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Horizons

A Golden West Publication

GhostBear
CONTRACTING, INC.
Ogala, South Dakota

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ROLLING FORWARD

G Force meets Pine Ridge
tire and auto service needs

 **Golden West**
We're everywhere people connect.



Calvin and Carla Ghost Bear stand in the waiting room of their local tire & auto service company.

ROLLING FORWARD

G Force meets Pine Ridge tire and auto needs



Calvin Ghost Bear didn't exactly plan to open his second business in Pine Ridge – G Force Tire & Auto Service.

“The story behind that is we just stumbled into the business,” he says.

It was 2013 and Calvin and his wife, Carla, were setting up a new shop for their contracting business, Ghost Bear Contracting, which has been in business since 1996. One day a man pulled up in his vehicle and asked if he could inflate his tires using their air compressor. Calvin happily helped him out.

“The next day he came back and asked if we could fix his pipe (muffler)” which was dragging beneath his car, he says. “I asked my mechanic to weld the pipe on and help this elderly gentleman out.”

The man insisted on paying for the services, despite Calvin's protests.

Born out of need

“Later that evening, it just kind of hit me that there was a need for an auto repair shop,” Calvin says. The next day, his crew began renovating a portion of the building to accommodate an auto repair shop as well as Ghost Bear Contracting. Four months later, G Force officially opened its doors. “And here we are today, 10 years later,” he says.

G Force features four bay areas and offers a range of services, from tire and wheel alignment to oil changes and towing services. In addition to individual vehicle owners, they also take care of vehicles for the Oglala Sioux Tribe, federal agencies, ambulance services and area public safety departments. “The tribe has been very supportive of the business,” he says.

While G Force mainly serves the Pine Ridge community, Ghost Bear Contracting has also done work in North Dakota, South

Dakota, Montana, Nebraska, and elsewhere for tribal, state, and federal projects.

Calvin and Carla see their two businesses as offering much needed services to the community of Pine Ridge and beyond. “We want to be the best we can at providing services to our community,” Calvin says, noting there's only one other auto shop in the area. “Here at G Force, our focus has never changed. We've always tried to improve on the delivery of our services.”

Telecom supports services

Calvin says Golden West plays a significant role in helping them provide their services.

“It allows us to operate our businesses with the tech that's available, being able to access pricing for parts, being able to keep track of inventory, and to provide real time quotes to customers. All these things are dependent on the Golden West services they provide,” he says.

Calvin notes that Golden West has also utilized his business for auto services and Ghost Bear Contracting has worked on projects for Golden West. He hopes that this symbiotic relationship continues.

“In our community we strive and push for small businesses. We encourage Golden West to continue using us and other small businesses,” he says.

As his businesses continue to thrive, Calvin is grateful for the connectivity that allows both businesses to stay relevant. “The connectivity we get with Golden West – that's vital to our business,” he says. “It's necessary for our day-to-day functions and for the success of our companies.”



What causes cable bills to rise?

One big factor is **RETRANSMISSION CONSENT FEES** charged by local network affiliates.



1 National Networks to Local Broadcasters
National networks share programming with local affiliate stations who charge cable TV providers to carry their signals.



2 Local Stations Demand Fees
Federal rules require regular negotiations, which have led to significantly higher retransmission consent fees and demands to carry extra channels for more money.

Renegotiating Fees 7

Despite Golden West's diligent efforts, retransmission fees will soon go up again. If we don't agree to the fees, the local stations will not allow us to share the programming you love.



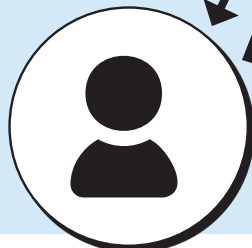
Cable Distributor 6
Golden West does not keep any of the fees; it all goes back to the local affiliate stations.

Monthly Fee 5

After 15+ years of increases, retransmission consent fees now constitute more than 20 percent of the total monthly Golden West cable TV bill.



3 Free Over the Air
At the same time, local affiliates share programming over the air for free to viewers who can receive a signal via an antenna.



4 TV Viewers

Due to rural locations, many South Dakotans must subscribe to cable TV and pay fees to receive all national networks.

1st Place



Canistota

2nd Place



Rosebud

3rd Place



Custer

Spectacular Scenery

Photo contest winners showcase various South Dakota landscapes

About 50 area shutter bugs entered their prized snapshots in Golden West's annual photo contest this summer. The photos were shared on Facebook where cooperative members collectively judged by 'liking' their favorite(s).

THE THREE WINNERS WERE:

FIRST PLACE – Serah Volden won a Go Pro camera.

SECOND PLACE – Bert Shields won a \$100 Visa gift card.

THIRD PLACE – Jean Treloar won a \$50 Visa gift card.

Thanks to everyone who entered and voted!
South Dakota is truly a beautiful state.



■ **LEFT:** Human Resource Assistant Jody Pease presents on topics such as application and resume advice and discusses telecommunication career opportunities.

■ **BELOW:** Field Service Technician Tanner Evans shows Edgemont High School students splicing techniques that he uses in the field.



Unlocking career opportunities for youth

One beautiful fall afternoon in October, Golden West field service team members from the southern hills hauled Golden West’s splicing trailer to Edgemont. But instead of connecting new customers, the team was working to attract potential future coworkers.

Field Service Supervisor Jack Petersen, Hot Springs Area Foreman Chad Olstad, and Field Service Technician Tanner Evans used the trailer to give Edgemont High School students a behind-the-scenes look at a career in telecommunications. They offered students a glimpse into their daily operations, focusing on splicing and safety techniques.

The students also received advice on transitioning into the professional world from Human Resource Assistant Jody Pease. She gave application and resume advice and shared interview strategies. She also addressed how vocational/trade

schools could provide an alternative to a four-year degree.

Many Golden West Field Services team members earned two-year degrees in Wi-Fi broadband technologies from Mitchell Technical College or another trade school. Attendees at these schools graduate and start work in half the time of those pursuing a bachelor’s degree.

In addition, graduates earn more in their first year of employment than the average total cost of tuition at a trade school. That’s according to the U.S. Department of Labor database of occupational information, *O*NET OnLine*.

Projected growth within the telecommunications industry

An important highlight of the day was the discussion over the telecommunications industry’s projected growth. *O*NET OnLine* predicts the industry will

experience “faster than average” growth until 2031. At that time, the site estimates there will be 100,000 or more job openings nationwide.

Edgemont seniors Cian Waite and Addison Neville will be shadowing Golden West team members as high school interns this year. They are excited for the opportunity to gain experience in the telecommunications industry and look forward to what Golden West has to offer.

Edgemont Student Advisor Becky Harding is thankful for the collaboration with Golden West. She appreciates the potential opportunities for students in the telecommunications world, which could translate into long-term career opportunities in towns like Edgemont.

“We are excited to team up with Golden West and allow our students the opportunity to intern throughout the remainder of the school year,” Becky says.

Members elect directors, approve bylaw changes

“YOUR COOPERATIVE IS MORE THAN A PROVIDER OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES: IT IS A STEADFAST PARTNER IN COMMUNITY BUILDING AND ENRICHMENT.”
- JEFF NIELSEN

The 71st annual meeting of the Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative was held at the Wall Community Center on Saturday, Sept. 23.

Members attending the meeting heard updates about the cooperative from the president and general manager, elected board members, and approved changes to the co-op’s bylaws.

Board president talks about cooperative impact

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Board President Jeff Nielsen introduced the board of directors and shared comments about the cooperative’s impact in local communities, events, and charitable causes.

“Your cooperative is more than a provider of essential services: it is a steadfast partner in community building and enrichment,” Nielsen said. “Your cooperative’s commitment to supporting local events and charitable causes, funding economic development grants, and offering high school scholarships embodies the true

spirit of what a cooperative is about – connecting you to what matters most.”

Manager highlights fiber-optic investment

Golden West General Manager Denny Law added to President Nielsen’s message of improving communities by talking about this year’s internet speed increase.

“Golden West increased internet speeds earlier this year by an astounding 400 percent to all fiber-served communities without increasing prices,” Law stated.

Law also highlighted the cooperative’s ongoing efforts to finish its fiber to the home project and work with national policy makers to ensure rural South Dakota is included in future decisions.

“Golden West understands the critical role it plays in its members’ lives, and it is the members’ daily pursuits that inspires

the cooperative to keep improving and keep advocating for rural areas,” Law said.

Members elect three board members

Following Law’s address, two incumbents were re-elected to the board of directors for Golden West Telecommunications. They include Arnie Hill of White River serving District III and Ansel Wooden Knife of Interior serving District VI. Thomas Zickrick of Long Valley was elected to serve District IV in the seat left open by Kenneth “Buddy” Bolzer. All three will serve four-year terms.

Proposed bylaw changes pass

The members approved proposed amendments to the cooperative’s bylaws. These changes make it possible for the board to consider new voting methods beyond in-person voting during the yearly meeting.

Members in attendance win prizes

Door prizes included gift cards, beef certificates, and cash. Sonny and Echo Zickrick of Long Valley won the \$500 grand prize drawing.

Golden West will hold their next annual meeting on Sept. 28, 2024.



Pictured from left to right are **Thomas Zickrick** of Long Valley (District IV), **Arnie Hill** of White River (District III), and **Ansel Wooden Knife** of Interior (District VI).

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WIN BIG SHOP LOCAL

Customer Appreciation Giveaway

WIN A LOCAL SHOPPING GIFT CERTIFICATE

- | | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| 1 GRAND PRIZE | \$500 Local Shopping |
| 2 RUNNERS-UP | \$250 Local Shopping |
| 20 WINNERS | \$100 Local Shopping |

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. 1, 2023.** 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.

Screen time shouldn't be a battle.

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goldenwest.com/ultimate-wifi



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