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CUSTER CONNECTIONS

How to Create Community at your Business



If you have repeat customers, you already have the foundation of something powerful: a community. You just need to ensure they understand that.

Not a punch-card club. Not just “regulars.” A real group of people who feel connected to you, your team, and each other. Community is what keeps people choosing you even when a cheaper, closer, or flashier option pops up. It is also a lot more fun than chasing new customers all the time.

Here is how to turn those repeat visits into a community that loves coming back.

Shift from Transactions to Relationships

Most businesses stop at “Thank you, have a great day.”

Community starts when you get curious.

Ask yourself:

- Do I know anything about the people who come back again and again?
- Would I recognize them outside the business?
- Do they feel like guests, or like familiar faces?

You do not have to become everyone’s best friend. But a small shift in how you see them changes everything. When you view repeat customers as “our people,” you naturally look for ways to take care of them, remember them, and connect them.

That is the beginning of community.

Learn Names, Then Learn Stories

One of the simplest, highest-ROI moves you and your staff can make is learning names and using them.

“Hey, good to see you again” is nice.

“Hey, Maria, how did your event go last weekend?” is loyalty.

You can make a quick note after a conversation in your POS system or a notebook behind the counter. Capture just a few details: kids’ names, pets, big projects, favorite order. Train your team to glance at those notes before serving someone.

You are not being intrusive. You are being attentive. In a world where most people feel invisible, that level of care is rare. Over time, you will know who just started a business, who is new in town, who is training for a race, who is caring for a parent. That is how your space stops feeling generic and starts feeling like “their place.”

Create Simple Rituals People Can Join

Community loves a shared ritual.

This does not have to be complicated or expensive. Think about small traditions, such as a “regulars’ hour” once a week where you test new items, a wall of fame for long-time customers or milestone purchases, or a daily question on a chalkboard that everyone can answer.

Rituals give people a reason to come back and something to talk about.

When someone says, “On Fridays they always...” that is community behavior. You have given them a story to tell.

Start a Club That Gives People a Reason to Return

One of the strongest ways to turn repeat customers into a true community is to create a recurring club that meets at your business.

The club should fit your brand and your customers’ interests. For example:

- A bookstore or café could host a monthly book club or writers group.
- A yarn, craft, or gift shop might host a weekly knitting circle or “maker morning.”
- A fitness studio could run a “goals group” that meets once a month for coffee and conversation.
- A wine bar could host a “Wednesday Tasting Club” where members try a new flight together.

Keep it simple:

1. Choose a consistent day and time.
2. Give the club a name so it feels special.
3. Offer a small perk for participants, such as a discount, early access to products, or a reserved table.

Over time, the club becomes a steady heartbeat in your business. People come not only for what you sell, but for the friends they know they will see there.

Turn Repeat Customers Into Insiders

People do not just want to buy from you. They want to feel in on it.

Treat your regulars as insiders, not just transactions. You might give them early access to new products or menus, “first to know” messages about special items or events, or a quick behind-the-scenes look at what you are working on next.

Ask for their input:

“We are thinking about adding X. What do you think?”

“We have two logo options for this new product. Which one would you pick?”

When customers feel like insiders, three things happen: they show up more often, they bring people with them, and they defend you when someone criticizes you online.

Make Your Space a Place to Connect

Community is not just between you and your customers. It is also between your customers and each other.

Look for small ways to help that along. Arrange seating so people can sit, not just stand in a line staring at their phones.

Host tiny, low-pressure events: coffee tastings, lunchtime learning sessions, local maker pop ups, or “meet the owner” Q&As.

When it feels natural, introduce people:

“You two are both new business owners on this street, you should meet.”

“You both come in after the school run. Have you met?”

You are not planning a conference. You are creating moments where conversation is possible. Those moments are what people remember.

Share Their Stories, Not Just Your Promotions

If every post or email is “Here is what we are selling,” your marketing will always feel like noise.

Community-building content looks different. You highlight customer stories and shared moments. You might feature short spotlights of regulars, with a photo and a quote about why they come in. You can show customers enjoying your space (with permission, of course), or share stories of how your customers support one another, like referrals or collaborations that started at your business.

This makes featured customers feel seen and signals to everyone else, “People like you belong here.”

Suddenly your brand is about more than what is on the shelves or the menu. It’s about who gathers around them.

Build Light Systems So It Survives Busy Season

Community sounds warm and fuzzy, but it works best with a little structure behind it.

To keep it going even when you get swamped, create a simple “regulars” tag in your POS or email system. Add a short team habit, such as “two genuine conversations per shift” or “ask one follow-up question of a regular each day.” Once a month, review who you are seeing a lot and who you have not seen in a while.

You do not need a complicated points program. You need a repeatable way to notice, remember, and appreciate the people who show up.

The Quiet Advantage of Being “Their Place”

When customers feel like they are part of a community at your business, a few things shift quietly in your favor. They are more patient when something goes wrong. They choose you even when a big chain runs a sale. They tell people about you without being asked.

In a world where so many experiences feel rushed and anonymous, being the business that remembers their name, knows their story, invites them into clubs and rituals, and connects them to others is not just nice. It is a serious competitive advantage.

You are not just building foot traffic and revenue. You are building a small, loyal neighborhood around your business, one repeat customer at a time, and that feels really good for everyone involved.

*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.*

Medium: @christinametcalf

Facebook: @tellyourstorygetemtalking

Instagram: @christinametcalfauthor

LinkedIn: @christinagsmith



Dawn Murray
Executive Director

2025 EVENTS CALENDAR

A full list of 2025 events by the Chamber and other organizations.

Click to download calendar

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

December 18th
Chamber Mixer

hosted by South Dakota Outdoor Shop
5:00PM-7:00PM

December 23rd

Chamber Closed @ 1:00PM
Re-Open January 5th

January 29th

Chamber Mixer
hosted by Gold Pan Saloon
5:00PM-7:00PM

February 19th

Chamber Mixer
hosted by Premier Eye Care
5:00PM-7:00PM

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS



EARLY LEARNER

Custer



Childcare Provider Discount Program

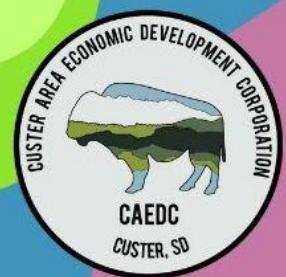
Custer Businesses,

We are looking for participants to commit to providing a discount for our 26 Childcare Workers in Custer. This discount or offer can be unique to your business. These cards will be given to our childcare workers as Christmas presents and would be valid for repeat use throughout the calendar year.

This is a small way to show our appreciation for the Childcare workers who take care of the children of our workforce. For more info or to commit to participating in this program please click the buttons below!

Questions?

Email us at earlylearnercuster@gmail.com



[Sign up to participate](#)







Be sure to VOTE

**Custer Area Chamber of Commerce
Board of Directors
2026-2028**

Get your ballots turned in by December 18

Remember, only one (1) vote per Chamber Membership

[Click To Vote](#)



Gift Wrapping Fundraiser for Fireworks

Join us at **The Hills Finest** for a special gift wrapping fundraiser

Bring your gifts and let us wrap them beautifully for you!

Donation only and all proceeds go to the Custer Chamber of
Commerce for the 4th of July Firework display.

Where: The Hills Finest Address: 26 S. 6th St When: Fri-Sun Starting 11-28-12-21-25

Wanna help or donate? Call Michelle at (605) 517-5588

Wrapping times are 11am-4pm Friday thru Sunday





Chamber Mixer



Hosted By:



January 29th from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Held At The Gold Pan Saloon

508 Mt Rushmore Rd, Custer, SD 57730

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

Chamber Mixer



Hosted By:



February 19th from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Held At Premier Eye Care

23 N 1st St, Custer, SD 57730

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



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 17- STARR INSURANCE



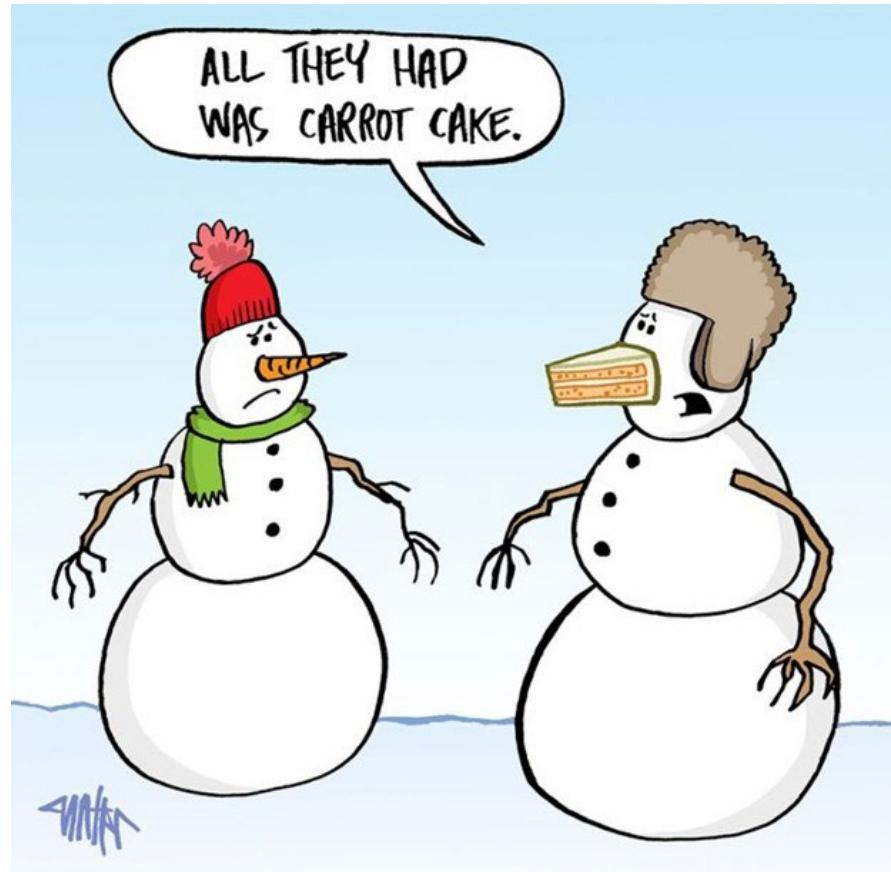
Follow Us on Facebook & Instagram



Chamber Board Meetings

December 17th 2:00 P.M

WEEKLY HUMOR



Thank you

for renewing your
Chamber Membership

Thank you so much for renewing your membership with the Custer Chamber! We truly appreciate your continued support and partnership.

- 1. 1880 Train
- 2. 1881 Courthouse Museum
- 3. 21 Electric
- 4. A & B Business Solutions
- 5. A Walk in the Woods

- 139. Highmark Credit Union
- 140. Hills Inn
- 141. HJEM am
- 142. Holiday Inn Express
- 143. Homeslice Media Group

6. Abundant Life Fellowship of Custer SD	144. Homestead Carpet Care
7. Aflac -Carol Perrigo	145. Honest Paint Co
8. Al Cornella Refrigeration	146. Horatio's Homemade Ice Cream
9. All Net Connections	147. Hounds, Pugs, and Hugs
10. ALPHA Builders, LLC	148. J & M Lawn Care
11. American Family Insurance- Ronni Calvird Agency	149. Jacqueline Hartwick
12. American Legion Post #46	150. JAM Heating and Cooling LLC
13. Aspen Federal Credit Union	151. Jewel Cave National Monument
14. Aspen+Pine Realty	152. John & Diana Carson
15. Bakers Bakery	153. Jon G Gindhart, D.C., PLLC.
16. Bavarian Inn	154. Jorgensen Log Homes Inc
17. Bear Country USA	155. JQ Clothing Co
18. Beaver Lake Campground	156. K & S Stagecoach Stop
19. Beecher Rock Vehicle Storage	157. K2 Masonry & Concrete Inc
20. Begging Burro Mexican Bistro and Tequila Bar	158. Ketel Thorstenson
21. Best Western	159. Kieffer Sanitation
22. Big Pine Campground	160. Kitchens by Karla
23. Black Granite Construction	161. Lampert Properties
24. Black Hills Badlands	162. Lasting Impressions Unlimited
25. Black Hills Balloons	163. Laurie Arthur
26. Black Hills Bronco Adventures	164. Lenny Merriam CPA, CFE, PLLC
27. Black Hills Burger & Pizza Co	165. LFC Veterinary Service
28. Black Hills Chemical & Janitorial	166. Living Outreach Church
29. Black Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc	167. LJ's Recovery and Transport, LLC
30. Black Hills Enclave	168. Local Black Hills
31. Black Hills Energy	169. Lynn's Dakotamart
32. Black Hills Federal Credit Union	170. Marci & John O'Connell
33. Black Hills Parks & Forests Association	171. Maria's Mexican Restaurant
34. Black Hills Pizza Hut	172. McCoy PC dba Custer Lawyer PLLC
35. Black Hills Playhouse	173. McGas Propane
36. Black Hills Power Bikes Rentals and Boutique	174. Mickelson Trail Affiliates, LLC
37. Black Hills Preservation Project	175. Miner's Cup, LLC
38. Blind Guy Custom Window Coverings	176. Moccasin Springs
39. Bradeen Real Estate and Auctions	177. Monument Health- Custer Hospital/Clinic
40. Branch Construction Services, LLC	178. Mountainview Baptist Church
41. Buffalo Ridge Camp Resorts	179. Mt Rushmore Brewing Co/ Pounding Fathers
42. Buglin' Bull	180. Murray Auto Repair LLC
43. Busy Ewe Farm & Fiber	181. My XO Adventures
44. Calamity Jane Kitchen	182. Naomi Haraldson
45. Calamity Peak Lodge	183. NARFE
46. Camp Bob Marshal	184. Nelson's Oil & Gas
47. Carr Electric, Co, LLC	185. New Trails Ministry, Inc
48. Carson Drug	186. Nielsen Enterprises, LLC
49. Certified Folder Display Service, Inc	187. NXTLAW PC
50. Chalet Motel	188. Operation Black Hills Cabins
51. Chamberlain McColleys Funeral Home	189. Our Place
52. Chapel in the Hills	190. Our Quilty Things
53. Charley and Norma Najacht	191. Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
54. Chief Motel	192. Outlaw Ranch
55. Christy Chamberlain & Bob Reich	193. Pain & Movement Solutions
56. City of Custer	194. Patti & Jim Lee
57. Claw Antler and Hide	195. PDQ Construction
58. Coca-Cola Bottling Company	196. Petals & Pages
59. Colleen Hennesy and Jim Frank	197. Pizza Mill
60. Comfort Inn & Suites	198. Pleasant Valley Farm and Cabins LLC
61. Common Cents	199. Plenty Star Ranch Retreat
62. Community Education of the BH	200. Prairie Hills Transit
63. Crazy Horse Memorial	201. Premier Family Eyecare
64. Crossroads Church	202. Purple Pie Place
65. Custer Ace Hardware	203. Pye-Barker Fire & Safety

66. Custer Ambulance Service	204. Rabbit Bicycle Rental & Repair
67. Custer Area Arts Council	205. Reed's Chimney Sweeping, Handyman & caretaking
68. Custer Cares	206. Regency CSP Resorts
69. Custer Chiropractic, PC	207. Reptile Gardens
70. Custer City Masonic Lodge #66	208. Rise Custer
71. Custer County Airport	209. Road Runner Inc
72. Custer County Candy Company	210. Rock Solid
73. Custer County Chronicle	211. Rocket Motel
74. Custer County Conservation District	212. Rod and Avis Converse
75. Custer County Democratic Party	213. Ronald McDonald Charities
76. Custer County Library Foundation	214. RP Lumber Co Inc
77. Custer County Republicans	215. Rush Mountain Adventure Park
78. Custer Dental Studio	216. Rushmore Photo & Gift, Inc
79. Custer Golf Corp/ Rocky Knolls Golf Course	217. Rushmore Vacation Rentals
80. Custer Heating & Air Conditioning	218. Sage Creek Grille
81. Custer Lions Club	219. Sentinel Federal Credit Union
82. Custer Lutheran Fellowship	220. Servall Uniforms & Linens
83. Custer Mile High Garden Club	221. Sew What
84. Custer Mt. Rushmore KOA	222. Shady Rest Motel
85. Custer Piecemaker Quilt Guild	223. Shepherd of the Hills
86. Custer Rotary	224. Simon Contractors of SD, Inc
87. Custer Senior Center	225. Skogen Kitchen
88. Custer State Farm- Steve Engelbrecht Agent	226. Sleep Better South Dakota, LLC
89. Custer State Park	227. Sousleys HillBilly Barbeque Catering
90. Custer Subway	228. South Dakota Outdoor Shop
91. Custer's Gulch RV Park & Campground	229. South Dakota Parks & Wildlife Foundation
92. Custer's Rendezvous	230. Southern Hills Animal Clinic
93. Dacotah Bank	231. Southern Hills Family Medicine, PLLC
94. Dakota Greens - Custer Greenhouses & Nursery, Inc.	232. Southern Hills Law, PLLC
95. Dakota Photographic	233. Southern Hills Tactical
96. Dave's Rock Shop	234. Southern Hills Title Co.
97. Days Inn	235. Splish Splash Car, RV and Dog Wash
98. Deep Creek Art Gallery	236. Spokane Creek Cabins & Camp
99. DGR Engineering	237. Sprockets Fun Foundry
100. Diane Dennis	238. St John the Baptist Catholic Church
101. Don & Arlayne Barmore	239. Star Ridge Advetisments
102. Double Diamond Ranch	240. Starr Insurance
103. Eagle's Landing Lodge	241. Stars and Stripes by Steph
104. Early Learner Custer	242. Steele Collision & Glass
105. Econolodge	243. Steve and Yolanda Davis
106. Edward Jones- Mark Koch	244. Stockade Lake Cabin
107. Edward Jones-Jared Slagel	245. Studt Construction, Inc
108. Edward Jones-Kris Zerbe	246. Sturgis Mustang Rally
109. Elk Haven Vacation Cabins	247. Sunset RV Park
110. enCore Energy Corp	248. Sunshine Storage
111. EO Bungalows	249. Super 8
112. Evergreen Media	250. Sweet Clover and Sage Salon
113. Faith Lewis Real Estate Inc	251. Sylvan Rocks Climbing School and Guide Service
114. Feel Good Café	252. Tallgrass Landscape Architecture
115. First Choice Lock and Key	253. Tanglewood Estate
116. First Interstate Bank	254. Tennyson Investments
117. Floors and More Cleaning and Restoration	255. The Cruisin' Canvas
118. Four Mile Old West Town & Campground	256. The Custer Beacon
119. Fred & Wendy Hlava	257. The Custer Wolf Food & Drink
120. Freedom Hills Wealth Management	258. The Mammoth Site
121. Freeman's Electric Service, Inc.	259. Thomas Home Improvement
122. French Creek Campground & RV Park	260. Travel Custer
123. French Creek Supply- NAPA Auto Parts	261. United States Forest Service Supervisor's Office
124. French Creek Tree Fellers, LLC	262. United Way of the Black Hills
125. Frenchy's Hideaways	263. Valhalla Legal, PLLC

126. George Mickelson Trail
127. Gideons International Southern Hills Camp
128. Glen Erin Campground
129. Gold Camp Cabins, LLC
130. Gold Pan Saloon/ Calamity Jane
131. Gold Valley Camp
132. Golden West Telecommunications
133. Good Karma Jewelry
134. Green Owl Media
135. Grizzly Gulch Adventure Golf
136. Growing Roots, Inc
137. H&R Block
138. Harney Peak Chapter, NSDAR

264. Vector Design Print and Tech
265. VFW Post #3442
266. Vineyard Black Hills
267. Western Skies Real Estate
268. Western Tire Chain LLC
269. Windsong Valley Gardens
270. Workplace Disability Network of the Black Hills
271. World Fossil Finders Museum
272. Xanterra
273. YMCA
274. Zonta Club of the Southern Black Hills



PDQ Specialty Products
Xtreme Sports Simulators
The Christians Team-Broker Heath Shields
The Hills Finest-Bridal by Michelle

Don't Panic, LLC
Rising Hope Counseling, LLC
Custer Laundry
Lintz Brothers Pizza
Around the Map Travel
Winmore, LLC
Bridle Ridge Horse and RV Camp LLC
Bottoms Up Taphouse
Grant Administration & Consulting LLC
Aflac- Matti (Kelley) Schryvers
Quilted Buffalo
Performance Outdoor Services
Western Dakota Tech Foundation
Encompass Payroll
South Dakota Department of Labor &
Regulation
On The Water
Elk Mountain Retreats and Tours
Rushmore Custom T's
Drover's Ridge
Black Hills Open-Top-Tours
Village of Boyd
Boyds Antiques and Unique's, Inc
Custer Sheds- by Old Hickory
Nomad Vancamp & RV Park

MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT



2025 Custer Chamber

Member Spotlight

The Custer Wolf



Address: 506 Mt. Rushmore Rd, Custer, SD 57730
Phone: 605-673-WOLF

#Membership Monday

This week our Membership Spotlight shines on one of Custer's local hotspots... *The Custer Wolf - Food & Drink!*

Here's what the wonderful staff had to say about the business:

"Providing a fun, casual atmosphere with a focus on fresh-made food and an exciting selection of beer and wine, The Custer Wolf is a favorite for locals and tourists looking for something a little different. Come in for a pint, delicious homemade food, and local conversation. Gluten-free buns and menu items are available! We're proud to be open year-round and locally owned and operated. Most people know us for craft beer, but we have a great wine selection, too! We have a steak special year-round. It may not be on the menu, but it's always available!"

More info: <https://custersd.com/members/custer-wolf-food--drink-the>
#custersd #chamberspotlight #chambermember #localrestaurants #loyal2local

◆◆ Membership Spotlight Time! ◆◆

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!



AREA EVENTS

**On Sunday evening, Dec. 21st at 6 p.m.
the Mountainview Baptist Church
will perform the Christmas cantata,
“Then Jesus Came.”**

All of the songs and performances
will be conducted by Custer
residents. The church's adult
and youth choirs will provide
special music.

In the play, the “Church at Forest Grove”
calls a new pastor, and the town gossips,
“Tilly” and “Lizzy” help the plot to thicken
by discussing details of the problems in their
little country church.



There's lots of good humor and a
positive message in this delightful
script. It's wholesome entertainment
that the whole family will enjoy.



**Mountainview Baptist Church
12230 Aviation Way
(next to the Custer airport)
605-673-2498**



GINGERBREAD

House Competition

It's time for another gingerbread house contest
at the Custer County Library!

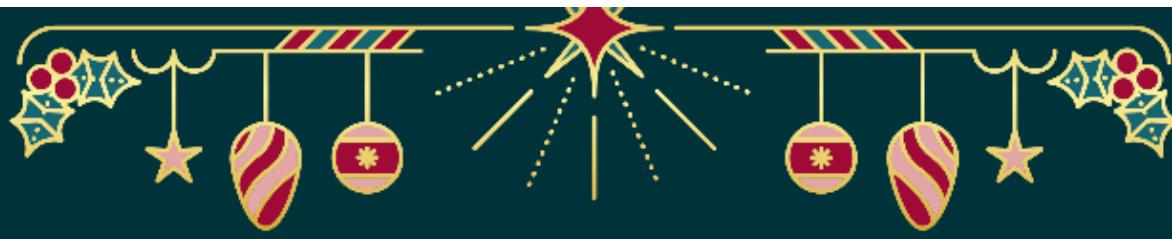
We will have sign ups and starter kits available for
pick up at the library (while supplies last)
starting Monday, November 17th.

All entries must be dropped off by December 6th.
December 8th - 31st voting by patrons

*Prizes awarded January 2026!!!



C CUSTER COUNTY
LIBRARY



ENCHANTED “WONDER”LAND

A Holiday Market

*Shop unique, high-quality gifts and educational items
that support national parks, grasslands, and forests!*

NOVEMBER 10TH - DECEMBER 24TH

833 MT. RUSHMORE ROAD

MONDAY - FRIDAY
9:00AM-4:00PM

SATURDAYS
9:00AM-3:00PM



BLACK HILLS
**PARKS &
FORESTS**
ASSOCIATION

BHPFA.ORG

*A non-profit organization supporting wonder
and exploration through stewardship of
YOUR public lands.*





Adopt A Resident

Spread holiday cheer
this year!

PICK UP TAGS: DROP OFF BY
12/1/2025 12/19/2025

HOW CAN YOU HELP?
• GRAB A TAG FROM THE TREE.
SHOP FOR YOUR RESIDENT.

Spread the Joy!

Custer Care & Rehab Center
1065 Montgomery St.
605-673-2115







**FREE
ad design
included!**

Reserve your holiday ad space now!

Thank your friends, neighbors and community for a wonderful year!

Chronicle only

3.25" wide by 5" tall: \$120

6.625" wide by 5" tall: \$220

COMBO (both papers)

3.25" wide by 5" tall: \$220

6.625" wide by 5" tall: \$400

Prevailer only

3.25" wide by 5" tall: \$120

6.625" wide by 5" tall: \$220

**DEADLINE:
December 12**

Contact Kate now to be included!
chroniclewriter2@gmail.com
call or text 605-440-1248

**With kids'
letters to
Santa!**



Kids Afternoon Art Party

**Friday, December 12th
1pm-3pm**

122 N. 6th Street Custer, SD



MORMAN & GUESTS ONLINE AUCTION

Explore this one-of-a-kind auction packed with an incredible variety of items—truly something for everyone. You'll be impressed by the breadth of offerings, including trailers, firearms, currency, hunting knives, high-end pocketknives, tools, cutlery, books, stamps; postcards, jewelry, art, and so much more. Don't miss your chance to discover unique finds and exceptional deals!



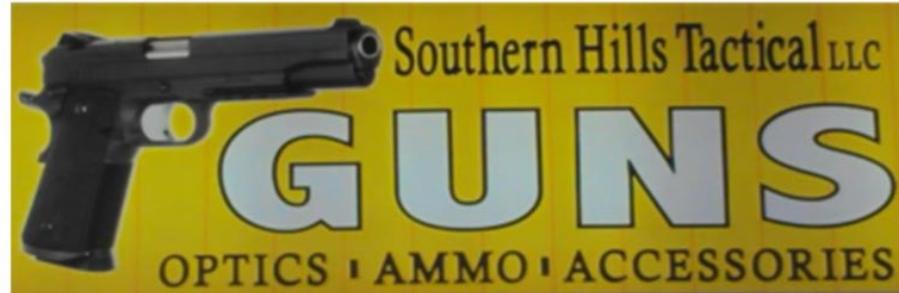
OPENS
12th
Dec.

CLOSES ON
Tuesday, Dec. 16th, 4pm
9 W. MT. RUSHMORE RD.
CUSTER, SD



Ron Bradeen - Jeff Storm - Travis Mayer, Auctioneers
605-673-2629 • Custer, SD
www.bradeenauction.com





South Dakota Enhanced Conceal Carry Class

This is a One day Class

Saturday Dec 13th 2025 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



CHRISTMAS FOR KIDS 2025

The 34th Annual Christmas for Kids event will take place at the Custer High School on Saturday December 13th, 2025 Noon-3:00 P.M.

All children residing in Custer County, ages 0-10 years, are welcome to attend this free event but must be registered.

Registration via email at custerchristmas4kids@gmail.com, registration will start on Saturday November 17th and end on December 5th.

A reply email will confirm your registration and will let you know what time to arrive. Kids and parents will enjoy lunch, holiday games, crafts and kids will visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

If you would like to donate to this event to assist with our toy purchases, or have any questions, please contact Corey or Jana Virtue at custerchristmas4kids@gmail.com or at 605-890-0458.



Details

Date: Saturday 13 December 2025

Time: 4:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Cover Charge: Free for all ages!

Location: The Custer Beacon!



Custer Senior Center's

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

DRAWING ON DECEMBER 15TH

The most wonderful time of the year brings amazing prizes! **Join our holiday raffle for your chance to win two \$50 Lynn's Dakotamart gift cards, one \$25 Ace Hardware gift card, a deluxe travel game set, red & black oven mitts, crocheted pot holders, a bottle of Prairie Berry wine, two wine glasses, and other fun miscellaneous items.** Feel the excitement of winning while celebrating the season together!

Purchase your
tickets at
538 Mt.
Rushmore Rd.

Tickets are \$1
for 1 ticket or
\$5 for 6
tickets!



Ladies Night at 'The Cruisin' Canvas

Tuesdays: 6pm to 8pm



October 28
November 4, 11, 18
December 2, 9, 16
January 6, 13, 20, 27

Looking for a way to escape the chilly December weather? Come join us at Jewel Cave National Monument on December 19th at 10:45 A.M. for a Holly Jolly Lantern-Led Scenic Tour!

Much like our Lantern Tours in the summer, this tour will use only hand-held battery



powered lanterns to light up the path, allowing visitors a chance to experience the wonders of the cave in its more natural darkness.

Tickets for this FREE tour will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis on December 19th. There are only 20 tickets for this tour, so spots will be limited!



NOV-FEB
6:00- 7:30 PM
\$10 AT DOOR

Black Hills Parks & Forests Presents

CABIN NATURE CHATS AT THE TRAILHOUSE

148 GORDON ST, CUSTER, SD 57730

Join us for a series of interactive nature programs held in the warm and welcoming Trailhouse. Explore, learn, and connect with the natural world in a cozy setting.

NOV 6
Field Notes: Stories and Skills from the Natural World
Explore the art of observation through photos, videos, and stories that bring tracking, survival, and local plants and wildlife to life. Interactive Q&A included.

DEC 4
Introduction to Survival
Learn the core skills of survival: shelter building, fire without matches, making water safe to drink, and basic snares for food.

JAN 8
Nature's Clues: Intro to Animal Tracking
Discover how to recognize tracks, scat, and other animal signs and interpret what they reveal about behavior, movement, and the ecology of the area.

FEB 5
Voices of Nature: Learning the Language of Wildlife
Tune in to the calls, movements, and behaviors of birds and mammals to detect hidden wildlife and move through nature with greater invisibility.



Learn more



TRAILHOUSE
a creative gathering space
www.TRAILHOUSEARTS.COM

BLACK HILLS PARKS & FORESTS ASSOCIATION

www.bhpfa.org | 605-745-7020

JUNE 13, 2026

The **Big Mick** CENTURY & HALF CENTURY RIDE



Bike it like you mean it!
George S. Mickelson Trail

109 Miles • 1 Day
1/2 Century Ride: 49 miles

Register Now!
MickelsonTrailAffiliates.com

We Ride at Dawn!
Event starts in Deadwood, ends in Edgemont
Registration Includes: Meals • Snacks
Day Pass • Rider Support • T-Shirt • Trail Swag

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS



Rapid City - Open Group

Hospice House
224 Elk St.
Rapid City, SD 57701
Thursday 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Rapid City - Closed Group

Hospice House
224 Elk St.
Rapid City, SD 57701
RSVP for details

All groups are free and open to anyone in the community experiencing grief and the loss of a loved one. Please RSVP for more information.

Spearfish - Open Group

931  E. Colorado Blvd.
Spearfish, SD 57783
2nd and 4th Thursday
12:00 p.m. - 1 p.m.

Custer - Open Group

Custer Hospital
1220 Montgomery St.
Custer, SD 57730
1st and 3rd Friday
12 p.m. - 1 p.m.

TO RSVP, CALL:

Bereavement Coordinator
605-755-7729

Hot Springs - Open Group

Fall River Health Services
1201 State Hwy. 71
Hot Springs, SD 57747
2nd and 4th Friday
12:00 p.m. - 1 p.m.

HOSPICE BEREAVEMENT PROGRAM
605-755-7729

 **MONUMENT HEALTH**

The basics of mutual funds

When you invest in a mutual fund, your money is pooled with that of other investors. A professional money manager or money management team then invests the money into a variety of securities to help the fund meet its stated objectives (e.g., growth, income, etc.). A single mutual fund can be made up of stocks, bonds or a combination of both.

Mutual fund 101

Diversification: Most funds diversify their holdings by buying a wide variety of investments that correspond with their category. A typical stock fund, for example, might own stock in 100 or more companies providing a range of products and services. The advantage of diversification is that losses on some stocks in the fund can potentially be offset by gains on others. There are many types of mutual funds with different objectives and levels of growth potential.

- **Professional management:** Each fund is run by one or more professional managers who are responsible for its day-to-day operations and performance. A typical fund engages a large group of research analysts, traders and financial analysts as well as a variety of other investment professionals.

Liquidity: Mutual fund shares are liquid investments that can generally be bought or sold on any typical business day. However, because of the fees involved with mutual fund transactions, we do not recommend using mutual funds as a short-term trading vehicle.



Kris Zerbe, AAMS®
Financial Advisor
P O Box 528
Custer, SD 57730
605-673-4092

- **Flexibility:** Mutual funds can be appropriate investments for large and smaller sums. Mutual fund investors may qualify for a reduced sales charge (known as a breakpoint) once they reach a certain level of investment in a mutual fund or fund family. This level may be achieved through a single purchase or a series of purchases.
- **Choice:** An investor can find a mutual fund to fit most investment goals. Many fund families now offer international, equity, balanced, bond, sector, asset allocation, growth, fixed-income and many other funds.

Deciding what's right for you

I can review with you the features and risks of a mutual fund to help determine whether it may be suitable for you.

Mutual fund investing involves risk. Your principal and investment return in a mutual fund will fluctuate in value and your investment when redeemed, may be worth more or less than the original investment.

How we work together: Helping you reach your financial goals

My team and I will take the time to truly get to know you, since how we turn your vision into a reality is very unique to you. I'll work with you to create a personalized financial strategy that includes advice, tools and resources to help you achieve your financial goals.

I'll do this in three important steps:

1. Understanding what's important to you

Your strategy should be personalized. So, before I make a recommendation, we'll work closely together to understand what is most important to you, including your goals, comfort with risk and how you'd prefer to work together.

2. Using an established process to build your personalized financial strategies

I use an established 5-step Process, incorporating what's important to you, to develop a personalized strategy using our advice, guidance and advanced tools. Our 5-step Process helps me fully understand what is most important to you and then create a personalized and actionable financial strategy.

3. Partnering together over time to help keep you on track

Markets, interest rates and life's priorities may change, but our relationship and my commitment to helping you achieve your goals won't. I'll make sure I'm with you every step of the way by:

- Providing regular reviews and updates
- Identifying timely risks and opportunities
- Helping you keep your emotions in check during market volatility
- Helping you prepare for the unexpected

I believe that when it comes to your financial strategy, you deserve a personal relationship and professional advice. My goal is to help you achieve your goals. That means focusing on the future you see for yourself, building strategies just for you and helping you stay on track by partnering together over the long term.

It takes a team

When we develop your financial strategy, you're backed by all of Edward Jones. Along with my team, you have the expertise of our Investment Policy Committee, our product review team and research analysts behind you all the way.

These teams provide the guidance and resources to help me:

- Develop a financial strategy for your goals
- Build your personalized investment portfolio
- Identify and address potential risks and opportunities



Scan the code
with the camera
on your phone



Jared N Slagle
Financial Advisor
P O Box 528
Custer, SD 57730
605-673-4092

Angie Svoboda
Sr. Branch Office Administrator
Aubrey Frasier
Sr. Branch Office Administrator



CUSTER COUNTY CWPP

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Custer County is updating its CWPP in cooperation with representatives from local, state, and federal agencies and other organizations with a stake in wildfire preparedness and mitigation. The project is being facilitated and supported by contract staff from Bintel Inc.

The CWPP is a plan developed by a community in an area at risk from wildfire. The Community Wildfire Protection Planning process is the collaboration between communities and agencies interested in reducing wildfire risk.

We welcome your feedback on how wildfire affects you for the purposes of the CWPP.

Survey Topics:

- county wildfire risks
- landowner mitigation
- evacuation planning



Scan for Survey



What is included in a CWPP?

- fire history, behavior, and probability
- firefighting capabilities & water supplies
- evacuation routes
- wildfire community hazard ratings
- wildfire mitigation recommendations
- home ignition zone recommendations

For more information about the project contact
sesser@custercountysd.com



Take Survey



VFW Post 3442 Angel Tree

There are 71 envelopes on the tree. Each envelope has a number and that number is assigned to a resident at the State Veterans Home in Hot Springs. Inside each envelope is a list of what that veteran would like for Christmas. Most of the lists are very short, but nothing says you can't buy more for that person.

When you pick a card, you will be Christmas shopping for that veteran. Please fill out your name and phone number on the sheet provided next to the number that you picked.

There will also be a contact card in the envelope for you to list your name, phone number and mailing address in case that veteran wants to personally thank you.

Please have all gifts back to the VFW by Dec 15th so we can deliver them later that week.

We would prefer that you wrap the gifts or at least put them in a holiday gift bag so that it really feels like Christmas to the heroes at the State Vets home.

Hats on, Gloves up! Let's Warm The Community



Winter Hat & Glove Drive

DROP OFF LOCATION
EDWARD JONES: KRIS ZERBE
245 MT. RUSHMORE RD
CUSTER, SD 57730

**Donate: Hats/gloves brand new or
clean in good condition**

All sizes needed from infant to teenager!



For more information call Aubrey at 605-673-4092 or
email at aubrey.frasier@edwardjones.com



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



CHRISTMAS TREE **PERMIT**

GET YOURS AT
[RECREATION.GOV](https://recreation.gov/tree-permits)

Cut down your own Christmas tree
and bring home a story!



Cutting your own tree delivers gifts for the forest and families

- Removing trees in designated areas helps other trees grow and can open areas that provide forage for wildlife.
- The adventure of hiking through the forest and the memories made can create traditions worth carrying on for generations.

For information on how to obtain your Christmas Tree Permit and important Know Before You Go steps visit recreation.gov/tree-permits or you can scan the bar code.



Fourth Graders with Every Kid Outdoors Passes are Eligible for a **Free** Christmas Tree Permit.



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

RECREATION.gov
BRING HOME A STORY





MOCCASIN SPRINGS
NATURAL MINERAL SPA
HOT SPRINGS, SD

12 Month Membership

- Unlimited Soak Pass
- Unlimited Yoga Classes
- 10% OFF
(spa services, events, gift shop, The Dragonfly restaurant)



SALE \$50 OFF

AVAILABLE DECEMBER ONLY

EXCLUSIVE OFFER
#membership

605-745-7625



HOLIDAY EXPRESS

*All aboard for
a magical ride!*



•1880 TRAIN•



*Every weekend from
Thanksgiving to Christmas Eve*

RESERVATIONS - 1880TRAIN.COM



Holiday RAFFLE

DRAWING WILL BE DECEMBER 6TH

FOR EVERY \$25 YOU SPEND GET 1 FREE RAFFLE TICKET

OR BUY 1 TICKET FOR \$5 OR 5 TICKETS FOR \$20

TOP 3 PRIZES WILL BE MAILED IF WINNER IS OUT OF STATE

-TOP PRIZE-

BLACK HILLS GOLD WOMEN'S WATCH - OR - HANDMADE DAMASCUS
DINO BONE INLAYER FOLDING KNIFE WITH SHEATH - ESTIMATED
RETAIL PRICE \$650

-2ND PRIZE-

LARIMAR STERLING SILVER BRACELET -
ESTIMATED RETAIL PRICE \$360

-3RD PRIZE-

TITAN INTERNATIONAL HANDMADE VIKING
INSPIRED AXE WITH SHEATH - ESTIMATED VALUE \$150

AS WELL AS MANY OTHER PRIZES FOR LOCALS SUCH
AS CINCH, KIMES, PANHANDLE, BLACK HILLS GOLD
APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES, AND WITH THE WIND WINERY
AND MANY MORE.

507 MT RUSHMORE RD
CUSTER, SD





GOOD KARMA
JEWELRY
Custer, SD

Etsy
Holly Jolly Holiday

SALE
35% OFF **EVERYTHING**

+ FREE DOMESTIC SHIPPING

WWW.ETSY.COM/SHOP/GOODKARMAJEWELRYSD

SALE RUNS 12/3-12/31

The advertisement features a wooden plaque with the brand name and location. The word 'Etsy' is written in red, followed by 'Holly Jolly Holiday' in a larger, stylized red font. A large red 'SALE' text is prominently displayed, with '35% OFF' and 'EVERYTHING' in bold red and green respectively. Below this, a green text '+ FREE DOMESTIC SHIPPING' is shown. The website 'WWW.ETSY.COM/SHOP/GOODKARMAJEWELRYSD' is in green, and the sale period 'SALE RUNS 12/3-12/31' is in green. The background is white with green pine branches and red berries at the top and bottom. A red Santa hat is placed on the 'SALE' text. Several white gift boxes with red ribbons are arranged on a red surface in the lower right.

DONATIONS NEEDED



- Empower Job Corps Classes -



Donate your old (working) sewing machines to Job Corps to aid in helping students build the skills and gain the hands-on experience needed to launch a successful career, pursue higher education, or join the military.

**Drop off your donations
at Custer Senior Center**





Announcing Holiday Pass Sale for Season 80 Tickets at the Black Hills Playhouse

Save up to 23% on Tickets from November 1-December 31!

For Immediate Release

SOUTH DAKOTA — Theatre 605 Black Hills Playhouse is excited to announce its annual holiday pass sale, offering exclusive savings on flexible ticket packages for the highly anticipated 2026 season. Running from **November 1 to December 31**, this special sale is one of the year's biggest for theatergoers. With discounts of **up to 23%**, it's the perfect opportunity to plan ahead and secure flexible tickets for an unforgettable summer of theatre in the scenic Black Hills. **The Holiday Pass Sale goes live online on November 1 and by phone via the Box Office on November 4.**

The holiday ticket packages come in a variety of options to suit any budget or gift-giving need:

- **Stocking Stuffer:** Includes 2 flexible tickets
- **Secret Santa:** Includes 4 flexible tickets
- **Shout it From the Rooftop:** Includes 8 flexible tickets
- **Shining Star:** Includes 16 flexible tickets

Each ticket package provides flexibility for attendees. Tickets can be redeemed for any 2026 season regular show performance and used by anyone, making them ideal for sharing with friends or family. Whether as a thoughtful gift or a personal treat, these passes offer convenience and value for all theatre lovers.

Season 80, titled **250 Years and Counting...Celebrating America's past, present, and imperfect progress** features a stellar lineup of four productions sure to captivate audiences:

- ***The Complete History of America (Abridged)***
- ***1776***
- ***Come From Away***
- ***What the Constitution Means to Me***

These flexible ticket packages are the perfect gift for the holiday season, and the Theatre 605 team is ready to assist you with your purchase. Tickets can be purchased conveniently online at theatre605.org starting November 1 or by calling **605.255.4141** starting November 4.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to share the magic of live theatre with loved ones while enjoying exceptional savings!



Yoga Teacher Training 200HR Certification

Our 200-hour Yoga Alliance Registered Teacher Training is designed for dedicated practitioners who feel called to expand their knowledge and impact others through teaching.

605-745-7625
www.moccasinsprings.com



Black Hills National Forest 2025/2026 Off-Season Campground Information						
Campground Name	Start of Reduced Off-Season Rates	Daily Fee	Units	Lake or Stream	Spur Length (Maximum)	Remarks
Bearlodge	Sept. 8	\$15	8	None	25 ft	Closes 12/15
Beaver Creek	Sept. 8 - Dec. 15	\$0	8	Beaver Creek	45 ft	Sites are outside of the main campground gate. Closes 12/15
Bismarck Lake	Sept. 29	\$15	5	Bismarck Lake	45 ft	Sites are outside of the main campground gate.
Boxelder Forks	Sept. 8 - Dec. 15	\$15	3	Boxelder Creek	45 ft	Sites are outside of the main campground gate.
Black Fox	Sept. 8 - Nov. 30	\$0	9	Rapid Creek	45 ft	Closes 12/1 for snowmobile routes.
Castle Peak	Sept. 8	\$0	9	Castle Creek	45 ft	Historic mining sites are available nearby.
Comanche Park	Sept. 8	\$15	5	None	25 ft	Sites are outside of the main campground gate.
Cook Lake	Sept. 8	\$4 Day Use \$15 Night	15	Cook Lake	45 ft	B Loop is open. All other loops are closed. Closes 12/15
Custer Trail	Sept. 8	\$0	16	Deerfield Lake	50 ft	
Dalton Lake	Sept. 8	\$15	11	Dalton Lake	45 ft	Closes 12/1 or as access allows due to snow
Ditch Creek	Sept. 8	\$0	13	Ditch Creek	50 ft	Off-season access may require a snowmobile or skis.
Dutchman	Sept. 8	\$0	9	Deerfield Lake	50 ft	Top Loop is open. All other loops are closed.
Hanna	Sept. 8	\$15	6 - Tent Only	Spearfish Creek	0 ft	Walk-in tent sites are open during the off-season.
Redbank Springs	Sept. 8 - Nov. 30	\$15	4	None	50 ft	Closes 12/01
Reuter	Sept. 8	\$15	24	None	30 ft	Closes 12/15
Rod & Gun	Sept. 8 - Nov. 30	\$15	7	Little Spearfish	50 ft	Closes 12/1
Roubaix	Sept. 8	\$15	9	Roubaix Lake	25 ft	C Loop is open. All other loops are closed.
Sheridan Lake South	Sept. 29	\$15	30	Sheridan Lake	60 ft	Woodsy Loop is open. All other loops are closed.
Summit Ridge Cabin	Year Round	\$75	1	None	N/A	Reserve at www.recreation.gov - Area roads are not maintained; off-season access may require a snowmobile or skis.
Sundance (Horse Camp)	Sept. 8	\$15	10	None	50 ft	Horse facility (corrals & stalls). No water after 09/11
Timon	Sept. 8 - Nov. 30	\$15	7	Little Spearfish	60 ft	Closes 12/1
Whitetail	Sept. 8	\$0	17	Deerfield Lake	50 ft	Lower Loop (including toilet) is open. Upper Loop is closed.
Closed for the Off-Season on Sept. 8:	Bear Gulch Group Campground, Dalton, Grizzly, Pactola Reservoir, Sheridan Lake North Group Sites, Steamboat Rock, and Strawberry.					
Closed for the Off-Season on Sept 29:	Bismarck, Horsethief Lake, and Oreville. NOTE: Oreville Campground and Iron Creek and Willow Creek Horse Camps are open through October 31 (Weather Permitting).					
<p>* Fees: Self-Pay at all open campgrounds. The Stay Limit is 14 days at all developed campgrounds.</p> <p>* Roads: Not maintained during the off-season. Sites above are open until weather prohibits access or closed on date(s) noted above.</p> <p>* Garbage: Pack It In, Pack It Out at all sites.</p> <p>* Plan Ahead: All campsites are first come, first serve and offer a picnic table and fire ring. Vault toilets are available. Drinking water is NOT available.</p> <p>* All information is subject to change, due to inclement weather, decreased staffing, and sporadic conditions beyond control.</p>						

September and October offer some of the best camping conditions in the region. Shoulder season temperatures are comfortable, roadways are less congested, and recreational opportunities still abound on the Forest. Whether you are a local enthusiast or a passing traveler, please see the off-season camping calendar from our friends at the Black Hills National Forest. #FindYourForest

LOVE LOCAL GIVE LOCAL

HELP LOCAL PROJECTS THAT MATTER TO YOU
& YOUR BUSINESS!

CHAMBER MEMBERS:
PLEASE CONSIDER A BUSINESS DONATION

HIGHLIGHT YOUR BUSINESS & SUPPORT CUSTER'S FUTURE!

DONATE AT THE CITY OFFICE OR SPEAK TO A COMMITTEE MEMBER

CURRENT PROJECT:

REBUILD & REVIVE WEST DAM AND PARKS



FUTURE PROJECTS MAY INCLUDE: CITY PARKS & CUSTER COMMUNITY CENTER

MAKE A TAX DEDUCTABLE DONATION - SCAN QR CODE OR VISIT:
[HTTP://BIT.LY/CUSTERWESTDAM](http://bit.ly/custerwestdam)

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT:
[WWW.CUSTERCDF.COM](http://www.custercdf.com)

NEWS FROM THE STATE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tues., Dec. 2, 2025

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

Travel South Dakota Proudly Recognizes Official 2025 Great Place and Great Face Designees

PIERRE, S.D. – Travel South Dakota is proud to recognize **38** businesses with a **2025 South Dakota Great Place** designation and **65** individuals with a **2025 South Dakota Great Face** designation. These tourism-focused businesses and individuals earned the designation for their outstanding hospitality and customer service. “South Dakota continues to be a place where visitors are met with genuine warmth and hospitality,” said James Hagen, Secretary of the Department of Tourism. “But this doesn’t just happen. We are known for world-class hospitality because of the businesses and people that prioritize it and embody that welcoming spirit on a daily basis. I couldn’t be prouder to recognize each of them for their commitment to excellence.”

The **South Dakota Great Place** program puts a spotlight on businesses that exemplify great service by going above and beyond for guests and employees. The **South Dakota Great Face** program honors individuals in the tourism and hospitality industry who excel in customer service by providing top-tier service to guests. The goal of both programs is to strengthen the tourism industry in South Dakota and offer support to tourism industry members.

“Hospitality remains at the heart of what makes South Dakota so special,” continued Hagen. “Our **Great Place** and **Great Face** designees consistently go above and beyond to make every guest feel at home.”

To view the list of **Great Place** businesses recognized, please [click here](#). For a list of **Great Face** individuals, [click here](#).

Online application forms for 2026 **South Dakota Great Place** and 2026 **South Dakota Great Face** will open in February 2026. All are encouraged to participate. For more information about the **Great Place** program, [click here](#). To learn more about the **Great Face** program, [click here](#).

The department also offers an **Online Hospitality Training** program. The training is free, and all tourism industry businesses are encouraged to share the training with their staff. For more information about the department’s hospitality programs, please [click here](#).

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: The 2025 South Dakota Great Place and South Dakota Great Place designees listed by community and organization:

2025 GREAT PLACES

Aberdeen

Wylie Park/Storybook Land

Brookings

Brookings Arts Council

The Carrot Seed Kitchen Co.

Children's Museum of South Dakota

Dacotah Bank Center

Downtown Brookings

Kool Beans Coffee and Roasterie

The Lanes

McCrory Gardens at SDSU

The Oscar Larson Performing Arts Center

South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum

South Dakota Art Museum

Visit Brookings

Wooden Legs Brewing Co.

Bruce

Oakwood Lakes State Park (SD GFP)

Chamberlain

Akta Lakota Museum & Cultural Center

Crazy Horse

Crazy Horse Memorial

Custer

Fort Welikit Campground

Hot Springs

The Mammoth Site

Keystone

Big Thunder Gold Mine

Rush Mountain Adventure Park

Sprockets Fun Foundry

Lake Preston

Lake Thompson Recreation Area (SD GFP)

Madison

Lake Herman State Park & Walker's Point Recreation Area (SD GFP)

Mitchell

My Place Hotel/Mitchell Holdings LLC

Rapid City

Black Hills Adventure Tours

Black Hills Caverns

Black Hills Visitor Information Center

Hotel Alex Johnson

Sioux Falls

Experience Sioux Falls

Falls Park Visitor Information Center

McCrossan Boys Ranch

Watertown

My Place Hotels

Quality Inn and Suites

Venerts Hotel Management, Inc.

Yankton

Lewis & Clark Recreation Area

Visit Yankton

2025 GREAT FACES

Brookings – McCrory Gardens at SDSU

Varlika Ahirekar, Kathryn Bowar, Carson Hunsley, Catherine Jones, Lisa Marotz, Victoria Meier, Rose Nett, Sophie Pavelka, Lori Puetz, John Qui, Alyson Swanson, Sydney Trio, Laura Valentina Lopez Bustos

Brookings – Children's Museum of South Dakota

Loren Bauder and Bob Ullom

Brookings – Visit Brookings

Bridgit Burghardt, Laura Schoen Carboneau, Kate Solberg

Brookings – The Oscar Larson Performing Arts Center at SDSU

Christina Castillo

Brookings – Wooden Legs Brewing Company

Jack Richards, Rachel Schmitz, Regan Yseth

Chamberlain – Akta Lakota Museum & Cultural Center

Wanda Bunker and Linnea Wright

Crazy Horse Memorial

Rebekah Bone, Skyller Coughlin, Bill Daybrest, Jim DeHaven, Joe DeRouchey, Judith Evanoff, John Hanson, Robert Knudsen, Mike Reznik, Kevin Showers, Betty Sowder, Tom Wilson

Keystone – Rush Mountain Adventure Park

Megan Jones, MiBella Ochoa, Jeremiah Shepperd

Keystone – Srockets Fun Foundry

Tyler Cooper, Spencer Hagen, Loki Joeckel

Mitchell - My Place Hotels

Brenda Nelson

Rapid City – Black Hills Adventure Tours

Mark Barker, Mike Faust, Lisa Ficek, Carrie Gerlach, Denny Gienger, Mickey Higgins, Al Maas, Jamie McSherry, Aura Plooster, Jacki Welbig-Stenson

Rapid City – Black Hills Caverns

Isaac Cristol

Rapid City – Black Hills Visitor Information Center

Kelly Braun, Twila Ferguson, Katie Hoeke, Skip Stanec, Ed Toms, Jessica Underwood

Sioux Falls – Experience Sioux Falls

Jessica Pappas and Kristi Desaulniers

Watertown – My Place Hotels

Mamie Blanas and Dennille Goette

Watertown – Quality Inn & Suites

Traci Hanchet

PRESS RELEASE

Fall / Winter 2025

CUSTER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Custer County
Conservation District was
established in 1940.

Special points of interest:

- District turns 85
- Community Wildfire Protection Plan
- Invasive cool-season annual grasses

Inside this issue:

District anniversary and history	1
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CUSTER CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

Happy Anniversary! The Custer County Conservation District Celebrates 85 Years.

As 2025 comes to a close, the Custer County Conservation District is celebrating its 85th anniversary. The District hosted a small celebration during its December board meeting with some of its partners. The group shared cake and conversation. A special thank you to all of our partners! We would not be successful without your cooperation and valuable contributions.

Conservation District History:

The official beginning of the district dates back to 1940 when a Land Use Planning Committee passed a resolution proposing that a soil conservation district be formed within the

(Continued on page 2)

85!



The Custer County Conservation District celebrated its 85th anniversary at the December 2 meeting. Pictured left to right (standing) are board supervisors Paul Nettinga, Dave Thom, Donagh Wood, Tamarah Caster, and Greg Neugebauer, district manager Mike Baldwin, and former board supervisor and current advisor Gladwin Paulsen (sitting).

Community Wildfire Protection Plan - Your Input is Wanted!

Custer County is updating its Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) in cooperation with local, state, and federal agencies and other organizations with a stake in wildfire preparedness and mitigation. The CWPP is a collaborative plan developed by a community in an area at risk from wildfire.



What is included in a CWPP?

- fire history, behavior, and probability
- firefighting capabilities & water supplies
- evacuation routes
- wildfire community hazard ratings
- wildfire mitigation recommendations
- home ignition zone recommendations

Your feedback on how wildfires may affect you is valuable. Please scan the QR code to take the survey.

Survey topics include county wildfire risks, land-owner mitigation, and evacuation planning.





Black Hills Parks & Forests Association

Supporting wonder and exploration through stewardship of **your** public lands.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Patty Ressler

Email: pressler@blackhillsplarks.org

Government Shutdown Leaves Public-Lands Partner with More Than \$105,000 in Lost Revenue

HOT SPRINGS, SD – Black Hills Parks and Forests Association, a nonprofit that supports National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service sites in South Dakota and Nebraska, reports more than \$105,000 in lost revenue following the 43-day federal government shutdown. The financial hit affects the organization's ability to fund educational programs that thousands of visitors rely on each year, including Junior Ranger activities at several national parks and forests.

BHPFA operates 16 stores inside federal land agency facilities across the region, including Wind Cave National Park, Jewel Cave National Monument, Scotts Bluff National Monument, Agate Fossil Beds National Monument, and ranger district offices for the Black Hills and Nebraska National Forests. These locations provide most of the nonprofit's operating income.

"Our partner retail operations make up 89 percent of our operating revenue," said BHPFA Executive Director Patty Ressler. "October is usually a strong sales month for us. Losing this revenue will impact how we support our federal partners, especially the education programs families count on."

Because the shutdown closed federal facilities to visitors, BHPFA's stores were unable to operate during one of the most active visitor periods of the fall season. The organization says the shortfall threatens funding for interpretive materials, youth education, and community outreach programs that help connect people with public lands.

To stabilize its budget, the nonprofit is launching a year-end fundraising effort supported by a \$50,000 matching gift. The appeal aims to prevent interruptions to partner support and to maintain staffing levels for the organization's nine full-time employees.

"A gift at this time will assure our federal partners there will be no gaps in funding their education programs," Ressler said. "It also helps us keep our staff employed so we can continue serving the parks and forests our communities care about."

BHPFA has also opened a holiday market at its new headquarters at 833 Mt. Rushmore Road in Custer, offering seasonal hours through Dec. 24.

About Black Hills Parks & Forests Association:

Black Hills Parks & Forests Association (BHPFA) is a nonprofit partner of the U.S. Forest Service and National Park Service. The organization supports wonder and exploration through stewardship of public lands. In 2025, BHPFA has provided over \$100,000 to its agency partners for educational programming, interpretive materials, and public outreach across South Dakota and Nebraska.

Proud non-profit partner of Wind Cave National Park, Jewel Cave National Monument, Scotts Bluff National Monument, Agate Fossil Beds National Monument, Black Hills National Forest, Nebraska National Forests & Grasslands, & the National Grasslands Visitor Center

26611 US HIGHWAY 385 | HOT SPRINGS, SD 57747 | 605.745.7020

BlackHillsParks.org

At 11 a.m. MT today, Monday, Oct. 6, 2025, a road construction project is scheduled to begin on U.S. Highway 16A near Custer. The reconstruction project to replace a box culvert structure and multiple pipe culverts is located 14 miles east of Custer or nine miles west of the S.D. Highway 79 intersection.

Highway 16A will be closed from the intersections of Highway 16A/Iron Mountain Road to Custer State Park's Wildlife Loop. This closure will be in place until April 2026. Additional work will include replacing multiple pipe culverts, building gabion walls, and mill and overlay asphalt from Custer State Park's east entrance to the west entrance for 13 miles. Custer State Park's Wildlife Loop and Iron Mountain Road will remain open throughout the project.

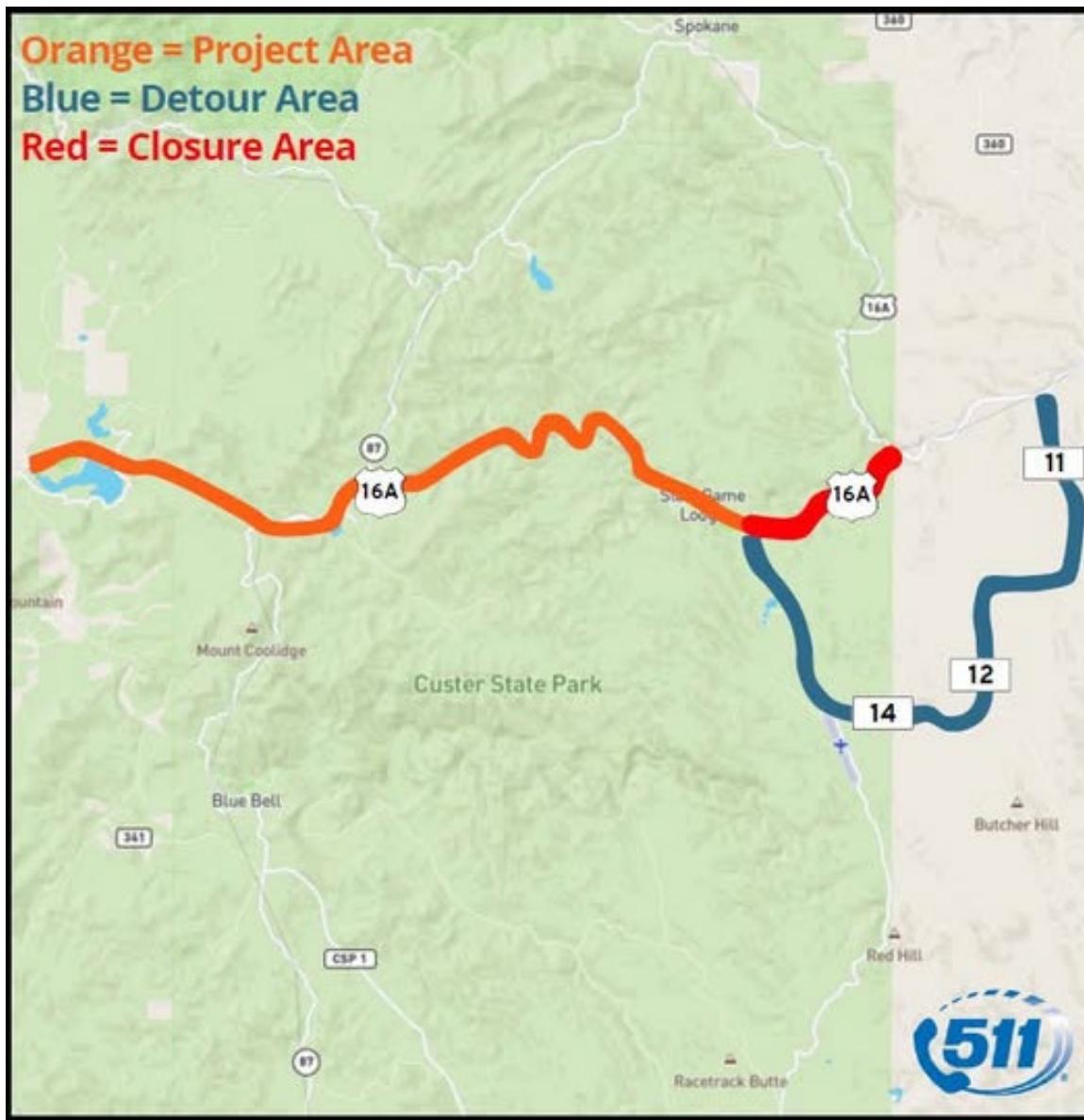
During the Highway 16A closure, there will be a detour in place. The detour route is from the intersection of S.D. Highway 36 and Custer County's Ritterberger Road, south two miles to Cobb Road intersection, west one mile on Cobb Road, south one and one-half miles on Cobb Road to the intersection of LH Road, west approximately two miles on LH Road to Custer State Park's Wildlife Loop Road, and then north two miles on the Wildlife Loop Road back to Highway 16A. Motorists should be aware that the detour on Ritterberger Road, Cobb Road, and LH Road includes six miles of gravel. The Wildlife Loop Road is two miles of asphalt with a reduced speed limit of 25 mph.

S.D. Highway 40 between Hermosa and Keystone also provides a detour option for area motorists.

Find additional project information at <https://dot.sd.gov/16a-culverts>. This website includes project updates, photos, and a downloadable map that demonstrates the project area and detour route.

The overall project completion date is October 2026.

#SDDOT #SD511



South Dakota DOT Update





Project Update

NOVEMBER 28th

Current Construction:

- Closure E (Pactola Dam to Taylor Ranch Road) is currently in place and ends on Friday, March 6, 2026. Outside of the closure area, construction crews are continuing work on the roadway.
- The driving surface within the construction area is a combination of pavement, blotter (a hard, packed surface that resembles asphalt), and gravel. U.S. Highway 385 from Wrinkle Valley Road to 1/2-mile from South Sanders Ranch Road and from Sheridan Lake Road to 1/2-mile to the north is gravel.
- In the event of winter weather, the South Dakota Department of Transportation will plow and maintain the construction area as well as Custer Gulch Road.
- The intersection of Custer Gulch Road and Highway 385 has been temporarily moved 300 feet to the north. A temporary diversion is in place while the contractor continues work on a box culvert in this area.
- Within the closure area, the contractor continues to conduct planned rock blasts, excavating and replacing culverts, and grading the roadway.



[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.**



Custer Senior Center

December Activities





To educate every student
to his or her potential

[Latest Newsletter](#)

WEEKLY INSPIRATION

BLESSINGS December

"May December bring you countless blessings and endless joy." — Unknown



HELP WANTED



We are seeking qualified candidates to join our team in the ***Black Hills Visitor Information Center.***

Interested applicants should send a cover letter and resume to ara@blackhillsbadlands.com or give Ara a call at 605-355-3600.

Visitor Information Center Host: <https://bit.ly/3KKeh4f>
Visitor Information Center Supervisor: <https://bit.ly/4pMSWWF>



CARSON DRUG

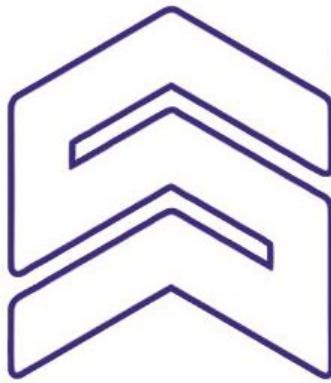
WE ARE HIRING

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- PART-TIME OR FULLTIME
- PAY \$20.00-\$25.00
- CERTIFICATION PREFERRED
BUT NOT REQUIRED IN SD

- Stop in to apply in person
- Send Your CV to Colby at
Carsondrug@gwtc.net
- Apply on Indeed





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 - Weekdays during business hours (flexible scheduling)
- \$14/ hour, part-time
- Great for students interested in healthcare or physical therapy
- Send resume to julie@painandmovementsolutions.com for consideration



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The graphic consists of a black rectangular sign with white text, set against a green background. A white starburst shape is positioned at the top right of the sign. The sign contains the following text:
**CUSTER SENIOR
CENTER**
**WE'RE
HIRING!**
OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
POSITION IS OPEN. PLEASE STOP
BY THE CENTER OR EMAIL YOUR
RESUME TO
CSCDIRECTOR@GWTC.NET

For more information please call:
(605)673-2708

538 Mt. Rushmore Rd.
Custer, SD 57730



HELP WANTED

WE ARE LOOKING FOR PART-TIME WORKERS YEAR-ROUND.

APPLY TODAY

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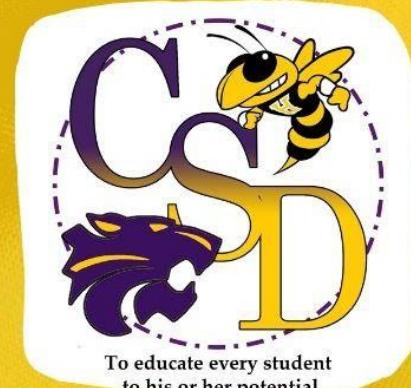
Outlaw Ranch



Outlaw Ranch is looking for a part-time assistant cook/baker. Our beautiful space offers a welcoming working environment. Experience preferred, will train. Pay DOE. Hours for this position vary throughout the year, as we host a wide variety of retreats from August-April, and we host summer camps for ten weeks from late May through July.

Please call Jamie at 605-673-4040 for more details.

Join Us.



**BE A PART OF OUR
EDUCATIONAL
TEAM!**



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- SPED PARAPROFESSIONAL @ CES
- Substitute Teachers & Custodians- at all schools

• To apply: <https://www.csd.k12.sd.us/page/current-career-opportunities>
• Call Custer School District 605-673-3154

www.csd.k12.sd.us

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

Chamber Staff & Board of Directors



CHAMBER STAFF

Dawn Murray
Executive Director
dmurray@custersd.com

Fred Baumann
Information Associate
fbaumann@custersd.com

Pat Hattervig
Information Associate
phattervig@custersd.com

Adrianna Burgess
Office Assistant
assistant@custersd.com

Rachelle Woodford
Office Assistant
bytes@custersd.com

Joel Behlings
Information Associate
info@custersd.com

2025

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Our Address:
615 Washington Street
Custer, SD 57730

Phone Numbers:
605-673-2244
800-992-9818



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