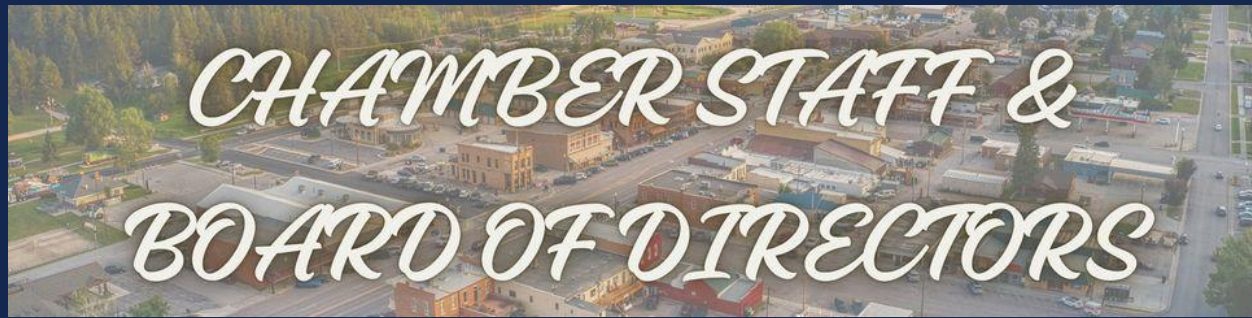
Please contact Lori

at the Custer Senior Citizen's Center

in person or at **605-673-2708**



Be sure to check out the Help Wanted section on our [Website](#):



CHAMBER STAFF

Dawn Murray
Executive Director
dmurray@custersd.com

Fred Baumann
Information Associate
fbaumann@custersd.com

Lacey Curl
Office Assistant
assistant@custersd.com

Office Assistant
bytes@custersd.com

Joel Behlings
Information Associate
info@custersd.com

2026

Board Of Directors

Craig Reindl – President
Corey Virtue – Vice President
Michelle Fischer – Treasurer
Carrie Moore– Secretary

Amanda Allcock

Amy Bailey
Miranda Boggs
Ronni Calvird
Scott Eastman

Monica McGowan – City Liaison

Tim Frederick – School Liaison

Lydia Austin – CSP Liaison

Jessica Noteboom – BID Board Liaison



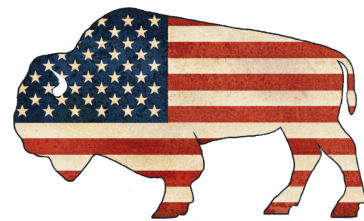
Our Address:

615 Washington Street
Custer, SD 57730

Phone Numbers:

605-673-2244
800-992-9818

dmurray@custersd.com / custersd.com



CUSTER
Chamber of Commerce

[Visit our Website](#)

[Send Us An Email](#)



When viewing on a mobile device- please scroll down and click on "view entire message" to view Buffalo Bytes in correct formatting

To be included in Buffalo Bytes, please email your items to bytes@custersd.com. Submissions must be received by Wednesday at 5:00 PM to be included in that week's issue. Thank you!





Customer expectations are changing faster than ever and with back-to-school and gift-giving fast approaching, it's now more important than ever to understand what's driving buying decisions. Customers are shopping more intentionally, comparing prices more carefully, and expecting a seamless, personalized experience wherever they choose to buy.

The latest retail outlook suggests, as you might expect, that businesses that adapt to these shifts will be in a stronger position going into 2027 and beyond, while those relying on yesterday's playbook may find it harder to compete.

At the same time, retailers continue to face higher operating costs, workforce challenges, and rapidly changing technology.

So, what can retailers do to meet changing needs in the market without going broke?

Here's what you need to know about buyers and where the biggest opportunities are.

Consumers Are More Selective

Recent industry forecasts point to a consumer who's still spending—but spending more carefully. Shoppers are comparing prices, looking for convenience, and expecting a seamless experience whether they shop in-store, online, or both.

Many households remain budget-conscious, making every purchase more deliberate. Thankfully, that doesn't *necessarily* mean customers are buying less. It means they're looking for the best combination of price, quality, and experience before deciding.

For local retailers, that creates an opportunity to emphasize what national chains often can't such as personalized service, knowledgeable staff neighbors know, community connections/support, and unique products and experiences.

These advantages continue to be powerful differentiators.

Convenience Is Now Expected

Today's customers want flexibility. Whether they're browsing online before visiting your store, ordering for pickup, or shopping entirely in person, convenience influences buying decisions almost as much as pricing.

While you don't need every new technology to stay competitive, having accurate business information online, an easy-to-navigate website, and active social media can help customers choose your business first.

However...

Technology Is a Competitive Advantage

Artificial intelligence, inventory management tools, and customer data platforms are becoming more accessible for businesses of every size. While large retailers may have bigger budgets, many affordable tools now help independent businesses automate routine tasks, improve marketing, and better understand customer behavior.

But don't adopt technology for its own sake. Find tools that save time so you can improve the customer experience.

Inflation Is Tops

Inflation, supply chain disruptions, and operating expenses continue to challenge many businesses. Recent surveys show inflation remains one of the top concerns among small business owners, affecting everything from pricing decisions to hiring plans.

It's also a top concern for buyers, who are caught between being able to afford a purchase now and waiting knowing prices may increase.

Regularly reviewing inventory, vendor relationships, and pricing strategies can help protect margins without sacrificing customer satisfaction.

Additionally, you can use concerns over cost increases to encourage your potential customers to buy now.

Looking Ahead

The retail outlook isn't all positive or all negative. Businesses that understand their customers and stay flexible, focusing on delivering a great experience are in the strongest position to navigate whatever comes next.

If you need additional help understanding the economic drivers and challenges in your area, the chamber is committed to sharing timely business insights and resources to help members make informed decisions.

Whether you're preparing for seasonal demand, exploring new technology, or looking for ways to strengthen customer loyalty, the chamber is here to support your success.

Christina Metcalf is a writer and women's speaker who believes in the power of story. She works with small businesses, chambers of commerce, and business professionals who want to make an impression and grow a loyal customer/member base. She is the author of The Glinda Principle, rediscovering the magic within.

Facebook: @metcalfwriting

Instagram: @christinametcalfauthor

LinkedIn: @christinametcalf5



Dawn Murray
Executive Director

2026 EVENTS CALENDAR

A full list of 2026 events by the Chamber and other organizations.

[Click to download calendar](#)



August 7-14
Custer Cruisin'

August 21-22
Custer Crazy Days

August 22
Community-Wide Rummage Sale



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Forest Service News Release

Media Contact: Krista Landreneau, Program Specialist
(605) 673-9201
krista.landreneau@usda.gov
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/ro2/blackhills>

Safety Alert: Closure for Pactola Loop B & Osprey Trail during construction

(Rapid City, SD, August 5, 2026) — The Black Hills National Forest has issued a temporary closure order for the Pactola Loop B Campground, the Osprey Trailhead, and National Forest System (NFS) Trail #58 (Osprey Trail) to ensure public safety during active construction in the area. The closure will take effect August 16, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. and remain in place through June 23, 2027, at 11:59 p.m., unless rescinded earlier.

Construction activities in and around Pactola Loop B and the Osprey Trail include improvements that require heavy equipment, restricted work zones and ongoing site modifications. The closure is necessary to prevent injury or harm to individuals and protect public health and safety while crews conduct work within and along Pactola Loop B.

Forest Service personnel have attempted to address safety concerns through on-site education and public notification; however, the nature of the construction work requires fully restricting access. The Forest will post closure maps and signs at all practical locations near the area and trailheads.

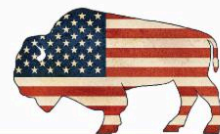
The Forest is committed to reopening the area as soon as construction is completed. For more information on this temporary closure, contact the Black Hills National Forest Supervisor's Office at (605) 673-9200 or visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/ro2/blackhills>.

About the Forest Service: The Forest Service has brought people and communities together to answer the call of conservation for more than 100 years. Grounded in world-class science and technology — and rooted in communities — the Forest Service connects people to nature and recreation opportunities. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, supports the nation's forest industry and energy needs, and operates the largest and most respected wildland fire and forestry research organizations in the world. By providing assistance to state and private landowners and working with tribes and other partners, the Forest Service also helps steward an additional 900 million forested acres within the U.S.

###

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

Your Custer-area magazine!
**Everything you need to know about
 Custer and Custer County!**



CUSTER
 Chamber of Commerce

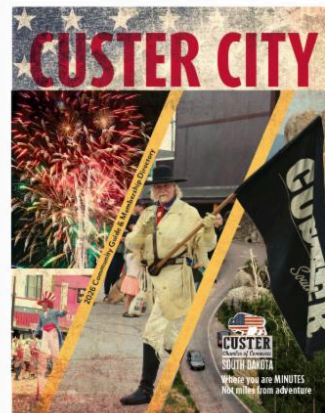
**2027 Custer Area Chamber of Commerce
 Business and Membership Directory**

Your Custer Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau is producing the 2027 Chamber Business and Membership Directory with helpful features for chamber members, Custer visitors and potential residents. This beautiful, full-color directory will include great photography, a community profile, a calendar of special events, accommodations, attractions, restaurant listings and a complete categorical directory of all chamber members in full magazine-size layout.

We'll print 15,000 copies of this directory, which will be distributed to prospective visitors and residents who call our community seeking information about traveling to the region, or relocating their home or business to the Custer area. In addition, thousands of copies will be distributed at our Visitor Information Center and at chamber businesses such as local motels, restaurants and campgrounds. **This will be our primary economic development and business recruitment piece!**

If you'd like to distribute your message to thousands of potential customers who will visit Custer or are inquiring about living here, just give the folks at Southern Hills Publishing a call at 673-2217. Don't miss this opportunity. Thanks for your continued support.

Craig Reindl
 Chamber President



**15,000
 Copies**

EARLY BIRD SPECIAL RATES!

**Advertising Rates
 Full-Color Ad**

Full page ad	\$1650
Half page ad	\$875
Quarter page ad	\$600
One eighth page ad	\$450

Premium pages are back page, inside front, inside back page, and page 3 and are an additional \$100.

DEADLINE: Oct. 23, 2026

Full Page Size
7.708" wide x 10.139" tall
With bleed (8.875" wide x 11.305" tall)

1/2 Page Size
7.708" wide x 5" tall

1/4 Page Size
3.75" wide x 5" tall

1/8 Page Size
3.75" wide x 2.5" tall

We'll be happy to compose your ad for you AT NO EXTRA CHARGE. All camera ready ads should be e-mailed to custerads@gwtc.net in the appropriate size at 300 dpi. Acceptable formats are JPG or PDF files.

For Space Reservations, Call Kate Najacht at 605-440-1248

or email Kate at chroniclewriter2@gmail.com

Southern Hills Publishing Inc. • PO Box 551 • 522 Mt. Rushmore Rd. • Custer, SD 57730 • 605-673-2217




Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Black Hills National Forest

STAGE FIRE RESTRICTIONS

The current restrictions are in effect starting 12:01 a.m. on Monday, July 27, 2026, through December 27, 2026, unless rescinded earlier.

Fires, Campfires, and Stove Fires





PROHIBITED: Building, maintaining, attending or using a fire, campfire, or stove fire, including charcoal and briquettes.

Propane and Liquid Petroleum Devices




PERMITTED: Devices fueled by liquid petroleum or LPG fuels that can be turned on and off. Such devices can only be used in an area that is barren or cleared of all overhead and surrounding flammable materials within 3 feet of the device.

Vehicles



PROHIBITED: Possessing or using a motor vehicle off established roads, motorized trails or established parking areas, except when parking in an area devoid of vegetation within 10 feet of the vehicle.

Smoking



PROHIBITED: Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle, or building.

Explosives



ALWAYS PROHIBITED: Using explosives, including fireworks, flares, exploding targets, or other incendiary devices.

Welding



PROHIBITED: Welding or operating an acetylene or other torch with open flame

Black Hills National Forest

1019 N. 5th Street
Custer, SD 57730
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r02/blackhills>
(605) 673-9200

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Printable Copy



FINALIST

HELP US WIN A \$100K RESCUE TRUCK!



**We are 1 of 5
National Finalists!**

- Vote Daily: July 29 – Aug 14
- 1 Vote Per Email every 24 hours
- 100% Free

SCAN ME



SCAN HERE

VOTE DAILY!

[Vote Now](#)

BUSES ARE COMING

**August
Schedule**

COLLETTE BUS TOUR BUS TIMES

11:15 AM - 12:45 PM

THURSDAY & SATURDAY

1:00 PM - 2:15 PM

TUESDAY & SUNDAY

INSIGHT VACATION BUS TIMES

1:00 PM- 2:00 PM

FRIDAY





Sign up Today!

2026 MIXER DATES

JANUARY 29-GOLD PAN
FEBRUARY 19-PREMIER EYE CARE
MARCH 19- CUSTER'S RENDEZVOUS
MAY 21- LEWIS REALTY
SEPTEMBER 10-CAMP BOB MARSHALL
NOVEMBER 19- BRADEEN REAL ESTATE
DECEMBER 10- STARR INSURANCE



Follow Us on Facebook & Instagram



August 19th



*Built Right Roofing & Construction
Network Troubleshooting & Installation LLC
John's Handyman Service
The Black Hills Bakery- Gluten Free
Black Hills Disc Golf Club
Hobo's Healing Heart
Black Hills Roofing
Wolff's Plumbing & Heating
Aardvark Pest Management
Custer Reloading Center
Fort Welikeit Campground
Black Hills Sewer and Drain Solutions
KND Accounting Solutions
Weather Tite Exteriors
Black Hills Lifestyle Magazine
Wild Spruce Market
Fly Badlands
PDQ Specialty Products
Xtreme Sports Simulators
The Christians Team-Broker Heath Shields
The Hills Finest-Bridal by Michelle
Don't Panic, LLC*



2026 Custer
Chamber

Member
Spotlight

**THIS
COULD BE
YOU!**

Our Chamber is powered by people like you—passionate, dedicated, and committed to making Custer a stronger, more vibrant community. Whether you're a local business owner, entrepreneur, or community advocate, there's a place for you here!

Join today and be our next Member Spotlight!

✦ THIS COULD BE YOU! ✦

Every week, the Custer Area Chamber of Commerce shines the spotlight on one of our incredible members—and your business could be next!

Our members are the heart of our business community. From local shops and restaurants to service providers, entrepreneurs, organizations, and community champions, we love showcasing the people who make Custer special. ❤️

Want to see YOUR business featured? Join the Custer Area Chamber of Commerce and become part of a network dedicated to supporting, promoting, and growing our local business community.

☀️ Join today. Be our next Member Spotlight! ☀️

We love shining a light on the amazing businesses that make our community great! ❤️

Would you like to see your business in the spotlight? ✨

Send a short write-up and a few photos to assistant@custersd.com — we can't wait to feature YOU! 📷





Workforce Knowledge Series

Discover opportunities and programs to help your business/organization.

Guarding the Gate:

Cybersecurity Essentials for Protecting Employee Data

Thursday, Aug. 13 | 11:30 a.m. CDT/10:30 a.m. MDT | Microsoft Teams

Learn ways to keep employee information safe. We'll share:

- Why this data matters
- Types of online threats to look for
- Security habits to use at work
- Policies and responsibilities employers should know
- What to do if something goes wrong
- Tools to protect information

Registration required.



Scan QR code or go to link. Click on calendar listing to register.

tinyurl.com/dlr-workshops



Equal Opportunity Program

Crossroads Church & Guests

Online Auction - Custer, SD

Online Bidding Closes Tuesday Aug. 18th, 2026, 4:00 PM

Properties located at 1): Bradeen Auction Facility 9 W. Mt.

Rushmore Rd. & 12480 US Hwy 16A, Custer, SD

Featuring: 2017 Ranger Reata boat and trailer, NICE!, '74 Stoddard 2 horse trailer; '97 Chevy 1500, Long box, 4x4, ex-cab; 640 Suzuki Motorcycle; 350 Yamaha Motorcycle; Emotion "Tandamonium" 16' kayak, nice; DR Promax52T, only 4hrs of run time; Electric wheelchair lift, 700lbs lift & weather resistant; Little Giant ladder system; Dewalt folding table for chop saw/table saw, etc.; Stihl gas trimmer; DR pull behind gas mower; Champion 400 Watt generator; Outland "Firebowl" propane fire pit; Craftsman deluxe power miter saw; Galvanized exhaust fan, new; Remington electric pole saw, new; Central Machine mini metal lathe; Pro-Tech table saw; large Dremel scroll saw; Tech Life mini power saw; leather love seat; leather sofa/sleeper; Craftsman 6.0 lawn mower, like new; B&D electric leaf blower; 2 Western saddles and pack saddle; Sony 36" flatscreen TV; Wicker living room set & Wicker Trundle bed & mattress, both nice!; another kayak; computer desk; hutch; 6-drawer dresser; rocking chair; 12 gauge Remington shotgun; .22 bolt action rifle; Viper pool cue & case; Snow blower, gas; outdoor wheel chair lift; 2 lifting recliners and so MUCH MORE! **Auctioneers Note:** Crossroads Church members and friends have donated some exceptional items for this auction! Many are new or like new condition. Quality donations are still being accepted through Friday. Please support this wonderful event. . .bid your BEST!



Note from BJ Shipp & Crossroads Church: Crossroads Church is excited to announce our Online Auction Fundraiser! This is a wonderful opportunity to support our church while bidding on a variety of unique items. Every bid helps us continue the mission and ministry of Crossroads Church. Your participation directly supports our church's programs, outreach efforts, and new ministry center expansion. Thank you for your generosity and for being a part of what God is doing through Crossroads Church. Happy bidding and thank you for your support.

OWNER:

Crossroads Church
& Guests
Custer, SD



See complete details & photos on www.bradeenauction.com



THE BLUEPRINT

Custer County Democratic Party



August Breakfast Get-together

Saturday, August 1st 9:30AM @ Maria's Mexican Restaurant

216 W Mt Rushmore Road, Custer

RSVP by Friday noon, July 31st to ccsddp21info@gmail.com



Order your Custer County Democrat shirt and grab some Summer Raffle tickets to pass along in the community.



CCDP Parade Float at the Custer County Fair in Hermosa

Sunday, August 9 10:00 AM Line-up & Judging / 11:00 AM Parade

If you're able to volunteer as a walker, please let us know. We'd love to have you with us.

August Business Meeting

Thursday, August 20th : 5:30 PM Potluck Hors d'oeuvres 6:00 PM Meeting

Custer County Library – Pine room - 447 Crook St, Custer, SD 57730

Custer Rummage Sale
Saturday, August 22nd

MORE INFORMATION
COMING SOON!

DemsWork: Medical Debt
Relief Through Oct 1

Custer County Democrats of SD
PO Box 5065 - Custer, SD 57730
ccsddp21info@gmail.com
@custercountymdemocratsouthdakota

"Let the people rule." ~ Theodore Roosevelt
a lifelong naturalist, he protected lands by establishing monuments
and refuges that helped launch modern conservation.

The Custer County Democrats invite everyone who values and supports our vision to promote Democracy, Economic Justice, Universal Human Rights, Environmentalism, and a Culture of Peace to join our growing community.



**SAVE THE
DATE** **FREE
SEMINAR**

20

**AUGUST
2026**

TOPICS:

CREDIT CARD SURCHARGING, OWNER
OCCUPIED PROPERTY TAX RELIEF, AND MORE



BLACK HILLS NATURE SHOP

DISCONTIUED APPAREL · VENDOR SAMPLES · BOOKS

Custer's famous sidewalk sale event,
now with more LOCAL PARK MERCHANDISE!



**August
21-22**



833
MT. RUSHMORE
CUSTER, SD
57730

Friday 8/21:
Crazy Days 1
9:00am-5:00pm
Everything priced to move!

Saturday 8/22:
Crazy Days 2
9:00am-2:00pm
Last hour sale - fill a bag for \$2 !!





On the tables:

- Adult & youth apparel
- Books
- Puzzles & games
- Household goods
- Plush animals



*Black Hills Parks and Forests Association is a non-profit organization
supporting wonder and exploration through stewardship of YOUR public lands.*



South Dakota Enhanced Conceal Carry Class

This is a One day Class

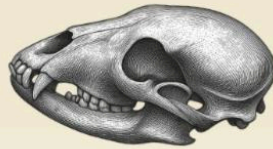
Saturday Aug 22nd 2026 9:00am to 4:30pm

The Enhanced Permit allows you carry in 39 states including
MN, NE, WI, NV, NH, WA, NM and SC

Class size is limited so register early.

For additional information or to register for the class you may
contact the instructor at echo.ft.sd@gmail.com, contact us at
605-673-3222 or by e-mail at
southernhillstactical@gwtc.net

BLACK HILLS PARKS & FORESTS ASSOCIATION PRESENTS



Field Notes

Escape the *Rally*... Find the *Wild*



Animal Tracking

• Black Hills Flora & Fauna •

Wildlife Signs & Calls



With Tom Tonkin, Education Specialist

1.5 hours

\$10 per person

Family rate option

Interactive

Whether you're here for the rally or in spite of it, this is your chance to discover the Black Hills in a way that few see it.

WHAT WE'LL EXPLORE

Animal tracking and survival techniques explained through real-world examples

The plants and wildlife of the Black Hills and surrounding ecosystems

Hidden meanings behind animal calls and signs

Interactive Q&A where you can test your knowledge and curiosity



-Purchase tickets here-



August 14th • 5PM-6:30PM • 833 Mt Rushmore Rd



BHPFA.ORG • BLACK HILLS, SOUTH DAKOTA



South Dakota Enhanced Conceal Carry Class

This is a One day Class

Saturday Aug 29th 2026 9:00am to 4:30pm

The Enhanced Permit allows you carry in 39 states including
MN, NE, WI, NV, NH, WA, NM and SC

Class size is limited so register early.

For additional information or to register for the class you may
contact the instructor at www.sodakian.com, contact us at
605-673-3222 or by e-mail at
southernhillstactical@gwtc.net

Music in Harbach Park

Summer 2026

Custer, SD

Live Looping with
QUAKEQUATION

June 23rd

August 11th

September 8th

6:30-8:30 PM

Sponsored by



Dementia Dialogues®

Dementia Dialogues® is a 5-module, evidence-informed nationally registered training course designed to educate community members and caregivers for persons who exhibit signs and symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD).

JOIN US FOR THIS **FREE** TRAINING WORKSHOP

HOSTED BY

CUSTER SENIOR CENTER

Continuing education approved for EMS, Dental, Long Term Care Administrators, Social Work, Occupational Therapy, Chiropractor and CHW/CHR professionals



Location: Custer Senior Center 538 Mt. Rushmore Rd. | Custer, SD 57730



Scan the QR
Code to Register
Today

Part 1 -September 10, 2026 9:00am to 1:00pm

Module 1 - The Basic Facts: An Overview of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias

Module 2 - Keep the Dialogue Going: Strategies for Effective Communication

Part 2 - September 11, 2026 9:00am to 1:00pm

Module 3 - It's a Different World: Understanding the Impact of the Environment & Ways to Promote Independence

Module 4 - It's Nothing Personal: Addressing Challenging Behaviors

Module 5 - Now What Do We Do? Creative Problem Solving

For more information: Contact Tonya Moschell email: tonya.moschell@sdfmc.org

SOUTH DAKOTA
Foundation for Medical Care



Office for the Study of Aging
Arnold School of Public Health
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

R.I.S.E.

SUICIDE PREVENTION & REMEMBRANCE WALK



*Sometimes the bravest thing we can do is simply show up—
for ourselves and for each other.*



TOGETHER, WE WALK.
TOGETHER, WE HEAL.
TOGETHER, **WE RISE.**

Join us for a morning of hope, healing, remembrance, and community as we come together to honor loved ones, support one another, and raise awareness for suicide prevention.

SEPTEMBER 12, 2026

The R.I.S.E. Suicide Prevention & Remembrance Walk is more than a walk—it's an opportunity to remind one another that no one has to face life's struggles alone.

Together we'll enjoy a peaceful walk around the beautiful shoreline of Stockade Lake, taking time to reflect, remember, encourage one another, and celebrate the lives that continue to inspire us.



EVENT SCHEDULE



Custer Lutheran Fellowship
12622 US Hwy 16A
Custer, South Dakota



7:00 a.m. – Registration Opens
8:15 a.m. – Walk Begins



Whether you're walking in memory of someone you've lost, supporting a friend or family member, or simply standing alongside your community, every step helps send a powerful message:

Hope is real. Help is available. You are never alone.



Together, we can make a difference—one conversation, one connection, and one step at a time.



MEMORIAL BUTTONS

We invite you to honor someone special with a memorial button during the walk. If you would like a memorial button created for a loved one, please complete the memorial button request form and email it (along with a photo and the name of your loved one). We'll have your button ready for you before the walk begins.

(Visit Rise-Custer.com for form)



LEARN MORE AT RISE-CUSTER.COM

You are not alone. Help is here. 

September 12, 2026



Black Hills Rails to Ales

George S. Mickelson Trail



from Hill City to Custer

16 Scenic Miles on

The George S. Mickelson Trail

starts at Tracy Park in Hill City ends in Custer at:

Mt. Rushmore Brewing Company

\$79 registration includes:

Lunch at Mt. Rushmore Brewing Company

Live Music & Door Prizes • Branded Beer Glass

event details & registration: MickelsonTrailAffiliates.com

YOU'RE INVITED TO CUSTER COUNTY HEALTHCARE TOWN HALL

★ YOUR VOICE. OUR COMMUNITY. BETTER HEALTHCARE FOR SOUTH DAKOTA ★



MONDAY,
AUGUST 17



6:00 PM TO
7:30 PM MT



CUSTER COUNTY LIBRARY
PINE ROOM
447 CROOK ST #4, CUSTER,
SD 57730



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

CALLIE STAINBROOK-DEWAR

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE ORGANIZER

✉ callie@unitedtoday.org

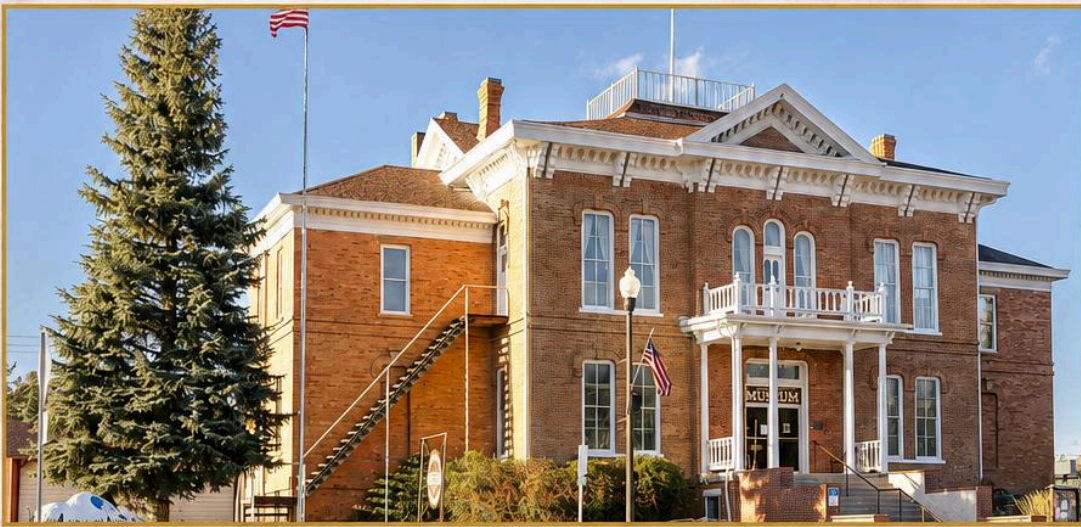
UNITED
TODAY
STRONGER
TOMORROW

CONSTITUTION BEE

A FUN, FRIENDLY TEST OF CONSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Celebrating America's 250th Year

FRIDAY • SEPTEMBER 18, 2026
1881 COURTHOUSE MUSEUM



AGES 8-11
PRIZES!



AGES 12-15+
PRIZES!



Open to youth in Custer County.

Come test your knowledge of the U.S. Constitution
in a fun, friendly competition.

Costumes encouraged!

FREE TO ENTER

Pre-registration encouraged • Name, age & parent contact information

1881courthousemuseum@gwtc.net • 605-673-2443

Day-of registration & check-in: 10:30–10:45 AM • Competition begins at 11:00 AM

Sponsored by **LEWIS REALTY**



PAGEANT HILL THURSDAY LEAGUE



Join us every Thursday for competition
and fun!

 **THURSDAYS**  **ROUND STARTS
5:30 PM**

**MEET AT:
THE PAVILION**

Every Thursday,
April-October

Contact:
✉ jellis0836@me.com

Sponsored by: 

Custer Writers Group

Thursdays at 5:45pm

Pine Room
•
Custer Library

July 30
August 13
August 27
September 10
September 24
October 8
October 22
November 12
November 24
December 10
December 22

Sponsored by:



*Stories
matter.*

... Free & Open to the Public ...

Debunking five common Social Security myths

*Reported by Jared Slagle MBA,
Edward Jones, Member SIPC*

Social Security is often one of the most important income sources in retirement. Yet widespread myths about how it works can lead to confusion, unnecessary worry and poor planning decisions. Here's the truth behind five of the most common misconceptions.

Myth 1: Social Security is going broke.

You've probably heard this one, but the full picture is more nuanced. According to the 2026 Social Security Board of Trustees Report, if Congress does nothing, the program would need to reduce benefits starting in 2032, paying roughly 78 cents for every dollar owed.

But that's just one scenario. Congress could raise the combined payroll tax from 12.4% to 16.65%, which the trustees estimate would secure full benefits through 2100. Other options include eliminating the earnings cap subject to payroll tax or adjusting retirement ages. Lawmakers have tools to address this.

Myth 2: Social Security will cover all your retirement needs. Think of Social Security as a financial foundation, not the full building. According to the Social Security Administration, benefits replace only about 40% of pre-retirement income for a median earner. That means you'll likely need to account for most of your retirement income yourself. Building a strong personal savings strategy now can help close that gap.

Myth 3: You lose benefits permanently if you keep working. Not true. Social Security does have an "earnings test" that can temporarily reduce benefits for people who claim early and keep working. If your earnings exceed a set annual cap - which changes each year - Social

Security will withhold a portion of your benefits. But once you reach full retirement age, the Social Security Administration adjusts your monthly check higher to repay those withheld amounts over time.

Myth 4: An ex-spouse's benefits come out of your own. If you were married for at least 10 years and are currently unmarried, your former spouse may be eligible to collect on your earnings record, or you may be able to collect on theirs. Divorced spouse benefits can be up to 50% of the other person's full retirement benefit. But those payments don't affect yours. Your monthly benefit is not reduced by anything paid to an ex-spouse or even a current spouse.

Myth 5: Social Security benefits are no longer taxed. Recent legislation caused some confusion here. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act did not eliminate taxes on Social Security benefits. If your combined income exceeds certain thresholds, you'll still owe taxes on a portion of your benefits.

The law also created a temporary deduction (available through 2028) for people 65 and older. Eligible taxpayers can deduct \$6,000 per qualifying filer if their modified adjusted gross income is \$75,000 or less for singles or \$150,000 for couples. The deduction phases out at \$175,000 for singles and \$250,000 for joint filers.

The more you understand Social Security, the more control you have over your retirement outcome. Grounding your decisions in facts rather than assumptions can make a meaningful difference in your long-term financial security.



Jared Slagle is a Financial Advisor with Edward Jones in Custer, SD. He can be reached at (605) 673-2198 or www.edwardjones.com/jared-slagle

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones and its financial advisors cannot provide tax advice. You should consult your qualified tax professional regarding your situation. Edward Jones, Member SIPC

[illegible]

I can help simplify life insurance

**Steve Engelbrecht**

Agent

750 West Mt. Rushmore Rd, Unit 6
Custer, SD 57730

Bus: 605-673-4141

www.protectcuster.comsteve@protectcuster.com

Talking about life insurance can be intimidating. That's where I come in. I can help you determine how life insurance will best fit your individual needs, and there's no guesswork with policy type, amount or budget. Contact me today.

Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.®

State Farm Life Insurance Company (Not licensed in MA, NY or WI)
State Farm Life and Accident Assurance Company (Licensed in NY and WI)
Bloomington, IL



Media Release



FREEDOM 250 AT MOUNT RUSHMORE DELIVERS MILLIONS IN ECONOMIC IMPACT AND GLOBAL EXPOSURE FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Mon., Aug. 10, 2026

CONTACT: *Katlyn Svendsen*, Global Public Relations & Content Services Senior Director, Travel South Dakota

PIERRE, S.D. – The Freedom 250 at Mount Rushmore celebration generated millions of dollars in economic activity while showcasing the state to audiences around the world.

A post-event analysis done by research firm Tourism Economics found the event generated an estimated **\$2.35 million in total economic impact**, including **nearly \$1.5 million in direct visitor spending**, while supporting area businesses, hotels, and local tax revenue.

More than **4,000 attendees** attended the event, with **87.7% traveling from overnight destinations** and representing **more than 40 states**.

The event's significance extended well beyond those attending in person and those that left their tax dollars in local communities. It also was viewed by millions across the world.

Broadcast and digital media coverage reached an estimated **53.7 billion audience impressions**, generating an estimated **\$50.7 million in publicity value**. Online interest also surged, with Travel South Dakota's website recording **146,535 sessions** during the event period—a **66% increase** over the previous week—and the livestream being viewed more than 107,000 times.

“The Freedom 250 at Mount Rushmore event demonstrated what happens when South Dakota has the opportunity to showcase one of America's most iconic landmarks on an international stage,” said James Hagen, Secretary of the South

Dakota Department of Tourism. "The economic benefits to our communities, combined with the extraordinary global exposure for South Dakota, will continue to pay dividends well into the future."

The Tourism Economics analysis also found the event immediately generated:

- **\$2.35 million** in total economic impact.
- **\$1.49 million** in direct visitor spending.
- More than **4,100 hotel room nights**.
- More than **\$1 million in lodging revenue**.
- Approximately **\$162,000** in combined state and local tax revenue.

The celebration also produced one of the strongest tourism weekends in recent Rapid City history. During the event, **hotel occupancy increased 5.5% year-over-year**, and Friday, July 3 recorded the highest single-day hotel revenue year-to-date as well as the top single day revenue-per-available room in the last two years.

The event was made possible through a partnership between the State of South Dakota, the U.S. Department of the Interior, the National Park Service and numerous federal, state and local partners. Following a five-year absence, the return of fireworks to Mount Rushmore National Memorial served as a centerpiece of the nation's 250th anniversary celebration.

The State of South Dakota invested \$2.8 million in planning and producing the Freedom 250 at Mount Rushmore celebration. This generated a return on investment that has already paid tremendous dividends and will continue to do so for years to come, thanks to the billions of earned media impressions. The costs include the pyrotechnics and lighting, media production, shuttle bus contracts, and cost recovery payments to the National Park Service.

"This event generated an estimated **\$2.35 million in direct economic impact** while delivering more than **53 billion media impressions** globally, introducing South Dakota to new and familiar audiences," Hagen said. "It's an investment that strengthened our tourism economy while reinforcing South Dakota's place as one of America's most iconic destinations."

The South Dakota Department of Tourism is comprised of Travel South Dakota and the South Dakota Arts Council. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen.

-30-

- **Media Notes:** Economic impact numbers are reported from Tourism Economic, an Oxford Economics Company.



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Black Hills National Forest

Forest Service News Release

Media Contact: Krista Landreneau, Program Specialist

(605) 673-9201

krista.landreneau@usda.gov

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/ro2/blackhills>

Black Hills National Forest issues new special order expanding camping opportunities

(Rapid City, SD, August 6, 2026) — The Black Hills National Forest has issued a new special order that expands public access for dispersed camping by updating the previous stay limit requirement. Under the former order, visitors were restricted to a maximum of 14 days of camping within any 60-day period. The newly issued order broadens this allowance to 14 collective days within a 28-day period, providing campers with increased flexibility and improved opportunities to enjoy National Forest lands.

This change reflects the Forest's ongoing commitment to supporting diverse recreation experiences while ensuring sustainable use of natural resources. The expanded stay limits were developed in response to public feedback, recreation

trends and land management needs across the Forest.

Forest officials emphasize that all visitors must continue to follow established regulations designed to protect natural and cultural resources, maintain public safety and preserve high-quality recreation conditions. Campers are encouraged to practice Leave No Trace principles and to consult current Forest guidelines before planning extended stays. The full special order and a detailed description of updated camping requirements are available on the Black Hills National Forest website.

For more information, contact the Black Hills National Forest Supervisor's Office at (605) 673-9200 or visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/ro2/blackhills>.

About the Forest Service: The Forest Service has brought people and communities together to answer the call of conservation for more than 100 years. Grounded in world-class science and technology — and rooted in communities — the Forest Service connects people to nature and recreation opportunities. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, supports the nation's forest industry and energy needs, and operates the largest and most respected wildland fire and forestry research organizations in the world. By providing assistance to state and private landowners and working with tribes and other partners, the Forest Service also helps steward an additional 900 million forested acres within the U.S.

###

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.



Black Hills National Forest

Forest Service News Release

Media Contact: Krista Landreneau, Program Specialist
(605) 673-9201
krista.landreneau@usda.gov
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/ro2/blackhills>

Safety Alert: Veteran's Point Area and Trail temporarily closed

(Rapid City, SD, August 10, 2026) — Beginning August 16, 2026, through May 20, 2027, the Veteran's Point Area and Veteran's Point Trail will be closed to public for safety due to construction associated with the Veteran's Point Trail Rehabilitation Project. This project includes asphalt and handrail repairs, construction of retaining walls, erosion control and overall trail improvements to enhance public access and safety.

The closure is necessary due to recurring safety concerns, including the public passing barricades, entering active construction areas, damaging construction materials, blocking access with unauthorized vehicles and causing interruptions to project operations. These issues have made it unsafe for the site to remain open during construction.

The contractor began mobilization on June 11, 2026, and project completion is now anticipated by mid-May 2027.- For more information on the Black Hills National Forest, call the Recreation Program at (605) 673-9200 or visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/ro2/blackhills>.

About the Forest Service: The Forest Service has brought people and communities together to answer the call of conservation for more than 100 years. Grounded in world-class science and technology — and rooted in communities — the Forest Service connects people to nature and recreation opportunities. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, supports the nation's forest industry and energy needs, and operates the largest and most respected wildland fire and forestry research organizations in the world. By providing assistance to state and private landowners and working with tribes and other partners, the Forest Service also helps steward an additional 900 million forested acres within the U.S.

###

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.



THEATRE 605

BLACK HILLS PLAYHOUSE

Theatre 605 Black Hills Playhouse Presents *What the Constitution Means to Me*

Tickets are [On Sale](#) Now!

For Immediate Release

Black Hills, S.D. — Theatre 605 **Black Hills Playhouse** presents its final production of the season, *What the Constitution Means to Me*, the boundary-breaking play breathing new life into our Constitution. *What the Constitution Means to Me* opens **August 9 and runs through August 15**, featuring 8 performances.

Playwright Heidi Schreck's thought-provoking play breathes new life into our Constitution and imagines how it will shape the next generation of Americans. Fifteen-year-old Heidi earned her college tuition by winning Constitutional debate competitions across the United States. In this hilarious, hopeful, and achingly human new play, she resurrects her teenage self in order to trace the profound relationship between four generations of women and the founding document that shaped their lives.

A special panel discussion in partnership with South Dakota News Watch will be held after the 2:00 pm opening matinee. Audience members are invited to join in on a conversation about the role journalists and news organizations play in protecting our freedoms.

A Pay-What-You-Can performance will be held on **August 8 at 7:30 pm. Plan to arrive early**, as this is expected to be a well-attended preview performance, and seating is first-come, first-served. Concessions available on site.

[Click here for more information](#), or call the friendly box office staff at 605-255-4141.

Play by Heidi Schreck

***Custer State Park passes are required and can be purchased in the snack bar.**

****8 PERFORMANCES. 14+, SOME STRONG LANGUAGE AND MATURE THEMES. DOCUDRAMA. THERE IS NO INTERMISSION FOR THIS PLAY.**

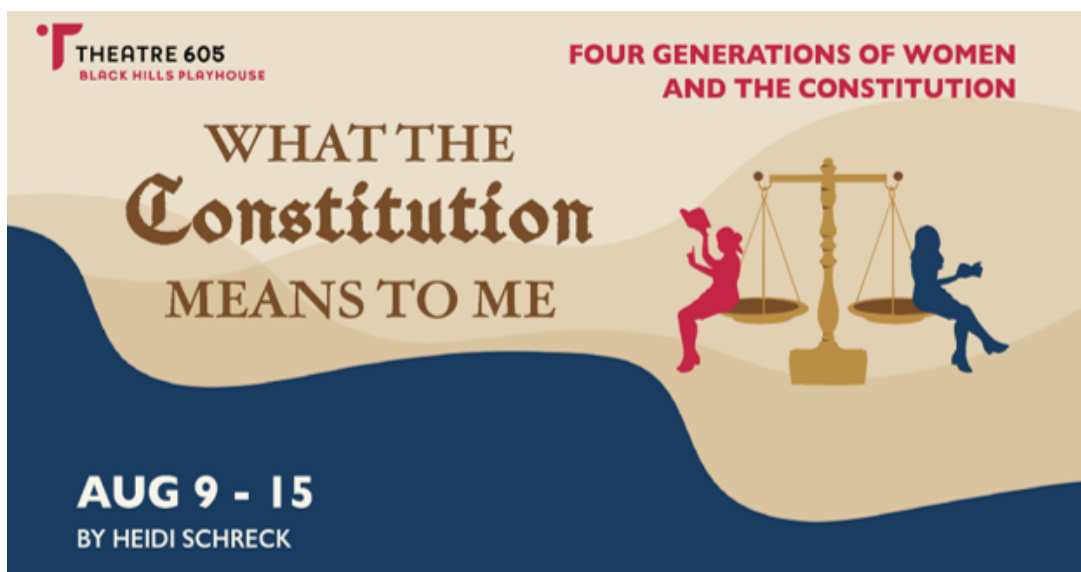
###

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW:

Linda Anderson
Executive Director
605 939-5271
linda@theatre605.org

About the Black Hills Playhouse
Telling Stories. Changing Lives.

Live theatre in Custer State Park.





BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK DESIGNATED INTERNATIONAL DARK SKY PARK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thurs., July 23, 2026

CONTACT: *Katlyn Svendsen*, Global Public Relations & Content Services Senior Director, Travel South Dakota, (605) 773-3301

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota is gaining international recognition as one of the world's premier destinations for experiencing the night sky.

Badlands National Park was designated an International Dark Sky Park by DarkSky International at a special evening ceremony Friday, July 17, becoming the first and only International Dark Sky Park in South Dakota and **one of only two in the National Park Service's Midwest Region.**

The internationally recognized designation places the park among an elite group of only 40 National Park Service units nationwide celebrated for protecting some of the world's darkest and most pristine night skies.

The designation is one of the most prestigious recognitions a place can receive for night sky conservation and visitor experience. Earning the designation requires years of planning, collaboration and investment to meet rigorous standards for sky quality, responsible lighting, public education and long-term stewardship.

"This designation is more than an incredible achievement for Badlands National Park. It's a milestone for South Dakota," said **James Hagen, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Tourism.** "It reinforces what visitors have long known: South Dakota's wide-open spaces offer experiences that are becoming increasingly rare. Standing beneath an unspoiled sky, watching the Milky Way stretch overhead, spotting the International Space Station, viewing constellations and planets, and experiencing true darkness is something travelers from around the world are actively seeking."

The recognition comes as interest in astrotourism continues to grow, with travelers planning vacations around destinations known for exceptional stargazing, astrophotography and nighttime outdoor experiences. The designation elevates South Dakota's profile among both domestic and international travelers while adding another world-class experience to the state's renowned outdoor recreation opportunities.

"This designation reflects years of collaboration and a shared commitment to protecting one of our most valuable natural and cultural resources," said **Eric Veach, Badlands National Park Superintendent.** "It also represents an opportunity to expand how visitors experience the park, through science, storytelling and a deeper connection to the night sky."

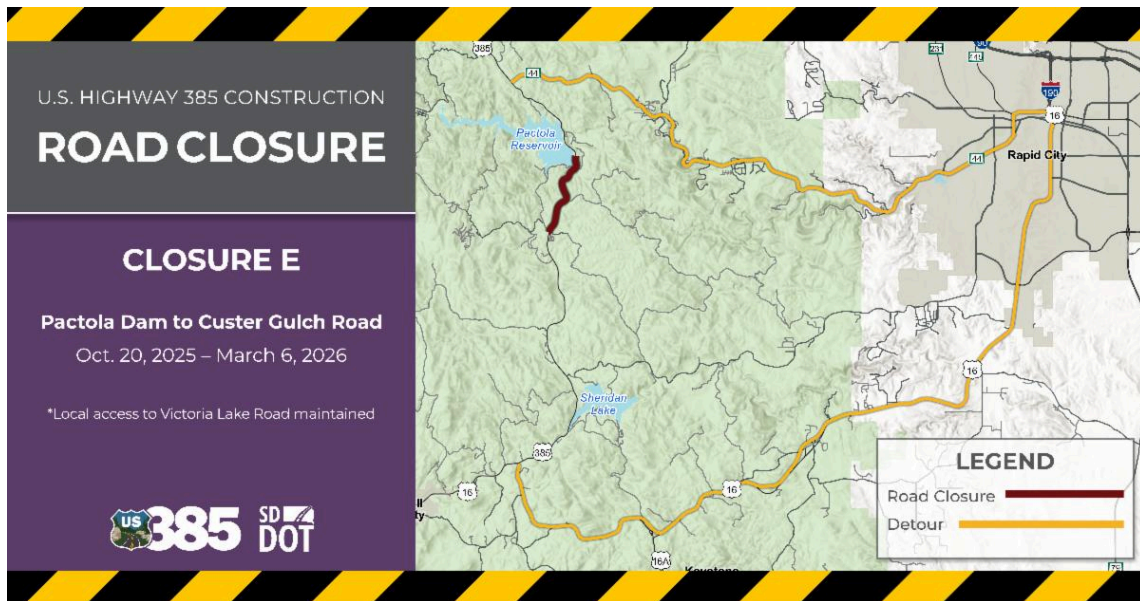
Few places are better suited for the honor than Badlands National Park. Its rugged buttes and pinnacles, remote setting, and exceptionally low levels of artificial light create an unforgettable backdrop for viewing the Milky Way, meteor showers, and thousands of stars with remarkable clarity. Combined with the park's rich paleontological resources, wildlife, Indigenous cultural significance, and breathtaking scenery and scenic drives, the Badlands offers visitors an experience unlike anywhere else in the region.

"This accomplishment is deeply personal to me. I grew up on a farm in the middle of South Dakota, where seeing the Milky Way each night felt ordinary," said **Marissa Marshall, executive director of the Badlands National Park Conservancy.** "It wasn't until recently that I realized how rare that experience has become. Protecting our night skies ensures future generations can experience that same sense of wonder."

Badlands National Park now joins more than 250 International Dark Sky Places around the world—an exclusive network of destinations recognized for preserving one of the planet's increasingly rare natural resources: truly dark skies.

For Travel South Dakota, the recognition reinforces the state's growing reputation for outdoor recreation and authentic experiences, encouraging visitors to extend their stays and discover South Dakota after sunset.

The South Dakota Department of Tourism is comprised of Travel South Dakota and the South Dakota Arts Council. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen.



Project Update

Friday, August 7, 2026

Sturgis Motorcycle Rally Construction Impacts:

- **Construction Activity Paused During Sturgis Motorcycle Rally:** Construction activities will be paused in the U.S. Highway 385 construction area (Pactola Dam to Calumet Road) starting on Wednesday, Aug. 5, 2026, and will resume on Tuesday, Aug. 18, 2026.
- **Sturgis Motorcycle Rally Traveler Information:** Find additional information, including frequently asked questions, on the [SDDOT Rally Traveler Information page](#).

Current Construction Area Road Conditions:

- Currently, the driving surface within the construction area is oiled blotter (a hard, packed surface that resembles asphalt) with pavement markings. The surface may feel slick, so drivers are encouraged to be cautious and allow additional stopping time, especially in wet conditions.



Upcoming Construction Updates:

- Final Surfacing: Final surfacing from Pactola Dam to Calumet Road is expected to be completed in the summer of 2027.

[View Construction Updates](#)



Construction Zone Reminders



- Follow posted speed limits in construction zones.
- Be aware of flaggers and other construction workers in the construction area.
- If you are following a pilot car, stay with the line, and do not stop or exit your vehicle in the project area.
- It is illegal to go beyond cones and barriers within construction zones even when the contractor is not working.

Stay Connected

Take a moment now to share this email with neighbors, friends, coworkers, and anyone else who might be interested in the U.S. Highway 385 Construction Project. Then encourage them to sign up for these project email updates at <https://us-385.com>.

A free text-in service is being used to communicate any major traffic changes. To subscribe, simply text "US385" to 605-566-4041. Subscribers can unsubscribe at any time.

HWY 385 ROUTING INITIATIVE



BH&B is sharing information related to the upcoming *Hwy 385 infrastructure improvement project* that will include *routing options* and continuous business promotion. BH&B's goal is to educate and to explain that this simple detour will not prevent, nor should it discourage visitors from enjoying their vacation in the Black Hills.

Visit Route Reimagined

A free text-in service is being used to communicate major traffic changes.

To subscribe, simply text "US385" to 605-566-4041.

Subscribers can unsubscribe at any time.

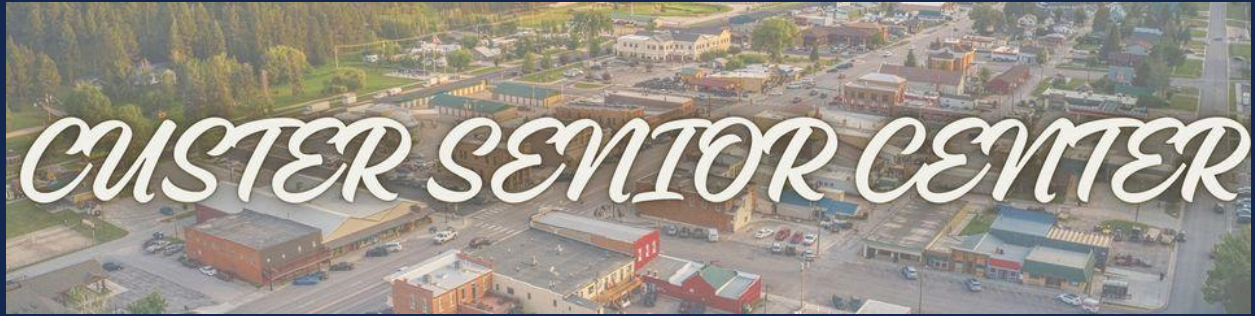


**U.S. HIGHWAY 385
CONSTRUCTION**
PENNINGTON-LAWRENCE COUNTY LINE TO SHERIDAN LAKE

Thank you for joining the SDDOT U.S. Highway 385 Text Update List! You will now receive the latest updates on this project via your mobile device. Thank you!

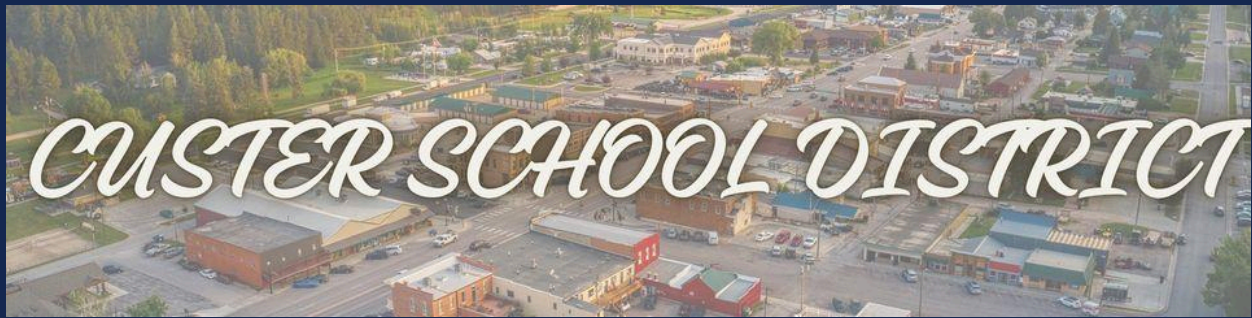
FREE TEXT ALERTS:
Text "US385" to 605-566-4041



June Activities





Schools Out For SUMMER!!



Job Available;

Custer Senior Center

Gift Shop Manager/Center Assistant

This job is for someone 55 years or older
as it is a grant from NICOA.

35- 40 hours a week

10 AM until 5 PM

Monday through Friday

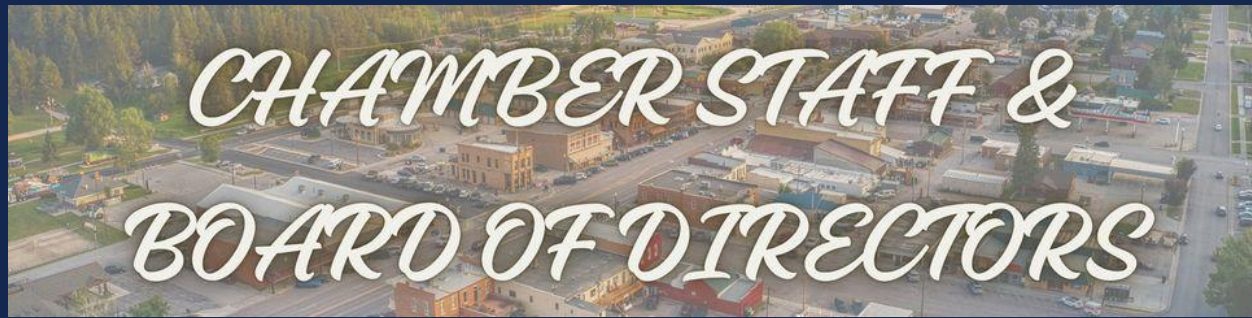
Please contact Lori

at the Custer Senior Citizen's Center

in person or at **605-673-2708**



Be sure to check out the Help Wanted section on our [Website](#):



CHAMBER STAFF

Dawn Murray
Executive Director
dmurray@custersd.com

Fred Baumann
Information Associate
fbaumann@custersd.com

Lacey Curl
Office Assistant
assistant@custersd.com

Office Assistant
bytes@custersd.com

Joel Behlings
Information Associate
info@custersd.com

2026

Board Of Directors

Craig Reindl – President
Corey Virtue – Vice President
Michelle Fischer – Treasurer
Carrie Moore– Secretary

Amanda Allcock

Amy Bailey
Miranda Boggs
Ronni Calvird
Scott Eastman

Monica McGowan – City Liaison

Tim Frederick – School Liaison

Lydia Austin – CSP Liaison

Jessica Noteboom – BID Board Liaison



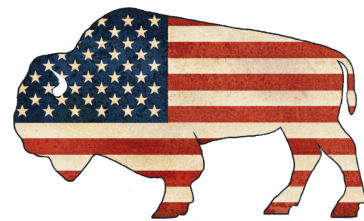
Our Address:

615 Washington Street
Custer, SD 57730

Phone Numbers:

605-673-2244
800-992-9818

dmurray@custersd.com / custersd.com



CUSTER
Chamber of Commerce

Visit our Website

Send Us An Email

Custer Area Chamber of Commerce | 615 Washington St. PO Box 5018 | Custer, SD
57730 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!