

March 2025

Horizons

A Golden West Customer Newsletter
& Award-Winning Publication

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Roasting Fresh Flavors

Cherrybean Coffee sells bean blends
in area stores and online.

Loren (left) and Robert (right) roast twice a week at their location in Marion.



Roasting Fresh Flavors

Cherrybean Coffee sells bean blends in area stores and online.

“Everything we do online depends on the internet from Golden West. We haven’t had any interruptions and the folks we have worked with have been really good.”

- Loren Johnson



Most people avoid drinking coffee late at night, but for the families behind Cherrybean Coffee in Marion, that’s exactly when the magic happens.

Owned by Loren Johnson, Robert Bauerle, Scott Luke, and their families, the business has grown from a local name into a regional and online company.

Cherrybean Coffee roasts a variety of coffee blends that don’t taste like cherries – except for one special cherry-flavored blend. The company’s name refers to the small, round cherry-like fruits that grow in clusters on coffee trees.

Local beans, national brews

Operating on a roast-to-order model ensures maximum freshness in every batch. Each week, the families work together to roast and produce a Fair Trade Certified product, meaning the beans were made in accordance with environmental,

economic, and other standards.

“We roast on Tuesdays and Thursdays,” explains Loren. “We serve grocery stores and some local folks around here. We don’t have a warehouse or shelves, and we roast to order so everything is fresh.”

Their coffee roast flavors are sold at locations for both chain and independent stores in Freeman, Watertown, Vermillion, Parker, Sioux Falls, and more. However, their reach extends far beyond South Dakota. Through their website, Cherrybean ships coffee beans across the country, serving customers in Texas, Florida, Wisconsin, and beyond.

Family-owned from the beginning

Cherrybean Coffee got its start in 2007 and has been owned by multiple

families over the years. As friends since grade school, Robert and Scott researched the coffee roasting business before approaching Loren, a coworker and friend of Robert, to join the venture. The friends purchased the coffee roasting business together to support their families and serve the communities around them.

While there’s no retail location, roasting and packaging occurs in a brick building along Marion’s main road not far from the post office. The Cherrybean website also lists many nearby businesses and locations where customers can try a cup of coffee or buy beans locally.

“Having grown up in a small town my whole life, it’s nice to know everybody,” says Loren.

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Roasting Fresh Flavors

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“Everyone around still feels that small-town sense of wanting to know and get along with everybody. Our communities have been really supportive of us.”

Since Loren, Scott, and Robert all work full-time jobs during the day, they often work late into the night and need additional help. Loren’s wife and children, along with Robert’s kids, pitch in to help during busy times. Whether it’s packaging, cleaning, or getting orders ready for UPS to pick up, everyone plays a role in keeping the business running smoothly.

Beans and bytes

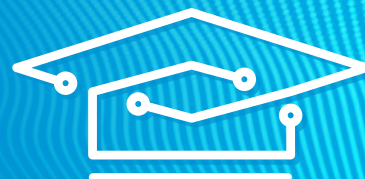
Cherrybean Coffee relies on their internet connection for website

sales, managing and processing orders, and more. Using their Golden West service, the three families can confidently do business with their online customers and the many stores they provide coffee blends for around the area as they continue to grow.

“Everything we do online depends on the internet from Golden West,” says Loren. “We haven’t had any interruptions and the folks we have worked with have been really good.”



FREE community education classes continue!



Join us for one or both FREE community sessions:

- **Online Power: Explore More While Staying Safe Online**
- **Your Guide to Home Entertainment – covering both cable TV and online streaming options**

Each session lasts about two hours and is taught by an experienced educator. Course materials are reviewed by Mitchell Technical College to ensure quality and relevance.

For details or to register, visit goldenwest.com/classes.

Golden West launched its community education classes in five communities this winter. This spring members in two more towns can take FREE classes covering email security, online fraud prevention, streaming options, cable TV’s *watchTVeverywhere* feature, and more! Learn how to make the most of your internet service while staying safe online, and you might even impress your friends and family with your newfound skills.

CITY	CLASS	DATE/TIME	LOCATION
Dell Rapids	Online Power	April 8 – 4 to 6 p.m.	Meeting Nook
	Home Entertainment	April 15 – 4 to 6 p.m.	
Pine Ridge	Online Power	April 17 – 1 to 3 p.m.	Sacred Heart Catholic Church
	Home Entertainment	April 24 – 1 to 3 p.m.	



Use strong passwords, reset often, and verify

As long as the internet has existed, cybercriminals have taken advantage of people by guessing or slyly obtaining their passwords. To protect your information online, be sure to follow up-to-date password guidelines.

Password security isn't just a one-time "make it and forget it" scenario either. To stay safe, you should know how to make a strong password, make changes regularly, and consider using two-factor authentication.

What makes a strong password?

Over time, short and simple passwords have become easier targets of cybercriminals looking to steal information. Because of this, cybersecurity experts recommend creating passphrases, or multiple memorable words in a row, instead of a password. To make a strong passphrase, you should include:

- **Decent length.** Passwords with 16 or more characters are considerably stronger due to each character adding dozens of possible guesses. Imagine trying to win a slot machine with 16 slots!
- **Unique words and phrases.** It's common to include personal details such as birthdays or pet names in passwords, but then it can be easier to guess. Instead, consider using less commonly known information like your favorite music artist as a child or a scent that always reminds you of home.
- **Memorable combinations.** Take multiple pieces of this information and combine it with special characters, such as replacing an "S" with a "\$" or an "8" instead of a "B" to create passphrases that only make sense for you to remember.

Why changing your password matters

In addition to following best practices when choosing a password, regularly changing your password can also keep you safe. Just because you have been using the same password for a long time doesn't mean it is immune to being hacked nor are you too small for hackers to care about.

Using public Wi-Fi can also put your online security at risk if you aren't careful. Multiple devices connected to one network gives cybercriminals access to more information they can target all at once.

Data breaches are similar to cyberattacks on public Wi-Fi networks, except on a much bigger scale and breaches do not involve accessing your device to steal a password. Although a data breach may not compromise your specific data, you should always create a new password when one occurs to reinforce your personal information.

One last common situation that necessitates a password reset is if friends on social media have received odd messages or links from you – when you know you didn't

send them anything. This could be a sign someone hacked your account or has made an account pretending to be you and is trying to scam others.

Protect the passwords you have changed

Although changing passwords should be done regularly, you can avoid some of this hassle with two-factor authentication (2FA). This involves verifying your identity by receiving an email or text message with a short code to enter instead of a password.

With 2FA, cybercriminals cannot gain access to your accounts without access to your email or text, which adds a second layer of security. For extra peace of mind, consider using 2FA options on websites you frequent.

Cybercrime is evolving each day and staying safe is an effort that must continue to evolve, too. Regularly checking the security of your password and investigating cybersecurity options is as easy as pressing the "reset password" button.

Source: Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)

Apply now for **SDTA** scholarships

The South Dakota Telecommunications Association (SDTA) will award multiple scholarships again this year totaling over \$6,000 to help offset the cost of college or technical schooling.

These scholarships are for students studying a variety of fields that use or rely on telecommunications and broadband technologies. This includes majors in marketing, computer science, medicine, education, and more. Applicants may be current high school seniors or students already attending college.

QUALIFYING CRITERIA

To be eligible, the student must:

- Reside in a household that subscribes to an SDTA member company, like Golden West.
- Have earned a high school diploma or GED equivalent or have fulfilled these requirements before application due date.
- Must be accepted into or be attending a multi-year program at any accredited technical college or post-secondary higher education institution in South Dakota for the fall 2025 semester.
- Must major in a degree/program or field of study that is useful in the telecommunications or broadband industry, or which significantly relies on the use of broadband services and related technologies.

Previous SDTA Memorial Scholarship recipients are not eligible to apply. For more information, including examples of fields of study eligible for this scholarship, and to apply visit https://sdtaonline.com/sdta_scholarships.php or scan the QR code. **The deadline for applications is June 15, 2025.** Scholarships will be distributed for the 2026 spring semester.



Scan for more
information
and to apply!

The truth about choosing an internet provider

Choosing the right internet provider is important, and Golden West appreciates the opportunity to serve you. Your cooperative understands that speed, reliability, and value all matter.

Other providers may present an offer that's hard to refuse. Keep in mind that tempting offers may not tell the full story. Before making a switch, dig deeper and ask more questions.

Know what your service offers

As of last year, all internet service providers must publicly display and share broadband labels. These nutrition label-looking charts list exact prices without the temporary, introductory discounts.

The labels also detail what speeds to expect from each plan. This includes typical upload and download speeds and latency. Latency, or responsiveness, should be a lower number for optimal performance for things like online gaming and videoconferencing. The labels offer transparency and make it easier to compare services between providers on an apples-to-apples level.

Speed you can count on

Not all internet is created equal. Many providers boast fast speeds, but some can only deliver when weather conditions are perfect.

Using fiber-optic cables, Golden West service is unaffected by weather conditions and experiences fewer outages and more stable connections. The fiber-optic network delivers consistent, high-speed internet whether you are streaming in 4K, running a home business, or gaming online.

With technology evolving quickly, Golden West is prepared for the

future. Also, fiber-optic networks will allow the cooperative to meet ever increasing demands for decades to come.

Partners, not just providers

Golden West is more than just an internet provider; it is a cooperative that actively invests in the communities it serves. As a valued member-owner, you invest in the organization with your monthly payments, and the cooperative regularly returns excess profit margins to you and other members in the form of capital credits.

The cooperative's local presence means you always talk to someone in South Dakota for help, rather than a faraway call center. In addition, cooperative employees live and work in your communities across the service territory.

With speeds of up to 1 Gig available in almost all areas, Golden West customers have the fastest, most reliable connection along with exceptional service as member-owners.

Your internet connection has never been more important than it is today. Golden West delivers reliable, future-ready internet with a commitment to the people it serves. To view the cooperative's broadband labels, visit goldenwest.com/labels.

7 things to ask before switching providers

When evaluating an alternate internet provider, it's important to understand what you're really getting. Here are seven important questions to ask the potential provider.

1. Will my upload speeds match my download speeds, or will there be a difference?
2. Do you have data caps? If so, what happens if I go over the limit?
3. What is the cost for equipment, installation, or service deposit?
4. How long does this promotional price last?
5. What will my total monthly bill be after the introductory period, including all fees and taxes?
6. If I decide to cancel before my contract ends, will there be a penalty?
7. If my service goes down, will a technician be available nights, weekends, or holidays?

By asking these questions upfront, you can make an informed decision and avoid surprises down the road. Picking the right provider isn't just about speed or price. It's also about trust, transparency, and reliability.

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Download the FREE
My Golden West
eBill mobile app

Get quick access to your account!

**Manage your Golden West account anytime,
anywhere with the FREE My Golden West eBill app!**

While the app can't make you coffee in the morning or walk the dog, it does give you control of your Golden West account. View and pay bills, enroll in AutoPay, track call history, reset your Wi-Fi password*, and more – all from your smartphone or tablet. Save time, reduce clutter with paperless billing, and never miss a payment again. Whether you're at home or on the go, managing your services has never been easier.

**Download the FREE My Golden West eBill app today from the
Apple or Google Play stores or visit goldenwest.com/estatement
for additional help getting started.**



Golden West
Connecting you to what matters most.

*Customers who lease the Zyxel router from Golden West can reset their Wi-Fi password in the eBill app. Those who lease the Gigaspire router will instead use the My Golden West Wi-Fi mobile app.



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