



## *Custer Connections*



Small businesses everywhere are realizing that success isn't just about how good your product is—it's about how connected your customers feel to you and each other. The new growth model that's gaining serious traction? Community-led growth.

This approach focuses on creating value and shared experiences before the sale ever happens. When done right, it doesn't just build customers—it builds advocates and connections.

But when done incorrectly, it turns potential fans into skeptics.

### Why Community Matters More Than Ever

Building a community isn't just a feel-good strategy—it's a competitive advantage. In an era where trust is low and attention spans are shorter than ever, people crave connection. A strong community gives your audience a reason to stick around, even when they're not ready to buy and, like your favorite binge-worthy show, it has a lot of seasons and variations. For instance, it looks like a group where people share wins, ask questions, support each other, and celebrate progress. It's people tagging their friends in your posts, offering advice in your Facebook group, and proudly using your templates or tools.

Community turns one-time customers into long-term advocates, and it transforms your brand from a product into a movement.

Let's look at two recent real-world examples of multi-day webinars run by small business owners with something to sell. Both had a course or community behind the scenes. But the difference in how they built interest and trust made all the difference.

## Example 1: Teach First, Sell Later

Tanya, a branding expert and course creator, ran a three-day webinar series on visual storytelling for small businesses.

From Day 1, she delivered value. Each day, she taught a specific concept—like choosing brand colors, creating consistent visuals, or writing engaging captions—and gave attendees practical takeaways they could use immediately. There was no bait-and-switch.

She also created a pop-up Facebook group where participants discussed what they learned, shared examples and wins, and supported each other. The sense of collaboration and energy in the group was palpable. People weren't just learning from Tanya—they were learning from each other.

She gave away free Canva templates to help people apply the lessons, and many posted their before-and-after visuals right in the group. By the time she introduced her paid course on Day 3, she had already built trust and delivered results. Her offer felt like a logical next step, not a sales ambush.

The result? A strong conversion rate and a thriving community that stuck around long after the sales window closed.

## Example 2: Sell First, Hope They Stay

Then there was Ashley, who held a webinar to promote her custom sales page software. From the first five minutes, it was clear the goal wasn't to teach—it was to sell.

She framed everything as “only possible with our proprietary system.” Instead of offering insights or techniques for improving sales pages, the entire event was an extended infomercial. Participants didn't walk away with tips or strategies—they left with a pitch.

Worse, the attendees were asked to “design their dream page” using mock-ups—but could only create fake versions unless they bought her software. No free templates. No tools. No shared community. Just a vague call to action: show off what you built... or could build if you paid.

The lack of value meant there was no momentum, no conversations, and no community. Attendees didn't connect with Ashley—or each other—because they weren't given anything to connect around.

## What We Learn from These Two Designs

Tanya and Ashley both had something to sell, but only one built a following.

Community-led growth isn't about avoiding the sale. It's about earning it. When you give people real value first—before asking for a commitment—you build trust. And when you create a space for people to share, learn, and collaborate, you build something even more powerful: belonging.

In a world saturated with content and competition, that's the difference between being scrolled past and being remembered.

## How Small Businesses Can Embrace Community-Led Growth

You don't have to be a mega content producer to be like Tanya. Tanya and Ashley had the same resources at their disposal. Tanya saw sales as a final destination after a courtship and period of getting to know one another. She was

confident that once they knew her and what she offered, they'd continue on with her paid program. Ashley, on the other hand, came at sales hard from the beginning and expected everyone would be so wowed by the tech that they'd hand over their credit card.

To be more like Tanya and less like Ashley, you need to:

- **Teach before you pitch:** Share something useful and actionable for free. Make your audience feel smarter, better, or more equipped just by showing up.
- **Create a space to connect:** Whether it's a Facebook group, Discord server, private community, or Slack channel, invite attendees to join a space where they can talk, share, and celebrate wins. You'll get the best results if your community is somewhere people are already connecting so it's an extension of their online habit and not one they have to remember to log into and visit.
- **Provide tools to succeed:** Templates, checklists, worksheets—something they can use right away goes a long way in building goodwill. People will feel like you're interested in them and their success, not their wallet.
- **Make the sale a next step—not the first step:** Let your offer feel like the natural progression of the learning journey, not the destination.

Community-led growth isn't just a trend—it's the future of small business marketing. Those who lead with value and create spaces for connection will be the ones people follow, buy from, and tell their friends about.

*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.*

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Medium: [@christinametcalf](#)

Facebook: [@tellyourstorygetemtalking](#)

Instagram: [@christinametcalfauthor](#)

LinkedIn: [@christin](#)



Dawn Murray  
Executive Director

## Important Chamber Announcements

A graphic for a hiring announcement. On the left, a dark blue background features the Custer Area Chamber of Commerce logo (a stylized 'W' with a crown) and the text 'Custer Area Chamber Of Commerce' in white. Below this, 'WE ARE HIRING' is written in large, bold, white and yellow letters, followed by 'Join Our Team' in white. At the bottom left, a yellow dot is followed by the text 'Part Time Information Associate' in white. On the right, a photograph shows two people, a woman and a man, looking at a computer screen. In the top right corner of the photo, the Custer Chamber of Commerce logo is visible, featuring an American flag and the text 'CUSTER Chamber of Commerce'.

- 3 plus days a week / Including Saturdays & Events
- Competitive Wages

**SEND YOUR RESUME TO :**

✉ [dmurray@custersd.com](mailto:dmurray@custersd.com)

**CONTACT US :**

☎ 605-673-2244



**CUSTER**

**CHAMBER**

**MONDAY**

**9AM - 5PM**

**TUESDAY**

**9AM - 5PM**

**WEDNESDAY**

**9AM - 5PM**

**THURSDAY**

**9AM - 5PM**

**FRIDAY**

**9AM - 5PM**

**SATURDAY**

**9AM - 4PM**

**SUNDAY**

**CLOSED**

**COME SEE US DURING OUR**

**EXTENDED SUMMER HOURS**

**STARTING MAY 24TH**



**DO YOU  
WANT TO BE  
IN THE LOOP?**

Don't miss any updates from  
the Custer Chamber!

Sign up now to receive  
important events directly on  
your phone.

**Sign up Now!**



Sign Up  
Now

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**CUSTER**  
*Chamber of Commerce*

**CUSTER ♥'S  
MILITARY FAMILIES**





CHECK OUT OUR  
MILITARY DISCOUNTS

Visit our  
Website

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**LOVE LOCAL  
GIVE LOCAL**

**HELP LOCAL PROJECTS THAT MATTER TO YOU  
& YOUR BUSINESS!**

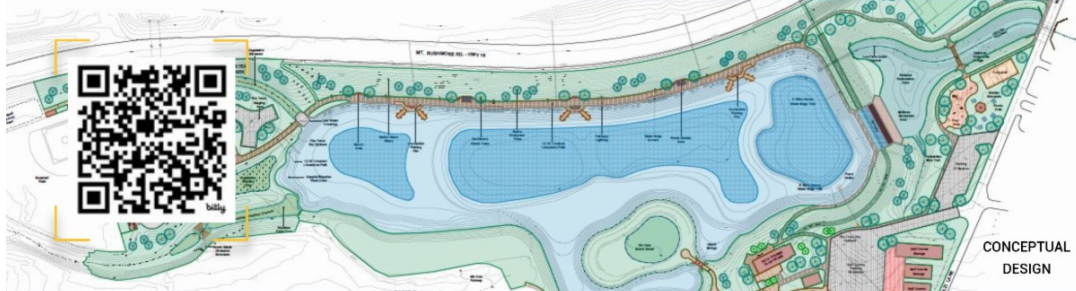
CHAMBER MEMBERS:  
PLEASE CONSIDER A BUSINESS DONATION

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)

6/5/2025

[Learn More](#)

□ *Mark Your Calendars* □

**June 13-15th**

Custer Off-Road Rally

**June 20-22nd**

Summer Mickelson Trail Trek

**June 27th**

Ribbon Cutting  
Bottoms Up Taphouse  
430 Mt Rushmore Rd  
4:30PM





*Register Now*

**For more information:**

<https://www.custersd.com/events/custer-off-road-rally>



# Mickelson Trail Trek Welcome Banquet Sponsors Needed

**Fat Tire Sponsor- \$300**

**Road Bike- \$200**

**Hospitality Night Sponsor- \$100**

Over 300 bicyclists on  
June 19, 2025

Contact Dawn at [dmurray@ustersd.com](mailto:dmurray@ustersd.com)





# *Ribbon Cutting*

CLUSTER  
Chamber of Commerce



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**WHEN: JUNE 27TH, 2025**  
**WHERE: 430 MT RUSHMORE RD,**  
**TIME: 4:30 PM**

TIME: 4:30 PM



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# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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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  
Black Hills Enclave  
Game On Arcade  
Custer Lawyer, PLLC  
South Dakota Parks & Wildlife Foundation

Dean Baker Parks & Wildlife Foundation  
Black Hills Preservation Project  
My XO Adventures  
Local Black Hills  
555 Pro Books  
A & B Business Solutions  
CJR Painting  
Dave's Rock Shop

St John the Baptist Catholic Church  
Black Hills Glass Restoration  
Sleep Better South Dakota LLC



2025 Custer Chamber

# Member Spotlight

## Drover's Ridge



Address: 25538 Newell Road, Custer  
Phone: 605-503-3163  
Email: [droversridge@gmail.com](mailto:droversridge@gmail.com)

**#MembershipMonday#**

This week, we are talking about our new member, **Drover's Ridge**. Here is what the owner, Brittany Johnson, had to say about Drover's Ridge.

"Drover's Ridge is creating unforgettable pet experiences, one wag at a time! We offer boarding, training, grooming, daycare and free community events like our Custer Pack Walk (the first Saturday of every month). We currently are accepting pets of all kinds and species and offer a pick up and drop off taxi for

all of our services. We have big plans for the future and are working on getting a facility built up so we can also offer retail, a K9 unit, indoor and outdoor obstacle courses and more! Drover's Ridge is currently by appointment only and being ran out of our home, we thank you for working with us during this building phase and we really look forward to what the future holds! Contact us today to learn more!"

**#custersd #ChamberSpotlight #MemberSpotlight #Loyal2Local**

## □ Keeping You Up To Date □



### Area Events

#### □ Upcoming Events □

Looking for something fun to do in the area? Here are a few exciting events happening soon.

[Read More](#)



### Announcements

#### □ Important Announcements Ahead!

Stay tuned for some key updates you won't want to miss.

[Read More](#)



### News FromThe State

□ News from the State  
Important updates stay informed about what's happening in your community. More details to follow soon!

[Read More](#)



### Press Release

#### □ Press Release Alerts □

Stay tuned for the full details and



**Read  
More**

### Custer Senior Center

**Custer Senior Center**   
There's always something happening at the Custer Senior Center! From activities to community news, we're here to keep you connected and engaged.

**Read  
More**

### Custer School District

**Custer School District**   
Exciting things are happening in the Custer School District! Stay updated on student achievements, upcoming events, and important announcements.

**Read  
More**



### Help Wanted

**Help Wanted!**  
If you're looking for a great opportunity to join a dedicated team, we'd love to hear from you.

**Read  
More**



### Chamber Staff

**Meet the Custer Chamber Team!**  
Get to know the friendly faces behind the Custer Area Chamber of Commerce!

**Read  
More**



### Board Of Directors

**Meet the Board of Directors Team!**  
Get to know the friendly faces behind the Custer Area Chamber of Commerce!

**Read  
More**

## Stay Connected 385'

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.



# U.S. HIGHWAY 385 CONSTRUCTION

PENNINGTON-LAWRENCE COUNTY LINE TO SHERIDAN LAKE

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

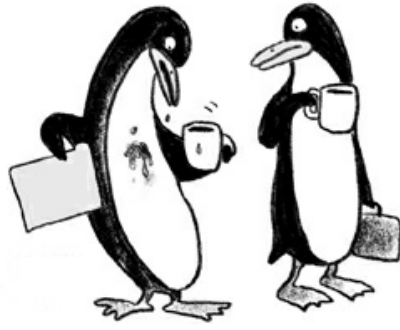


## 2025 EVENTS CALENDAR

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

[CLICK TO DOWNLOAD  
CALENDAR](#)

*"Dang! That's never coming out."*



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**The most effective  
way to do it,  
is to do it.**

**- Amelia Earhart**



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

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