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Horizons

A Golden West Customer Newsletter

Crafting Community

Brewery Brings People Together in Hartford

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Crafting Community

Brewery Brings People Together in Hartford

Chris and Callie Tuschen fell in love with the craft beer scene while living in Oregon. After moving back to South Dakota, they turned their passion into a business. Today, their brewery in Hartford draws rave reviews from locals and visitors.

“The seed was planted eight or nine years ago,” Callie says. “Chris’ mother and I bought him a home brew kit for his birthday one year. He fell in love with brewing beer at home. He and I have always been of the entrepreneurial mindset, and we always wanted to start a business and be our own bosses.”

“The Universe Aligned”

When the Tuschens moved to South Dakota to be closer to family in 2014, they didn’t plan on starting their own business. Chris landed a job in Mitchell and, with three young children, their focus was on building a comfortable life. South Dakota was a natural fit; Chris and Callie grew up in different parts of the state, and Callie was able to homeschool their kids.

“It felt like the right thing for us to be near family again,” Chris says.

The idea of starting their own business began to take root a couple of years later. The couple first discussed logistics while visiting a friend who works as a chef in 2017. While they didn’t ultimately partner with that friend, their conversation got the wheels turning.

Once the decision was made, everything came together quickly. They secured financing, broke ground, and opened within a 10-month span.

“It was serendipitous,” Chris recalls. “The universe aligned, and everything just happened the way it was supposed to.”

Community Feels Like Home

The Tuschens hadn’t originally targeted Hartford, but the community quickly won them over. It turned out to be an ideal location for Buffalo Ridge Brewing Project.

“I absolutely love Hartford,” Callie says. “Moving here and opening a business has been a very positive experience. I lived in eight different places after graduating high school, and Hartford is the first place I’ve lived that actually feels like home. I think that’s because there are people who have lived here all their lives and others who have moved in more recently. There’s a combination of all different kinds of people.”



Chris and Callie Tuschen, Owners of Buffalo Ridge Brewing Project

Callie serves as vice president of Downtown Hartford, Inc., a nonprofit dedicated to supporting and revitalizing the downtown district. She also coordinates the farmers market.

“People come out in droves for it,” she says about the farmers market. “It highlights a lot of local hidden talent – hobbies, woodworking, crafting – and offers an opportunity for the community to come together.”

A Mecca for Locals & Travelers

Between Chris’s day job and Callie’s community projects, it can be easy to forget the Tuschens also own a business ... but the brewery spurred their move to Hartford in the first place.

Buffalo Ridge Brewing Project, located at 102 N. Main Ave., was a hit the moment its doors opened in November 2018. With a focus on freshly brewed craft beer, the taproom attracts both locals and travelers passing through town. They currently offer pint sales and growlers to go but hope to eventually build a production facility and expand into canning with both traditional sizes and larger 32-oz. crowlers.

Indoor capacity is 90 and an outdoor patio seats another 30-40. In addition to serving beer and appetizers, the brewery hosts a variety of special events, including bingo nights where all proceeds are donated to charity. It’s all part of the Tuschens’ plan to create a space for the community to come together. “We really want to be that space where

The Tuschens aren’t the only ones singing Hartford’s praises. The town was named South Dakota Small Community of the Year for 2020.

See page 4 for details.

people can come and meet one another and just enjoy time together,” Chris shares. “We are family and pet friendly; everyone is welcome. One of the comments we hear is, ‘It doesn’t even feel like we’re in Hartford.’ We have a different feel, a different energy. Breweries have a unique culture. It’s a different space that people gravitate toward. It’s awesome to provide a space that people really enjoy being in.”



I absolutely love Hartford. Moving here and opening a business has been a very positive experience.

Callie Tuschen,
Buffalo Ridge Brewing Project



State Honors HARTFORD

Residents of Hartford are celebrating Governor Kristi Noem's announcement that their town was chosen as South Dakota's "Small Community of the Year" for 2020.

Every year, two South Dakota communities — one large and one small — are recognized for strides they have made in economic development, community enhancements, added jobs, and quality of life investments. The awards, created in 1989 by former Governor Bill Janklow, are traditionally presented during the Governor's Office of Economic Development's annual spring conference, but COVID-19 forced the cancellation of last year's event. Governor Noem announced the selection of Hartford in November instead, a declaration that Mayor Jeremy Menning believes validates the effort he and others have put into improving the community.



Award Validates Hard Work

"I was very proud to accept the award," Menning says. "We've seen it go out different times throughout the years and always thought, you know what, it would be quite an honor someday to win that! We knew we were doing a lot of things we thought were going to push our community forward. It was great to see that somebody else recognized that, as well. Getting the award was a realization that we are doing the right things!"

Key factors that went into Hartford's selection, Menning believes, are a commitment to downtown revitalization and

the Hartford Area Development Foundation's Vision 2025 campaign. The latter project kicked off in 2020 and its focus is two-fold: promoting industrial and economic development and improving quality of life. The city is planning construction of a new wastewater treatment facility and, while not glamorous, Menning says it's the type of project that will benefit the community for the next 50 years.

Sense of Community Makes Hartford Special

Menning says one of the things that makes Hartford special is the overall sense of community. "So many people are working on different committees and groups," he shares. "There seems to be a sense of can-do and ownership to the community that is undeniable. People know they can make it better and work hard to do so."

Residents and visitors alike find plenty to love about Hartford. The downtown farmers market, held on the first Thursday of every month during the summer, is a great place for families to mingle while shopping for food and crafts from local vendors. Jamboree Days is another big draw; the annual three-day event takes place over the third weekend in June, and features food, entertainment, a parade, and a tractor pull. First-timers will get a good sense of the community by visiting Buffalo Ridge Brewing Project and Hartford Steak Co. Tavern, according to Menning.

"If you're visiting town and you've never been here, you can do both in the same night and you'll get a pretty good idea of what Hartford is," he says.

Growth is inevitable in the future, but as long as it's managed properly, it will be beneficial to both long-time residents and newcomers.

"We're going to grow, whether we try or not," Menning says. "We want to put a lot of planning and effort into making sure we grow in the right directions and don't lose our sense of identity. It's going to be exciting as we see more and more people coming into our community; the challenge is making sure we get them involved so they have the same sense of ownership and community that many of us have here already."



QR Codes Make a Comeback

QR codes have made a comeback in the past year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has forced businesses to creatively reassess safety protocols.

Perhaps you remember them? QR (Quick Response) codes appeared everywhere at the beginning of the smartphone era. Created for the Japanese automobile industry in 1994, the barcodes store data that, when scanned, takes users directly to information online. Unlike traditional barcodes, which use vertical stripes, QR codes are made up of square-shaped patterns. This allows more data, or characters, to be stored in the image and makes the codes easy to scan.

The Rise and Fall (and Rise) of QR Codes

The first cellphones equipped with QR readers were released in 2002, though the technology didn't catch on with American consumers until after the iPhone was introduced in 2007. By 2011, some 14 million Americans were scanning QR codes with their cell-phones. Usage fell as the codes had technical issues and consumers didn't want to download third-party apps that were primarily used for marketing. QR codes fell out of favor and were largely abandoned by the late 2010s.

Enter the coronavirus. As the pandemic spread, businesses turned to touch-free solutions to reduce spread. Restaurants were among the first to embrace QR codes, scrapping paper menus in favor of digital ones that enable consumers to order and pay for their food with a wave of

their smartphones. Some South Dakota restaurants, especially those in high-traveled areas, use this technology in place of sharing menus and to promote social distancing.

Restaurants aren't the only businesses that can use QR technology amid the pandemic and beyond. Small businesses that sell physical products can use strategically placed QR codes to point customers to an online shop, order form or app. Service providers can also use the codes, linking to informational videos or other information.

The Future of QR Codes

Updates to the iPhone and Android operating systems in 2017 enabled all smartphone cameras to scan QR codes without the need for separate apps. As consumers grow used to QR codes again and realize how easy and beneficial they have become, the technology might just stick around

this time instead of being relegated to the dustbin of history.

Try It!

Open the camera on your smartphone and point it at this QR code. There's no need to actually snap a picture. You should see a pop-up message you can click on to visit Golden West's new informational website, theexchangesd.com.

Sources: Forbes magazine, BBC News, UXplanet.org, kaspersky.com.



Help Is Just 3 Digits Away!

Call 211 for SD Helpline Center

Golden West telephone subscribers are now able to dial a new three-digit code for assistance. Dialing 211 provides access to a wide range of information and resources for residents across the state.

Most people are familiar with abbreviated dialing codes such as 411 (directory assistance) and 911 (emergency services). These easy-to-remember numbers offer callers quick and convenient access to important resources. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has expanded this practice to provide additional three-digit numbers for special public use.

What's the 211?

All South Dakotans seeking community and social resources can now dial 211 for assistance. The 211 Helpline was established to provide individuals in need of information and support with easy access to professionally trained specialists.

The use of 211 dates to the 1970s, when New York City used it as an automated credit request number for disconnected or misdialed calls. In 1997, United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta established 211 as an informational resource. Three years later, the FCC approved its use as a three-digit nationwide number for information and social service referrals.

In South Dakota, 211 has been available in a limited capacity since 2001. The state legislature passed a bill enabling the Helpline to reach all 66 counties in 2020. Residents across the state can now dial 211 for information and support. Telephone calls are free and confidential.

Callers who dial 211 are routed to a local or regional call center in either Rapid City or Sioux Falls. There, referral specialists direct them to appropriate agencies and community organizations for assistance. Centers are staffed around the clock to provide 24/7 assistance for the elderly, disabled, non-English speakers, people who are experiencing a crisis, those who are new to a community, and others.

A wide variety of referrals are available through 211.

- **Basic Human Needs Resources** (food and clothing banks, shelters, rent and utility assistance).
- **Physical & Mental Health Resources** (health insurance programs, crisis intervention services, support groups, counseling, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, Medicaid and Medicare).
- **Work Support** (financial assistance, job skills training, transportation assistance, education programs).
- **Non-English Language Services** (language translation and interpretation).
- **Support for Older Americans & Persons with Disabilities** (adult day care, transportation, respite and home health care, community meals, homemaker services).
- **Children, Youth & Family Support** (childcare, after-school programs, family resource centers, summer camps and recreation programs, educational programs for low-income families, mentoring, tutoring, and protective services).

211 Helpline resources are also available by text (text your zip code to 898211), email (help@helplinecenter.org), online (helplinecenter.org), and via a 211 app, available as a free download through the App Store and Google Play.



Money For Your Studies

If you are pursuing post-secondary studies in South Dakota in an eligible field of study and are looking for financial help, consider the South Dakota Telecommunications Association's (SDTA) Scholarship Program.

SDTA is offering four \$1,500 scholarships this year to students in families who subscribe to a SDTA member company, like Golden West. These students must also plan to attend or already attend college in South Dakota full time (taking at least 12 semester credit hours or its equivalent). Previous SDTA Memorial Scholarship recipients are not eligible to reapply.

Applicants must major in a program or a field of study that is useful for work in the telecommunications or broadband industry. Eligible majors/programs include, but are not limited to:

- Telecommunications
- Wi-Fi and Broadband Technologies
- Information Systems Technology
- Satellite Communications
- Programming or Network Specialist
- Engineering or Computer Science
- Technology Education
- Communication Arts

The application deadline is June 15, 2021, and the scholarships will be awarded for the 2022 spring semester. To apply, visit sdtaonline.com/sdta_scholarship.php.

FCC Mandates 10-Digit Dialing in 2022

Due to a new federal mandate, starting mid-2022 all telephone calls will need to include the area code when dialed - even local calls within the same town.

Adopting 10-digit dialing (area code plus telephone number) is necessary following the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designation of 988 as the three-digit abbreviated dial code for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline, coming in 2022. Because 988 is used as a prefix in the Sioux Falls area, phone systems won't recognize the short dial as the national suicide hotline once it has been established. Implementation of 10-digit dialing applies to the entire 605 area code. As one of a handful of states with a single area code, everybody in South Dakota will be required to use 10-digit dialing.

To ease the transition, Golden West has already activated 10-digit dialing as an option. Customers can now dial either seven or 10 digits. After the cutover in mid-2022, 10-digit dialing will be required.

For more information, visit goldenwest.com/10DD.



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