

January 2024

# Horizons

A Golden West Customer Newsletter

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# TECH MEETS TRADITION

From books to technology, Carnegie  
library connects the community

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"Not only do we use the internet every day for the basic parts of our job, but it drives a lot of our programs and our ability to help people."  
- Brittany Moeller

For the past decade, Brittany Moeller has worked to ensure that the community of Dell Rapids has a library that's as high tech as any large city library and a place all feel welcome.

She does it with the help of Golden West's fiber optic connectivity.

"We are so appreciative to have a company like Golden West to provide the internet and services. Without them our job wouldn't be possible," she says. "Everything we do is centered on having a good internet provider."

Moeller, a Dell Rapids native, began working in the Dell Rapids

Carnegie Library 14 years ago, taking the helm 10 years ago as director. She has a deep love for her community and the library that serves it.

**Community outreach**

Like most traditional libraries, Dell Rapids offers the usual hard copy books, digital books, newspapers and movies, but it also offers the community much more. In addition to storytime programs for younger kids, the library has teen programs and adult activities such as classes. The library does its share of

community outreach to daycares and classrooms.

It also has a maker space where patrons have their choice of an art station, a station focusing on building projects, and a STEM station with projects focusing on science, technology, engineering, and math.

Moeller says the library staff is also available to help patrons with other projects, including things like creating resumes, writing cover letters, and even setting up email accounts.

"Not only do we use the internet every day for the basic parts of our ▶

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job, but it drives a lot of our programs and our ability to help people,” she says. “Without it we wouldn’t be able to do a lot of the cool things we do.”

### Learn, explore, play

What people often don’t realize is that libraries have become a centralized place for community members to meet, especially in smaller communities like Dell Rapids. “Really we have changed and evolved so much. We really are a community hub,” says Moeller. “The whole purpose is to gather together to learn, to explore, to play.”

And like all libraries, Dell Rapids Carnegie Library offers its services free of charge thanks to taxpayer support. “Anything you get from here is always free,” she says. “Which really solidifies that sense of community.”

And that sense of community is what makes the Dell Rapid Carnegie Library the special place it is, Moeller says.

# Empowering the next generation

## 26 Years of Scholarships Add Up to Over \$1 Million

Each year Golden West awards a \$1,000 college scholarship to up to 45 qualifying students to help offset tuition costs. Since launching in 1999, the program has awarded more than \$1 million dollars to graduating seniors in our communities across South Dakota.

One recipient is selected from each of the high schools Golden West serves. One at-large scholarship is also given to a student who is either homeschooled or attends high school outside of the area but whose parents receive Golden West services.

“Our scholarships are an investment in the future,” says Golden West General Manager and CEO Denny Law. “Supporting promising young leaders can help build a stronger, more vibrant rural South Dakota.”

## Applications Open for 2024 Graduates

All high school seniors who meet the following criteria are encouraged to apply for the regular or at-large scholarship:

- The student’s parents or legal guardians must reside within one of Golden West’s telephone service areas and subscribe to Golden West phone or internet service.
- Applicant must take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), American College Test (ACT), or Accuplacer Vocational Entrance Exam by December 31 of their senior year.
- Applicant must be a high school senior.
- Recipient must take 12 or more classroom credits (or equivalent to a full-time course load) in the fall semester following high school graduation.
- Scholarship awards may only be applied to post-secondary institutions.

Students should contact their local high school to apply. At-large applications are available online at [goldenwest.com/scholarships](https://goldenwest.com/scholarships). The application deadline is March 15, 2024.

# Local broadcasters drive up fees for cable TV

**C**able TV programming costs have increased at an astonishing rate and will go up again soon. Despite Golden West's efforts to fight the fees, cable TV will likely cost almost \$10 more per month this year with additional increases coming in 2025 and 2026.

That's because local network affiliate stations like KELO, KOTA, KSFY, KEVN, KDLT, KNBN, and KTTW continually demand more money in retransmission consent fees from cable TV viewers like you. Since 2012, these fees have increased a whopping 1,340%.

Prices overall changed an average of just 36% during that same period according to the U.S. Consumer Price Index. If milk prices rose at the same rate, you would be paying almost \$50 per gallon.

## **Either fees go up or channels are removed**

Golden West knows how much you value your television programming. Yet each broadcaster can force the removal of their station from Golden West's channel lineup if their demands aren't met.

You either pay significantly more in fees – every penny of which goes to out-of-state owners of these stations and national network companies – or get less local programming. Only congressional action or the station owners can stop these rising fees.

## **You must pay when many can watch free**

Broadcasters use public airwaves at no cost as a gift from taxpayers, so local channels are broadcast free over the air. To do so you must use an HD antenna and live close enough to a broadcast tower to get a signal.

Most rural areas are unable to receive reliable signals with an antenna and rely on providers like



Golden West to deliver their local news, weather, and sports. Even though Golden West helps them expand their reach, the affiliate broadcasters choose to exploit and profit from most rural residents who want or need to receive local channels through cable or satellite TV.

Golden West works hard to control expenses and keep cable TV prices fair and competitive. However, the cooperative cannot absorb the continued rising cost of retransmission fees, TV programming, and other expenses.

To learn more about retransmission consent fees, visit [goldenwest.com/retransmission](https://goldenwest.com/retransmission).

**WIN BIG**  
**SHOP LOCAL**  
Customer Appreciation Giveaway

# Congratulations

## 2023 Shop Local Giveaway Winners

### \$100 Winners

Bill Eckhoff .....	Colton .....	Ace Hardware
Cathy Thomas.....	Freeman .....	Freeman Shopping Center
DenAlta Patocka .....	Scotland .....	Ron's Market
Jeff Barber .....	Enning.....	Badlands Veterinary Clinic
Jodi Jack.....	Hot Springs.....	Lynn's Dakotamart
Joyce Wilson.....	Martin .....	Fuchs Locker
Greg Kludt .....	Montrose .....	Big J's
Linda Cullison.....	Burke .....	Buche Foods
Megan Vanhofwegen.....	Colton .....	Sunshine Foods
Maureen Hollenbeck.....	Winner.....	Runnings
Nathaniel Zoeller.....	Wall .....	Wall Food Center
Pat Paulsen .....	Wall .....	Corner Pantry
Renae Mergen .....	Dell Rapids .....	County Fair Food Store
Ruth Pourier.....	Oelrichs .....	Bomgaars
Kim Jorgenson.....	Humboldt .....	Sunshine Foods
Sandra Streeter.....	Buffalo Gap.....	Ace Hardware
Tom Kolecka.....	Avon.....	Ron's Market
Ted Hartman .....	Custer .....	Lynn's Dakotamart
Travis Faulhaber .....	Plankinton .....	Plank Inn
Todd Dixon .....	Manderson.....	Ace Hardware

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### \$250 Winners

Brock Smith .....	Philip .....	Philip Hardware
Sid Addison.....	Martin .....	Lynn's Dakotamart

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### \$500 Winners

Cathy Fleischhacker.....	Hartford.....	Sunshine Foods
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*Watch for your chance to win in the  
2024 giveaway starting in November!*

# Fiber upgrades for 2024

Golden West continues its multi-year effort to provide rural communities across South Dakota with fiber optic technology for broadband connectivity.

Known as Fiber to the Home (FTTH), the massive undertaking involves burying about 14,000 miles of fiber optic cable.

Today almost 11,000 miles of fiber optic cable connect members. If all this cable was laid out in a straight line it would stretch from Wall, SD, west to Perth, Australia!

## Faster optics, more reliable connections

Fiber optic technology delivers faster broadband internet access and provides stronger connections for all services, including phone and cable TV (where available). Collectively, about 700 miles of new fiber optic cable will be laid for the 2024 projects. This will upgrade about 1,000 existing subscribers and provide high-speed connectivity to hundreds of potential new subscribers.

“Fiber optic technology helps brighten the future of the communities and customers we serve,” says General Manager and CEO Denny Law. “Broadband allows telemedicine to reach every corner, plugs rural classrooms into the world, and handles the needs of farm fields pulsing with data.”

Golden West began fiber optic cable construction and related electronics upgrades about a decade ago. So far more than 80% of subscribers have been upgraded to fiber optic technology. The cooperative is working to bring the technology to its entire service territory within the next three or four years.

## More info coming by mail, online

Start dates for the 2024 projects (see box to the right for list) are still being determined. The projects will take most of the year to complete, and customers will be transitioned to the fiber optic network late in 2024 or early in 2025. Customers scheduled to be upgraded should watch their mailboxes in the coming weeks for a letter from Golden West.

Detailed information will be shared online. This includes maps of the projects, lists of the contractors doing the work, and an overview of the upgrade process. Regular community updates will also be posted throughout the year as projects progress.

## 2024 FTTH Project Areas

In 2024, about 500 miles of new fiber optic cable will be added to the Golden West service territory to serve almost 1,000 additional members of the cooperative. Areas scheduled for upgrades this year include:

- **Custer North and West (rural)**, completing the remainder of the exchange.
- The remainder of the **Witten** exchange where all necessary rights of way have been secured.
- Two areas in the **Hot Springs** exchange (rural), including the Angostura East and Minnekahta West areas.
- The remainder of the **Wood** exchange where all necessary rights of way have been secured.

About another 200 miles of new fiber optic cable will be laid in two areas outside of – but adjacent to – Golden West’s service territory. These projects received partial funding through the Connect SD Broadband Development Program to help connect hundreds more potential customers to much-needed broadband. They include:

- The **Caputa** area running along U.S. Highway 44 east of Rapid City and to the south.
- The **South Lesterville/Utica** area about three miles north and west of Yankton.

For more information visit [goldenwest.com/fiber](https://goldenwest.com/fiber) or call 1-855-888-7777, option 3, and ask for engineering.

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Try both **FREE** for  
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**Sign up today to score more in 2024!**

1-855-888-7777  
[goldenwest.com/score2024](https://goldenwest.com/score2024)

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

Internet customers may request this offer through March 15, 2024. Ultimate Wi-Fi is for residential customers only and requires the lease of a Golden West Gigaspire router and use of the free My Golden West Wi-Fi mobile app. The three-month trial will start upon sign up; a monthly bill credit will offset the cost. Increasing speed one level is \$20/month; Ultimate Wi-Fi is \$5/month. To avoid a bill increase, the customer must cancel before the trial ends. Only one speed increase promotion may be active on an account at a time.

Internet speeds may vary based on network infrastructure and may not be available in all areas. This is an advertisement. Golden West shall not be held liable for errors or omissions in pricing. In the event of an error, we will make every effort to accommodate our customers. Some restrictions may apply. Golden West is an equal opportunity employer and provider.



**HORIZONS – Volume 25, Number 1**

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

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to  
Golden West, PO Box 411, Wall, SD 57790  
Dee Sleep, Editor • [goldenwest.com](https://goldenwest.com) • 1-855-888-7777