

September 2024

Horizons

A Golden West Customer Newsletter
& Award-Winning Publication

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Building a Future

How this Lakota women-owned
business supports a new vision
for its community.

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

Building a Future

How this Lakota women-owned business supports a new vision for its community.



Serena Harmon (left)
and Ellen Harmon



Two sisters are making a difference in their community, brick by brick as one of the few – if not the only – Lakota women-owned building and equipment rental centers in the country.

Serena and Ellen Harmon's Rosebud Building Products and Equipment Rental provides essential building materials and equipment rental services for their community and beyond.

"Our objective is to improve the infrastructure of our area through supplying quality building materials at an affordable price for our community," says Serena. "Our business is for the betterment of our employees and community because we think holistically, rather than just about ourselves."

Serena, Ellen, and their team provide invaluable resources to the people of Mission and the Rosebud Sioux Tribe while continually giving back.

"Connection is important. It's not just about selling products," says Serena. "It's about involvement in the community, supporting local initiatives, and helping develop projects in the

community. We believe in that and make it part of our vision as business owners."

Working with a community

Serena says Rosebud Building Products is an exciting place to work, where every customer is greeted by a friendly face, ready to diligently assist potential home improvement projects. She says everyone is ready to have fun by having a laugh, encouraging camaraderie between each other.

Whenever needed, the staff at Rosebud Building Products and Rosebud Rental are ready to talk through project steps with customers. Serena says she learns alongside them by being able to walk through their project goals, which allows everyone to connect with each other.

Sisters and responsibility

Serena works tirelessly, managing retail operations, product and fleet management, sales and marketing, and

customer and vendor relationships. Ellen jokes that she sometimes has to force her sister to take her lunch break.

"It's funny because Serena will say she's taking her lunch break, but five minutes later we hear her voice on the till asking customers how she can help them – she is that dedicated!" Ellen says.

Ellen works behind the scenes to ensure business continues to run smoothly. She handles financial management and human resources, coordinates advertising and marketing, and guides information technology.

While they each have their own areas of expertise, the sisters work together to oversee daily operations and share key decision-making duties.

A history of being helpful

Serena and Ellen got their start in business when they founded Rosebud ▶

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Building a Future

The Rosebud Building Products team of hard-working employees with decades of experience created a support system for the sisters.

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Log Homes (RLH, Inc.) along with their four brothers in 2005. The siblings realized the need for housing in their community. The family added two additional enterprises to accommodate for growing needs: RBP Supply and Rosebud Rental.

RBP Supply provides a wide range of products and services to federal agencies with a focus on supporting Native American communities. As an equipment rental center, Rosebud Rentals offers everything needed to complete a project.

In 2012, the family stopped building homes and began focusing on their new enterprises. Since then, their business has evolved to serve their community's needs. Serena and Ellen purchased the other owners' business shares, becoming sole owners in 2021 with the help of a lender who believed in their vision.

Teaming with the cooperative

Although the sisters must keep careful track of all their duties, they entrust Golden West to keep them on top of it all with internet and phone service. Golden West team members stop by to purchase power tools and other items from Rosebud Building Products.

"All of our ordering happens via the internet, so our business wouldn't be able to function without Golden West," says Ellen. "They're really fun to work with and the team is great."

The Rosebud Building Products team of hard-working employees created a support system for the sisters. Even when days get hectic, they are all around to encourage each other.

"We also have amazing staff members who have been with us for years," says Ellen. "We have great employees who have visions that are aligned with ours and are great people. We've been very fortunate in a lot of ways."

In the community they worked so hard to assist, the Harmon sisters and their team work year-round to provide all the necessary tools, equipment, materials, and more for their community.



2023 Annual Meeting MINUTES

The Annual Meeting of the members of Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc., was called to order at 10 a.m., September 23, 2023, at the Wall Community Center in Wall, South Dakota by President Jeff Nielsen. Said meeting was held pursuant to notice thereof as required by law. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jeff Nielsen.

President Nielsen then called upon Darla Pollman Rogers, attorney for the cooperative, who gave the Credential Report. A motion was made and seconded to approve a quorum. Motion carried.

Next, President Nielsen called upon Tanner Handcock, secretary, to read the Notice of Meeting and the Proof of Mailing, after which a certified copy of each was duly filed as part of the minutes of this meeting.

President Nielsen introduced the special guests in attendance at the meeting.

President Nielsen asked that the minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting be approved, if there were no additions or corrections, as written. On a motion duly made, seconded, and unanimously carried, the president declared the minutes approved.

A motion was made, seconded, and the financial report was approved.

President Nielsen welcomed the cooperative members and introduced the present Board of Directors of Golden West.

President Nielsen then delivered his presidential report. He reported Golden West provides service in 35 counties which is just over half of all counties in the state. Nielsen noted how the cooperative donates to local events and causes, funds community economic development grants, and invests in high school scholarships. These things along with the essential services the cooperative provides show that Golden West is a steadfast partner in community building and enrichment.

Next, President Nielsen called on General Manager/CEO Denny Law to present his annual report. Mr. Law shared some facts from Golden West's 2023 Annual Report, including that the cooperative has enough buried fiber-optic cable today to stretch from Wall, SD, west to the city of Perth in Australia. He reported that in addition to upgrading 1,600 more members to high-speed internet access, the cooperative secured grant funds to help bring much-needed broadband to additional areas of South Dakota. Golden West also increased internet speeds by 400 percent this year for those served by fiber without increasing prices.

President Nielsen called on Darla Pollman Rogers, attorney, to report on the nominating petitions for the Board of Directors. Vacancies on the Board of Directors were as follows:

District III - Arnie Hill (four-year term) one vacancy with one candidate

District IV - Thomas Zickrick (four-year term) one vacancy with one candidate

District VI - Ansel Wooden Knife (four-year term) one vacancy with one candidate

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to seat the uncontested incumbents and candidate:

District III - Arnie Hill, incumbent

District IV - Thomas Zickrick

District VI - Ansel Wooden Knife, incumbent

President Nielsen called on Darla Pollman Rogers, attorney, to report on the proposed amendments to the Bylaws of Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. The proposed amendments expanded the timeframe for submission of nominations and notice of member meetings to allow voting to occur in advance of the meeting. Rogers facilitated audience discussion.

Darla Pollman Rogers advised the membership of the balloting process and requested that the ballots for the proposed amended bylaws be handed out. After the membership had the opportunity to vote, the ballots were collected and counted under the supervision of a three-member balloting committee appointed by the Board of Directors. The members of the balloting committee, who reported to the membership, were Margaret Sampson, Judy Bosma, and Craig Sieg.

Drawings were held to give away more than 25 door prizes.

President Nielsen called for old business. There was none.

President Nielsen called for new business. One question from the audience was fielded and answered; no action was taken.

Following new business, Darla Pollman Rogers announced the balloting results for the proposed amended bylaws. The proposed amendments passed.

Meal tickets were distributed to those in attendance.

The grand prize \$500 check went to Sonny or Echo Zickrick of Long Valley.

President Nielsen adjourned the meeting at 11:12 a.m.



Tanner Handcock, Secretary

Investing in the Future

With 2024 Scholarship Winners

Golden West's Scholarship program promotes educational opportunity for students served by Golden West. The cooperative has awarded more than 1,000 scholarships totaling over \$1 million since the program began in 1999. Awardees exemplify qualities including academic success, leadership, civic and extracurricular achievement, and the motivation to excel.

Golden West is excited to introduce the 2024 scholarship winners.

Armour High School..... **Makayla Fuoss**
Avon High School **Megan Gretschmann**
Bennett Co. High School **Dante Rascher**
Bon Homme High School **Jackson Caba**
Burke High School..... **Piper Hanson**
Bridgewater High School **Brenden Watters**
Canistota High School..... **Kayla DeClark**
Colome High School..... **Shaleena Kingsley**
Corsica-Stickney High School **Ashlyn Lefers**
Crazy Horse High School **Jerilyn Richardson**
Custer High School **Abigail Studt**
Dell Rapids High School **John Mortrude**
Edgemont High School..... **Mackenzie Hollenbeck**
Freeman Academy **Stefany Cortes-Hernandez**
Freeman High School..... **Rylie Gossen**
Gregory High School **Cindy Khuu**
Hot Springs High School **Karina Novotny**
Jones County High School **Tristen Host**
Kadoka High School..... **Kaitlyn Schofield**

Lakota Tech High School..... **Crimsun Hotz**
Little Wound High School **Addison Young**
Lyman High School..... **Rory McManus**
Marion High School **Isabelle McConniel**
Menno High School..... **Ashton Massey**
Montrose High School **Kailey Thompson**
New Underwood High School..... **Cash Albers**
Oelrichs High School..... **DeShaun Merrill**
Philip High School **Wakely Burns**
Plankinton High School **Whitney Payne**
Red Cloud High School **Makana Little Sky**
Scotland High School..... **Jerica Stark**
St. Mary High School **Sophie Schwebach**
Stanley County High School..... **Cadence Hand**
Tri-Valley High School **Lauren Grinde**
Wall High School **Paige Kjerstad**
West Central High School..... **Lauren Murphy**
White River High School..... **Kamaria Krogman**
Winner High School **Cassandra Shutt**
At Large Scholarship..... **Natasha Winter**

For more information on this year's scholarship awardees, visit goldenwest.com/scholarships.



Make the most of your internet connection with two trial offers.



Protect what matters most.

As technology advances and younger audiences engage, concerns about social media's effects have grown. In 2023, the U.S. Surgeon General concluded although opportunities for connection and community exist, the harmful effects are more impactful. Research suggests increased use can cause sleep and mental health issues.

With Ultimate Wi-Fi from Golden West, parents can encourage healthy boundaries without unnecessary stress. Users can set limits, filter out inappropriate content, and manage access schedules for family members.

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ADD ULTIMATE WI-FI functionality through your My Golden West Wi-Fi mobile app to limit your kids' activities online. You'll protect your kids – and your Wi-Fi network – from online dangers.

Residential internet customers may sign up through October 15, 2024.

goldenwest.com/try-ultimate



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You and your family rely on your internet connection for more things on a growing number of devices all the time. The average Golden West subscriber has eight wireless devices online at once. If you are an above-average user with more than eight devices you could benefit from a speed above 250 Mbps. A faster speed could also help accelerate your experience working or learning from home, playing video games online, or streaming in high definition on more than one device at a time.

Sign up today for
3 months of **FASTER**
INTERNET FREE!

INCREASE YOUR SPEED up to 500 MBPS or 1 GIG for streaming, gaming, learning, working, and more. You'll ensure your whole family can use all your connected devices at the same time.

Residential and business internet customers may sign up through October 15, 2024.

goldenwest.com/try-speed

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Scan for info
or to Vote!

 **Last chance
to vote before
the meeting!**
Vote online by September 24!



HORIZONS – Volume 25, Number 5

Horizons is an award-winning customer newsletter
published bimonthly by Golden West Telecommunications.

Can't attend?
VOTE ONLINE BY SEPTEMBER 24!

Members are invited to the

72nd Annual Meeting

Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc.

**Saturday
September 28, 2024**

Wall Community Center,
501 Main Street, Wall, SD

Registration: 8:30 to 10 a.m.

Meeting Called to Order: 10 a.m.

**Board of Directors election voting will
conclude during the meeting with
meal tickets distributed afterward.**

Many door prizes and a \$500 grand prize will be
given away to registered members during
the meeting. Must be present to win.

1-855-888-7777, option 3
goldenwest.com/annualmeeting

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
Golden West, PO Box 411, Wall, SD 57790

Dee Sleep, Editor • goldenwest.com • 1-855-888-7777