

November 2024

Horizons

A Golden West Customer Newsletter
& Award-Winning Publication

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Prioritizing People

Karl's starts its reputation for
service in the town of Gregory.

 **Golden West**
Connecting you to what matters most.



Prioritizing People

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"A big part of any business is having reliable phone and internet service. With our stores spread out over such a distance, much of our work is done using connected devices. We are able to rely on Golden West for this."

- Jerri Lynn Kenzy,
Karl's TV & Appliance
Accountant

When Elmer Karl started his business in 1956, he didn't expect to become one of the region's largest retailers.

After almost 70 years, Elmer attributes the success of Karl's TV & Appliance with over 30 locations across the Midwest to their focus on customer service.

"We are your servicing dealer since 1956," says Elmer. "We're going to take care of the customer before, during, and after the sale."

Karl's TV & Appliance makes a promise to stand behind their products, ensuring any customer will be taken care of for years to come. Elmer's origins as a TV repairman soon transferred to a career as a service dealer for more than just televisions.

Giving back

Reflecting his own humble beginnings, Elmer was later inspired to share his success with his employees. In 1984 he implemented an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) providing better benefits for those looking to retire with Karl's. Today the employees own almost half of the company.

Over the years, Elmer says when other area appliance businesses prepared to shut their lights off permanently, they reached out to see if he could provide a second chance for their hometown store. By becoming a Karl's location, the stores remained open and continued serving their local communities and employing people.

"There's just a lot of people who reach out to our executive board looking to retire or are looking for some help because of the Karl's reputation, where we are, and the recognition of the name," says Jerri Lynn Kenzy, who joined Karl's as an accountant over two and a half decades ago.

Starting out small

Originally, Elmer took out a loan for \$2,000 to begin his business, even needing his father to co-sign on the loan. About five years later, Karl's made its first move toward expansion, opening a second location in Winner with the help of a friend he met at a dealer meeting.

"We set up shop in Winner, and that worked for about three years before we expanded," Elmer says. Eventually, the company would grow to cover numerous locations across the state, solidifying its presence in communities like Mitchell, Yankton, and towns in nearly every state bordering South Dakota. Karl's now operates 31 locations located in seven states in the Midwest.

Karl's slowly spread to places far from Gregory, but Elmer still managed to visit various locations throughout the years. He says that he would visit every store at least once each year, but at the age of 92, it has become more difficult. Today, the company operates their headquarters in the town where it all began.



Jerri Lynn Kenzy and Elmer Karl.

Keeping up on business

Golden West connects some Karl's stores with their service, making it easier for employees to meet, communicate, and work together from their hometowns. The first two Karl's locations in Gregory and Winner are serviced by Golden West.

"A big part of any business is having reliable phone and internet service," says Jerri Lynn. "With our stores spread out over such a distance, much of our work is done using connected devices. We are able to rely on Golden West for this."

The Karl's TV & Appliance website hosts ordering options for customers that became more popular during the pandemic. Even then, many could still order products from a name they could trust and knew well - Karl's TV & Appliance.

Picture Perfect

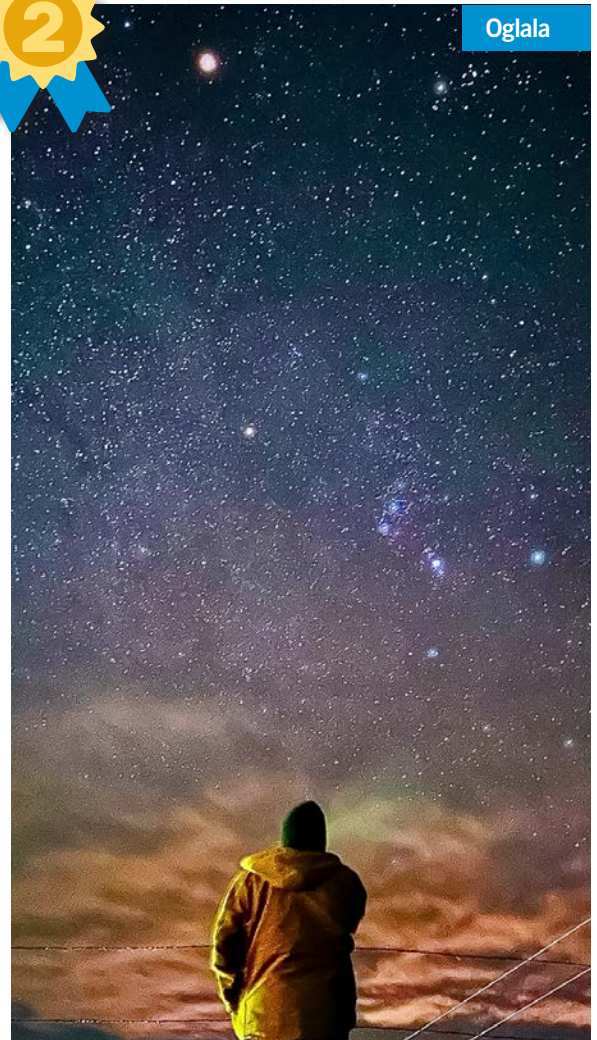
Over 50 members across the state submitted entries to the Golden West Photo Contest and showed off South Dakota's beauty! Other members voted by 'liking' their favorite photos shared to the cooperative's Facebook page.

The three winners:



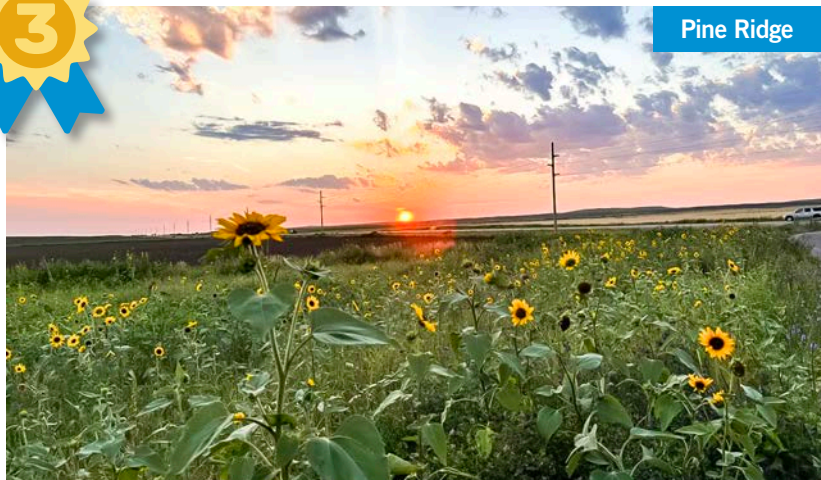
Badlands National Park

Rezty Gapuz of Lower Brule won a GoPro Camera.



Oglala

Mitchell Stands of Oglala won a \$100 Visa Gift Card.



Pine Ridge

Jami Ferguson of Pine Ridge won a \$50 Visa Gift Card.

Golden West cooperative members gather for annual meeting, elect directors



Left to Right: Tanner Handcock (District II), Nate Jones (District IX), and Jodi Smith (District III). Ken Tonsager, Jr. (District V) not pictured.

Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative's 72nd annual meeting was held at 10 a.m. Sept. 28 at the Community Center in Wall. Members in attendance heard updates about the cooperative and voted to elect candidates for the Board of Directors before concluding the meeting.

Board of Directors president talks about expanding services

After leading members in the Pledge of Allegiance, President Jeff Nielsen introduced the Board of Directors and then provided updates on the cooperative.

"As we look to the future, I'm pleased to report that we are not just maintaining our momentum; we are poised for growth," said Nielsen. "Our initiatives are designed to expand our services and enhance your experience. New programs are tailored to meet your needs, whether that's helping members control home networks easier, faster speeds, offering online purchases, or engaging in community events."

Empowering communities

Golden West General Manager and CEO Denny Law spoke about the significant investment Golden West has made in infrastructure to help in the communities it serves.

"Investment in infrastructure is not just about building networks; it is about empowering your communities," said Law. "Whether you are a small business owner looking to thrive online or a family seeking seamless connectivity for education and entertainment, the cooperative's fiber-optic network is designed to support your needs and the needs of your community."

Four directors elected

Four of Golden West's 15 board seats were up for election this year; all director terms are four years. Those elected include Tanner Handcock of Wall serving District II, Jodi Smith of Vivian serving District III, Ken Tonsager, Jr. of Hot Springs serving District V, and Nate Jones of Dell Rapids serving District IX.

Board members who retired this year were Lee Briggs of Midland who previously represented District III; Stu Marty of Hot Springs who previously represented District V; and Jeff Nielsen of Canistota who previously represented District IX. Golden West thanks them for their respective 28, 12, and 14 years of service to the cooperative.

Record voting numbers

With the introduction of new voting methods this year, more individuals were able to vote in this year's election than ever before. Votes cast in person at the annual meeting were combined with voting online and by mail.

Some attendees win prizes

Dozens of door prizes were given away including gift cards, beef certificates and cash. Terry and Barbara Wentz of Philip won the grand prize drawing of \$500. Members enjoyed a complimentary lunch at restaurants in Wall following the meeting.

Golden West will hold their next annual meeting on Sept. 27, 2025.

Broadband labels detail your service plan

What are broadband labels?

Broadband labels are designed to provide a clear, easy-to-understand breakdown of the cost and performance of your internet service.

After years in the making, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) introduced broadband labels to help consumers make informed decisions about their internet services. These nutrition-style labels give you all the nitty-gritty details, much like food packaging labels.

Why were these labels introduced?

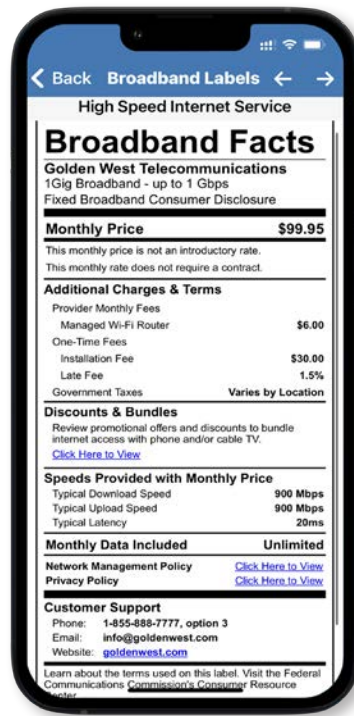
Broadband labels make it easier to understand all aspects of your service. In addition to pricing and speed, the labels also clarify latency or responsiveness, data allowances, promotional offers, links to data and privacy policies, and phone and online contacts for customer support.

Refer to the labels when you're first shopping for service and when you're considering an upgrade to meet your household's growing needs. Golden West works hard to communicate with its customers to ensure there are no hidden fees or service surprises.

As a cooperative member, you're not just a customer – you're an owner. Your payments don't line the pockets of corporate shareholders. Instead, they directly benefit you as Golden West reinvests in the communities it serves and returns value back to you through capital credits.

Where can I find my broadband label?

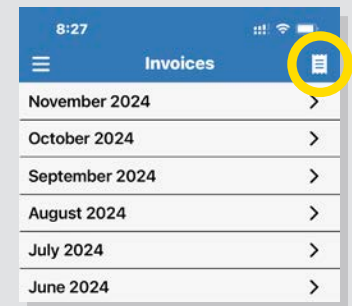
The FCC requires all home and mobile internet service providers to share a broadband label for each offered service plan with consumers online, in store, and by phone. Review the label for your current internet speed package online by logging in to your Golden West eStatement account online.



To review the broadband labels for all Golden West speed packages, visit goldenwest.com/labels.

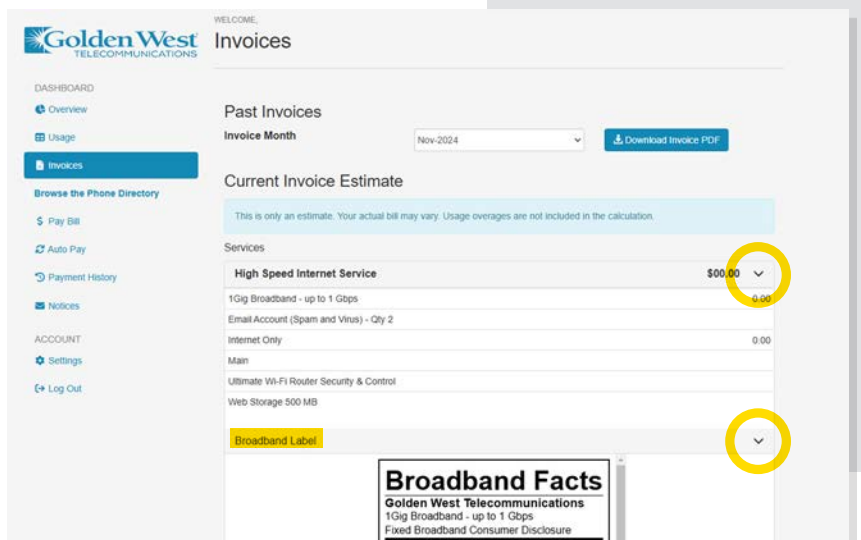
There are two ways to access your account and see your label:

Open the eBill app on your mobile device, click on "Invoices" and then click on the invoice icon in the upper right-hand corner. Don't have the app yet? Download it for free from the Apple or Google Play store. ▼



OR

Log in at goldenwest.com/ebill from your computer, click on "Invoices" in the Dashboard on the left and then click on "High Speed Internet Service." ▼



Prefer a personal touch? Our friendly local customer service team is happy to assist you in the office or by phone at 1-855-888-7777, option 3.

Golden West has career opportunities.

Refer someone and everyone can benefit!

Let your family, friends, and neighbors know about job openings at Golden West whether they are skilled at customer service, knowledgeable about networking, or something in between. Our team members do meaningful work connecting people to what matters most

while enjoying the close-knit South Dakota lifestyle.

Refer someone and you could be rewarded! After they are hired and complete 90 days on our team, you'll receive a \$150 credit toward your Golden West bill.

Golden West offers competitive wages and a generous benefits

package including paid vacation, personal, and sick days; 401(k) plan with robust company contribution and match; relocation assistance; health/dental/life/disability insurance; and more.

Help someone find a perfect position by visiting goldenwest.com/careers.

Applicants must list referrer's full name, address (including town), and phone number on the online employment application. Credit is given after referred applicant is hired and has worked 90 days. Referrer must currently subscribe to Golden West services.

goldenwest.com/careers

 **Golden West**
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WIN BIG SHOP LOCAL

Customer Appreciation Giveaway

Win a Local Shopping GIFT CERTIFICATE UP TO \$500

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------|
| 1 Grand Prize | \$500 Gift Certificate |
| 2 Runners-Up | \$250 Gift Certificate |
| 20 Winners | \$100 Gift Certificate |

Register to WIN at:
theexchangesd.com/giveaway

You must be a Golden West residential customer and be at least 18 years of age to register. Only one entry and prize awarded per household. No purchase necessary. **You must list a local merchant's name when you register. The retail or service-based merchant must be in a Golden West community.** The value of the gift certificate must be spent with only one merchant. **Entries close at noon MT on Friday, Dec. 6, 2024.** Drawing will be held and winners will be posted on the Golden West Facebook page and website by 5 p.m. that day.

Those without internet access can call
1-855-888-7777, option 3 to register.

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