

WESTERN TRADER

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Custer • Hill City • Hot Springs • Edgemont • Keystone • Newcastle, Wyoming and Everything in Between

www.myblackhillscountry.com

ISSUE NO. 42

DINING • ARTS • ENTERTAINMENT • EVENTS

New Cabin For Sale



This quality-constructed 14' x 18' cabin, standing 13' tall with vaulted ceilings, was recently built by the CHS residential construction class. The cabin is designed with wood frame construction and features an all-steel roof. It is fully insulated, and the interior is beautifully finished with knotty pine for a warm, rustic appeal. The electrical work is complete, including cove heating, and it comes with pex plumbing ready for installation (although fixtures are not included). Inside, the cabin includes a functional kitchen area with a countertop, cabinets, a stainless steel sink, and durable laminate flooring, all ready for your use. The layout incorporates a 6' x 6' bathroom area and several windows that provide abundant natural light, enhancing the remarkably spacious feel of the interior. This cabin is fully prepared to be relocated to your site, where it awaits your personal finishing touches. We are offering it for sale at the attractive price of \$15,000. If you are interested in purchasing this unique cabin, please contact Jared Webster at CHS - 605-673-4473 (Mon.-Thurs.). Don't miss this opportunity to own a cozy, custom-built cabin crafted with care and attention to detail.

BRADEN
REAL ESTATE & AUCTIONS
605-673-2629
Serving the Black Hills Area
for 100 years

EXPERIENCE MATTERS

 Ron Braden 605-381-2629 ron@bradenauktion.com	 Jeff Storm 605-673-1518 jstorm@gwtc.net	 Carol Wood 605-440-0466 carolw@gwtc.net	 Anne Fuchs 605-673-1177 afuchs@gwtc.net
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PLACES TO ESCAPE TO IN THE BLACK HILLS!



HUGE PRICE REDUCTION! Country living at its finest! Beaver Creek Road is a very desirable area and this 21.58 acres bordering USFS land just off HWY 385 is a rare find. This well-maintained 1680 Sq. Ft. home features 3 bedrooms, and two baths. Newer metal roof, flooring, and windows. The covered deck has an amazing view to enjoy your morning coffee from. Wildlife abounds. Bring your horses, chickens, or other pets, no covenants! Beaver Creek seasonally meanders through the property. Close to Wind Cave National Park, Custer State Park and all the Black Hills Attractions. **MLS# \$699,500 Peace and quiet price-less! MLS# 79733** Call or Text Carol 605-440-0466



TIME TO GET SERIOUS! \$369,000 for this LOG CABIN where you want to be if you love Nature or are a Hunting enthusiast! Don't need to "rough it"! No Covenants, No light pollution on this 5.33 acre homesite that borders hundreds of acres of National Forest Service. 960 sq. ft. of simple living with 2 bedrooms, bath, open kitchen/living areas. Enjoy the cooler evenings in front of the centrally located wood burning stove. Home was built in 2004 with larger addition in 2009. Metal roof & covered/ open decks to enjoy the peace and glory of nature at its finest! Electric, phone, septic, approx. 1200 gal. cistern and a 12x16 storage shed are all in place. Whether you decide to use the cabin seasonally or as full-time residence it will require minimal maintenance! **MLS #78186 \$369,000. Call/text Anne 605-673-1177 with any questions or to schedule a viewing.**

WANTING A SMALL SLICE OF BLACK HILLS LAND? This is the perfect opportunity to fulfill that desire and own +-2.14 acres located in the South Park Subdivision! Light covenants as to where your seasonal or year-round cabin/home can be minimum 1000 sq.ft. or you can do RV/camping for up to 6 months. Stay for the nice summers and enjoy the trails for ATV, Hiking or Horseback riding. The Mickelson trail is just a few minutes away. Centrally located between Custer City and Hot Springs. There is electric to the lot and fiber optic. It is fenced on one side. You can contact Southern Black Hills Water Dist. on the availability and cost for rural water. Land is still one of the best investments! **Call Anne for more information at 605-673-1177. MLS#81656 \$129,470.**



POSSIBLY THE CUTEST COTTAGE HOME ON THE MARKET!!! You can absolutely just move into this completely remodeled home. Every aspect of this home has been addressed. All new plumbing throughout, new electrical, new heating/central system, all new exterior fiberglass doors, custom made oak front door, all new windows except for the kitchen window, new light fixtures, new Whirlpool appliances, new cabinetry, upgraded bathrooms, added insulation, two new decks and multiple upgrades! Spacious upstairs room with bath and endless closet space! The walk out basement is framed, has washer/dryer hookup and stubbed in bathroom. This space can easily be another bedroom, family rec area. Endless possibilities! Large backyard with garage and small building for storage. Blocks from downtown Custer and the Mickelson Trail! **MLS# 81292 \$339,000 Call Anne for more info. 605-673-1177**

Pet of the Week



Look what we have! Puppies! Akbash, Anatolian and Kangal puppies. Come see for yourself how cute they are and get your pick of the litter. They were born Sept. 7 and are ready to go at 8 weeks old.

All 'Pet of the Week' listings are available for adoption at the Battle Mountain Humane Society 27254 Wind Cave Rd., Hot Springs, SD. 605-745-SAVE (7283)

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DINE IN • CARRY OUT • DELIVERY
605-673-3306
Open year-round!
904 Mt. Rushmore Rd.
Custer, SD
East of Lynn's Dakotamart
pizzamillcuster.com

Subscribe to the Chronicle or Previewer today!
Call 673-2217

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Engineered with NGMax™
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Industry-Leading Comprehensive Warranty for Years of Worry-Free Performance

Standard Warranty of **7 YEARS**
\$849 Value

Call 1-877-638-0736

THERE ARE TWO VOICES IN YOUR HEAD AND ONE OF THEM IS TELLING YOU NOT TO WORKOUT. WHEN YOU ARE READY TO LISTEN TO THE OTHER VOICE...

CUSTER FITNESS CENTER
OPEN 24/7
522 MT. RUSHMORE RD
605-673-2217

The Bath or Shower You've Always Wanted IN AS LITTLE AS 1 DAY

\$1000 OFF* AND **No Payments & No Interest for 18 Months****
Military & Senior Discounts Available
OFFER EXPIRES 9/30/2024

BCI BATH & SHOWER
CALL NOW! (855) 669-6306

*Includes product and labor; bathtub, shower or walk-in tub and wall surround. This promotion cannot be combined with any other offer. Other restrictions may apply. This offer expires 9/30/2024. Each dealership is independently owned and operated. **Third party financing is available for those customers who qualify. See your dealer for details. ©2024 BCI Acrylic Inc.

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1025 Crook St., Custer • 605-673-3443

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

HAVING A GARAGE SALE OR MULTI-FAMILY YARD SALE? ADVERTISE IT IN THE TRADER CLASSIFIEDS & GET THE WORD OUT!!! Call 605-673-2217

LET'S RE-ELECT REP. TRISH LADNER, for District 30 House! www.trishforsouthdakota.com. Paid for by Trish for SD.

GARAGE SALE - HILL CITY

THE 'NEVER ENDING GARAGE SALE' AT BACK ALLEY BARGAINS Clothing, Jewelry, Glassware, Gifts and much more shows up every week in our two truckloads of stock for our weekly 1000+ item Garage Sale at Back Alley Bargains. Sales are Saturdays from 10 AM - 4 PM at 101 Pine Ave (Directly Behind Super 8 Motel) Hill City - As Always, Free Coffee and Cookies!

GYM:

CUSTER FITNESS CENTER: Work out anytime—open 24 hours/7 days per week. Inquire at the Custer County Chronicle (522 Mount Rushmore Road, Custer), 605-673-2217.

HANDYMAN: Call Jeff for any job. Plus mowing and trimming. Mower tune-up, oil change & repair. Serving Hill City, Custer and surrounding area.

HELP WANTED:

CALAMITY JANE'S AND THE GOLD PAN SALOON are hiring cooks, waitress/waiters and bartenders. Please stop by or call 605-673-2269.

HELP WANTED: Jorgensen Log Homes is now hiring lead carpenters. For more info call 605-673-2720

HELP WANTED: Things That Rock is looking for an outgoing, enthusiastic individual to join our team. Part time, year round employment, weekend availability required. Call Mike at 605-574-9096 for more information.

FOR RENT:

APARTMENT FOR RENT NEAR HILL CITY. One bedroom, good for single person or married couple. Includes most utilities. Partially furnished. Phone 605-574-2986.

TRAILER HOUSE SITE FOUR MILES west, \$300 per month, includes sewer & garbage. Call Richard, 605-673-2587 and one RV site east of Custer, \$300-\$350 per month, includes water, sewer & garbage. Call Lauren, 605-673-3727.

ONE BED, ONE BATH newly remodeled trailer. Very clean, perfect for a couple or two people, one child. Nice location Keystone. \$750 plus utilities. No smoking. One house-trained cat allowed. Text interest to 605-391-8413.

CUSTER VALLEY EFFICIENCY LIVING has monthly rentals available; starting at \$700-\$1000 plus security. No cats - Call 605-673-3727 to apply.

FOR MONTH TO MONTH-RENT IN HILL CITY. Completely furnished, 3 BDRM, 2 bath seasonal vacation home. Available into April/May 2025. Includes washer/dryer & all utilities, high speed Wi-Fi and cable. Call Vic at 605-209-3963.

ATTRACTIVE, MODERN one and two bedroom apartments, central Custer. Laundry, cable TV, competitive rates. 605-591-9397

YEAR AROUND APARTMENTS FOR RENT IN HILL CITY: • Three bedroom, two bathroom mobile with shed. • Four bedroom, one bathroom house. Call Vic 605-209-3963.

OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE - Call 605-673-1280.

DEADLINE: Friday at 5 p.m.

PRICE: \$8.00 for 15 words, 10¢/word over that

PAYMENT: 522 Mt. Rushmore Rd. 605-673-2217

ERROR RESPONSIBILITY: Customers are asked to check their ad immediately after publication and report at once any error found. Claims for adjustment should be made at that time. The newspaper is responsible for an incorrect ad only the first time it runs, so check your ad carefully.

Southern Hills Classifieds

BRINGING BUYERS & SELLERS TOGETHER

TWO RV SITES WITH electricity, (30/50 amp), water, sewer at Plenty Star Ranch on Hwy. 385. October 2024 through April 2025. Heatable water hose required. Call isa Kirk 605-440-2233.

LONG TERM RV SITES now available for lease. Laundry facility on-site. Call for details 605-673-2720

LONG TERM RV SITES AVAILABLE! Close to Custer. Borders Forest Service land. Tiny homes may be considered. 605-673-4701.

STORAGE UNITS TO RENT AVAILABLE NOW! 10x20 storage units. New Construction. Close to Custer. 605-673-4701.

AFFORDABLE STORAGE: 9x9 and 10x21 units. Cement floors and solid walls. RV Parking Available \$25 per month. 605-673-4646.

SUNSHINE STORAGE: Annual or monthly rentals, 4 convenient locations. Call Teresa at 673-1025.

STORAGE UNITS 10x20 - \$65, 8x10 - \$30 per month. Little Italy Road, Ness's Storage. 673-2949

BUCKHORN STORAGE: 5x10, 10x10, 10x20. 673-5050.

ADS WANTED: CLASSIFIED ADS WORK! Fill out the form on this page if you are having a garage sale, if you are selling an automobile or if your business is hiring. If you are renting a lot, office space or house, a classified ad with us goes in print and online! Stop by or call 605-673-2217.

South Dakota Statewide Classifieds

EMPLOYMENT:

FINANCE OFFICER for the City of Kimball. Benefits and competitive starting salary. Please submit cover letter and resume to City of Kimball, P.O. Box 16 Kimball, SD 57355 or email to kimballcitysd@midstatesd.net

MISCELLANEOUS:

DEADWOOD WEDDING VENUE. Beautiful setting at the mouth of Whitewood Canyon. Call Jeff 605-641-1847 or visit www.thevenueat-deadwood.com.

JACUZZI BATH REMODEL can install a new, custom bath or shower in as little as one day. For a limited time, waiving ALL installation costs! (Additional terms apply. Subject to change and vary by dealer. (Offer ends 12/29/24.) Call 1-855-578-3126

PORTABLE OXYGEN CONCENTRATOR May Be Covered by Medicare! Reclaim independence and mobility with the compact design and long-lasting battery of Inogen One. Free information kit! Call 844-374-3458

DONATE YOUR CAR, truck, boat, RV and more to support our veterans! Schedule a FAST, FREE vehicle pickup and receive a top tax deduction! Call Veteran Car Donations at 1-877-810-1944 today!

ADVERTISE IN NEWSPAPERS statewide for only \$150.00. Put the South Dakota Statewide Classifieds Network to work for you today! (25 words for \$150. Each additional word \$5.) Call this newspaper or 800-658-3697 for details.

NOTICES:

CUSTER FITNESS CENTER: Work out anytime—open 24 hours/7 days per week. Inquire at the Custer County Chronicle (522 Mount Rushmore Road, Custer), 605-673-2217.

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OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE - Call 605-673-1280.

Covered storage • RV, ATV, Boats

At Plenty Star Ranch • 25991 Hwy. 385, Custer

Monthly/Annual Rates • 12-foot tall entrance

Call Isa Kirk at 605-440-2233

B

BROOKINGS

MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

WE ARE

HIRING

Chief Financial Officer

Brookings Municipal Utilities (BMU) is seeking a highly skilled and experienced Chief Financial Officer to join our executive leadership team.

This key position reports directly to the General Manager and will oversee all financial and regulatory activities across four enterprise funds serving water, wastewater, electric, and telecommunications. This individual will oversee our accounting, billing and collection, and human resource personnel.

BMU offers a robust benefits package which includes, but not limited to, excellent health insurance, a defined benefit pension plan (South Dakota Retirement System), paid leave, and much more. The salary range for this position is \$140,000-\$165,000 annually, DOQ.

For a complete job description and to apply, visit www.brookingsutilities.com

Questions? Contact Human Resources at 605.692.6325 or HR@swiftel-bmu.com

Brookings Municipal Utilities is a diverse workplace that encourages all qualified candidates to apply.

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When tomorrow stops coming, will your family know the plan?

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• February 4, 11 & 18 | Aberdeen

• March 11, 18 & 25 | Mitchell

Early registration closes 2 weeks before each session. Seating is limited.

Register at extension.sdstate.edu/events

Each location provides education, information, and hands-on tools South Dakota farm and ranch families can use to transition their operations to the next generations.

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THE PENNINGTON COUNTY COURANT WEEKLY NEWSPAPER IS FOR SALE

Established business in Wall, SD since the early 1900s.

Contract for deed financing available to committed buyer. Seller owns the office building and would offer a very favorable rent structure with front access.

The Courant is an official newspaper for the City of Wall, Wall School District, and Pennington County. It is also the official newspaper for the New Underwood School District and City of New Underwood.

A great paid revenue source is established.

Interested parties may contact Don Ravellette at 605-685-5147

DID YOU KNOW?

All classified ads placed in the Western Trader are also placed on the internet!

CUSTER FITNESS CENTER

OLD SCHOOL COOL

OPEN 24

522 MT. RUSHMORE RD

605-673-2217

Classified Ad Form • Deadline • 5 p.m. Friday

Classified Ad Category List

Circle One

Announcements

Antiques

Appliances

Arts and Crafts

Autos for Sale

Auto Parts, Repair

Boats

Business Opportunity

Child Care

Computers

Farm and Ranch

Firewood

Flea Markets

Furniture

Garage Sales -

Help Wanted

Horses, Livestock

Lawn and Garden

Lost and Found

Misc. for Sale

Mobile Homes

Motorcycles

Personal

Pets and Supplies

Photography

Real Estate

Rec. Vehicles

Rentals

Services

Sporting Goods

Wanted

Other

Date

Name

Address

Phone

Insertion Dates:

DIRECTIONS: Write your ad below, one word per line. Remember, make sure your ad includes a phone number. Garage Sale ads need to include date, time, location and directions (if your location is difficult to find).

1

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\$8.00

16

\$8.10

17

\$8.20

18

\$8.30

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\$8.40

20

\$8.50

21

\$8.60

22

\$8.70

23

\$8.80

24

\$8.90

25

\$9.00

26

\$9.10

27

\$9.20

28

\$9.30

29

\$9.40

30

\$9.50

31

\$9.60

32

\$9.70

33

\$9.80

34

\$9.90

35

\$10.00

36

\$10.10

37

\$10.20

38

\$10.30

39

\$10.40

40

\$10.50

41

\$10.60

42

\$10.70

43

\$10.80

44

\$10.90

45

\$11.00

46

\$11.10

47

\$11.20

48

\$11.30

49

\$11.40

Run my ad _____ Weeks x \$ _____ = \$ _____

Credit Card/Billing Charge + _____

Total _____

Paid \$ _____ Cash _____ Check # _____

Credit Card/Exp. Date _____

Bold Type

\$1.00 Extra

No. _____

rev Jan 2017



Business and Professional Directory

YOUR GUIDE TO SOUTHERN HILLS BUSINESSES

ELECTRICAL SERVICE Freeman's Electric Service Inc. Serving the Custer Area FREE Estimates 24 Hour Answering Service Your Call — Our Command Custer — 673-3701	CONSTRUCTION Talley Construction Dirt Work • Septic Tanks Waterlines • Road Grading Dump Truck Service FREE Estimates • 574-2155 Reasonable Rates	EYE DOCTOR Premier —FAMILY EYECARE— 322 Mt. Rushmore Rd. • Custer Walk-ins & New Patients Welcome 673-2716 www.visionsource-custer.com Vision Source!	FLOORING Carpet • Vinyl Laminate Ceramic • Wood Shanklins 12702 Miller Court Rd (Off America Center Rd) Custer • 605-673-2099	HOME BUILDER Ruby Creek Builders Home Builder • Remodels • Expert Carpentry RUBYCREEKBUILDERS.COM (605) 440-1470
FINANCIAL Jim Meyer, AAMS® Financial Planner 39 N. 4th Street Custer, SD 57730 605-673-2367 FREEDOM HILLS WEALTH MANAGEMENT associated with Raymond James Financial Services Inc. Member FINRA/SIPC www.freedomhillswm.com	WATER WELL DRILLING ALEXANDER DRILLING INC. 605-574-2331 info@alexanderdrillinginc.com • Water Well Drilling • Pumping Systems and Service • Well Hydrofracturing RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL • INDUSTRIAL www.alexanderdrillinginc.com	GRAVEL Southern Hills • Grading • Dirtwork • Septic Installs • Retaining Walls ROCK & GRAVEL • Commercial • Residential Delivery Available Lonny Schramm 605-745-5066 Argyle, SD Cell 545-1160 <i>Here to Rock the Southern Hills!</i>	CUSTOM CABINS Rent this space! Only \$8.50 a week (minimum three month commitment) 673-2217	
CONSTRUCTION Russ Johnson Construction 605-574-2881	Rent this space! Only \$8.50 a week (minimum three month commitment) 673-2217	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELP W.E.A.V.E. WOMEN ESCAPING A VIOLENT ENVIRONMENT P.O. Box 729 Custer, SD 57730 24-Hour Crisis Line 673-HELP (4357) Toll Free: 1-800-424-3574	VETERINARIAN Fall River Veterinary Clinic HOT SPRINGS Mon.—Sat. 8am–5pm Wed. 8am–8pm • 605-745-3786 Emergency • 605-745-3786 Dustin Brown, DVM • Kayla Brown, DVM	ELECTRICIAN Carr Electric Co. LLC 25 Years of experience Free Estimates Licensed • Insured • Bonded 605-670-0996
BUILDER ALPHA BUILDERS LLC • Residential Construction • Construction Management • Site Development Paul - 605-440-1201 Haylee - 605-228-0943 alphabuilders.net	GRAVEL BLACK HILLS GRAVEL 26248 Lime Kiln Road Pringle, SD WHITE LIMESTONE GRAVEL CLIFF PAT 605-440-1031 605-863-5170	CONSTRUCTION SWEDEN CONSTRUCTION ALL TYPES OF CONCRETE WORK RESIDENTIAL, FOUNDATION & FLAT WORK FREE ESTIMATES CALL DAVE 605-673-5235 • CUSTER	Rent this space! Only \$8.50 a week (minimum three month commitment) 673-2217	
CONSTRUCTION Craig Hindle Construction Licensed & Insured New Construction • Garages/Shops Remodeling • Custom Homes craighindleconst@goldenwest.net 605-673-4222 • Cell: 605-673-1526	Rent this space! Only \$8.50 a week (minimum three month commitment) 673-2217	Rent this space! Only \$8.50 a week (minimum three month commitment) 673-2217	HANDYMAN EVANS REPAIR Appliances • Furnaces Water Heaters & Service Handyman Services John Evans, Jr Cell: 605-673-1600 Home: 605-673-3048	Rent this space! Only \$17.00 a week (minimum three month commitment) 673-2217
REAL ESTATE Block Realty Buy or Sell with me! Julie Block Broker/Owner 605.868.5584 www.sellingblackhills.com MLS	REAL ESTATE WESTERN SKIES REAL ESTATE 523 Mt. Rushmore Rd. Custer, SD 57730 Lori Svoboda Owner/Broker/Notary www.BHrealtor.com 605.517.0785	BLASTING & CONTRACTOR A-1 Drilling & Blasting Development Blasting Residential Ditch Lines Quarries "Serving The Entire Black Hills Area" Fully Insured Shawn Stiles 605-578-1991	PRINT/COMPUTER Vector print@vectordpt.com DESIGN PRINT TECH Your LOCAL Design & Print Shop! COMPUTER UPGRADES & REPAIR 1164 Mt Rushmore Rd • Custer • 605-673-2740	
WINDOWS & GLASS Rapid City Window & Glass Store Fronts/Entrances • Exterior Patio Doors Glass Replacement • Residential Windows Automatic Doors • Commercial Windows Mirrors & Shower Doors • Sky-Lites/Sunrooms 605-343-4999 936 E. St. Patrick • Rapid City, SD	REAL ESTATE Integrity Realty "Your local, knowledgeable, Real Estate Agents" Contact us today! 605-574-4444 or 605-391-8373 www.landlotshomes.com	Rent this space! Only \$8.50 a week (minimum three month commitment) 673-2217	TAX PREPARER Rent this space! Only \$17.00 a week (minimum three month commitment) 673-2217	HEATING & COOLING Carrier Witt's Heating & Air Conditioning, Inc. 104 South 9th • Custer 673-3212 Heating and Cooling Service and Installation Heat Pumps Gas and Oil Furnaces and Boilers
EXCAVATING • BASEMENTS • DIRT • GRAVEL • SEPTIC Nielsen Enterprises, LLC Expect Honest Work and Fair Prices • Excavating • Basements • Dirt Work • Gravel • Septic Systems Mark Nielsen • 24890 Sylvan Lake Rd, Custer 605-673-4701 • Cell: 673-1519				
HEATING & AC • CONSTRUCTION Custer Heating & A/C Office: 605-673-2957 www.custerheating.com Custom Designed for your Home Serving the Southern Black Hills Sylvan Lake Road Custer, SD HVAC Kitchens by Karla Custer, SD 57730 605.580.0183 • From custom design to installation • Local licensed and insured contractors • By appointment www.kitchensbykarla.com karlaaagenson@gmail.com • www.bertch.com Karla Haagenson • Owner	FINANCIAL ADVISOR Edward Jones Member SIPC Mark A Koch Financial Advisor 27 North 6th Street Custer, SD 57730 605-673-2644 MKT SRND & AELSPAD • edwardjones.com	STONE & LANDSCAPING DAKOTA STONE COMPANY Landscaping • Black Dirt • Boulders • Crushed Stone - 5 Colors • Stonedust for Walkways • Stepping Stone • Retaining Walls • Patio Stone Building Stone • Fireplace • Outside Veneer Masonry Supplies • Cement • Mortar Color • Other Supplies Gravel Hauling Sand for Power Line Construction www.dakotastone.net Visit our website for more pictures! 605-574-2760	CONCRETE & FOUNDATION REPAIR RENT THIS SPACE! Only \$34 a week (minimum three month commitment) 673-2217	

Business & Professional Ads are a great way for your business to not only get noticed, but to stay in people's minds when they need to utilize a local business service. "Out of sight out of mind." Let's face it, if you aren't reading the Custer County Chronicle or the Hill City Prevailer at lunch on Wednesdays or Thursdays, you are not really going to know what's going on. People depend on us for all local news. Advertising is also a great way to reach potential new customers/clients and to boost your business. Come in or call 605-673-2217 and we can help. We will even build you an ad at no extra charge!

SHOP BLACK HILLS

HEY RETAIL BUSINESS OWNERS!!! THIS IS AN INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY TO ADVERTISE!!!

Custer

Deep Creek Gallery



A Gallery of Gifts Awaits!
Seven local artists, one gallery.
757 Mt. Rushmore Rd. • Custer, SD
312.505.4592

**2 column X 4 inch
color ad
for \$32**
(for retail businesses only)
**(\$100
Normal Price)**

**Thanks for saying you saw
it in the Western Trader!**

SHOP THE BLACK HILLS!

**2 column X 4 inch
color ad
for \$32**
(for retail businesses only)
**(\$100
Normal Price)**

Warning signs found in new South Dakota economic data

By Bart Pfankuch
South Dakota News Watch

So far in the post-pandemic period, the South Dakota economy is humming along nicely, though some new economic indicators reveal concerns that growth might slow in the coming months or years.

According to a recent financial forecast produced by the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors, many data points show the state has been in a very strong financial position in regard to housing, employment, income and gross domestic production.

However, three economic experts asked by News Watch to review and analyze the state forecast said the almost unprecedented growth seen since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 appears to be tapering off.

"I'd say our economy has grown very strongly over the last three years, uncharacteristically strongly, and this year, we are seeing kind of a reversion to the mean, kind of a return to more of the normal, if you will," said Jared McEntaffer, CEO of the Dakota Institute, a nonprofit group focused on analyzing and aiding the South Dakota economy.

New data points underscore challenges
Furthermore, the experts said a few indicators in the recent state report should be watched closely, as they carry potential warning signs for the future.

Chief among those concerning indicators:

A somewhat stark drop in overall farm income since 2022 that can cause negative ripple effects across the entire state economy.

Lower-than-expected state sales tax collections in June and July, which could portend a crisis if that trend continues — especially if voters decide in November to end the sales tax on consumable goods.

The vast divide between the roughly 30,000 open jobs in the state and the 10,000 unemployed people in the workforce, which can stall business growth and productivity.

The state's 2 percent unemployment rate, which could lead to employers hoarding existing workers

and preventing businesses from being able to expand or grow.

A steady slide in growth rate in personal incomes since 2021.

A slip in gross domestic product growth in 2024 that may be the result of other economic factors that are slowing growth overall in the state.

Despite those results, McEntaffer said that "there's no red flags that I'm seeing that jump out to me and say, 'Hey, we could be looking at a change in fortunes in South Dakota.'"

Here is an at-a-glance look at a few economic indicators that the economists highlighted in the Aug. 29, 2024, report.

Farm incomes fall from peak

According to the state report, overall farm income in South Dakota was around \$700 million in 2006, then rose to \$3.7 billion in 2011 before dropping to about \$1.2 billion in 2016-17. When the pandemic hit in 2020, however, demand and commodity prices both rose sharply and as a result, so did farm income, reaching \$3.7 billion in 2021 and peaking at \$4.4 billion in 2022.

Since then, however, prices have come down and overall farm income fell as well, to \$3.8 billion in 2023, with prices for corn and soybeans continuing to decline in 2024. Spending on farm equipment also dipped in 2023, the state report showed.

Joe Santos, a macro economics professor at South Dakota State University, said commodity prices paid to state farmers rose sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic and when war broke out in Ukraine, due to the loss of production of grain in Ukraine and the initial disruption of supply lines that drove up demand.

"Obviously, we don't want to see a pandemic, and we'd love to see peace in Ukraine," he said. "But without those pressures, prices will sort of ease. And while they won't go into the toilet, they won't be where they were when you had a pandemic and the belligerent activity that drove up commodity prices."

The dip in farm incomes and the resulting negative outcomes statewide are good examples of how the

SOUTH DAKOTA ECONOMY BY THE NUMBERS

- **2%:** South Dakota's unemployment rate in August 2024, compared to the national rate of 4.5%
- **4,000:** Construction of new homes in South Dakota in 2023. The rate peaked at about 9,000 in 2022.
- **1%:** Approximate population growth in 2023, outpacing the national rate.
- **33,000:** Open jobs in mid-2023, with only 10,000 people. Experts say that ratio puts a strain on the economy. and only 10,000 unemployed people,

Source: South Dakota Bureau of Labor

South Dakota economy is often tied to external forces and events, Santos said.

"I think the way you're going to see sluggishness in terms of economic activity in the state is probably going to be imported, in that the economic activity of this state reflects activity outside the state," Santos said. "I think that's probably our greatest vulnerability in South Dakota, in the state's sensitivity to economic activity outside the state."

Pluses and minuses of low unemployment

South Dakota is in an unusual position when it comes to its employment picture.

According to state data, non-farm employment growth has risen sharply since hitting a 12-year low point during the height of the pandemic in 2020, when the state had about 350,000 people working. Since then, non-farm employment has risen to about 470,000 people working.

Meanwhile, the unemployment rate in South Dakota, which was about 3.5 percent in 2014 and which rose to 8.5 percent during the pandemic, has now fallen to around 2 percent, according to state data. The national unemployment rate has followed a similar pattern, jumping to more than 14 percent in 2020 and now hovering around 4.5 percent.

All three economists interviewed by News Watch pointed to the low unem-

ployment rate as a problem, though generally a good problem to have.

Santos called the low unemployment rate a "second-order problem" that is less impactful than high unemployment, which would make it hard for people who want to work to find jobs.

But Santos also said an unemployment rate of 2 percent or lower could create a soft spot in the state economy.

"I think the downside is that the economic activity in the state is constrained by its inability to attract workers," Santos said.

David Chicoine, a former president and economics professor at South Dakota State University, said economists across the country are trying to determine what level of unemployment is acceptable to sustain larger economic growth.

"The question that has come up since COVID and since the Great Recession, is what is the appropriate level of unemployment to have a robust economy?" he said. "Clearly, 2 percent is, in most people's view, too low because that means you don't have enough workers to take advantage of new opportunities and sustain long-term growth."

Worker shortage a concern

The other, somewhat related, concerning data point is that the state had about 33,000 open jobs in mid 2023 and only 10,000

unemployed people, which Chicoine said can stunt productivity and growth in the business sector.

That gap exists even as the state has seen population growth of 1.5 percent in 2022 and more than 1 percent in 2023, both rates that outpaced national growth.

"I still think the economy is going to grow, but at what pace?" he said. "If you've got more jobs than you have people, that's going to put a constraint on the ability to grow because you're just not going to be able to have the output of a stronger labor force."

McEntaffer said the lack of workforce is largely due to the geography and demographics of South Dakota, which is a rural, low population state compared to other states.

Other than increasing innovation or raising productivity of individual workers, the only way to fill open jobs is to attract more people to the state, he said.

"It is putting restrictions for businesses and consumers," McEntaffer said. "We're right to do what we can to attract people. It's a strong economy, it's a great place to live and all of that, and if we can get more people here, that will help alleviate some of those strains on the economy."

General fund revenues

After two years of consistently steady growth in revenues, buoyed by billions in federal government stimulus money given to the state and local governments, businesses and individuals, revenue growth slowed in June.

In July, the state experienced a decline in revenues compared to legislative estimates. The June data shows an increase of just 0.4 percent over legislative estimates, and July saw a 3.7 percent negative growth figure, with a \$9 million shortfall compared to legislative projections.

Chicoine said the recent slowdown is not a major concern unless the trend continues.

"If we flatten out for the rest of the year, and we're already down in the first month of the new fiscal year (July), we won't know the full magnitude of any decline until we get there," Chicoine said. "The negative growth that we saw suggests the downward

trend could continue and accelerate."

Housing prices and construction

South Dakota followed the national housing market fairly closely in recent years, especially in growth rate of home construction and prices.

The home price indices, a broad measure of average home sale and resale prices, rose slowly in South Dakota and the U.S. from 2012 to 2021, then showed a significant price jump over the past three years.

Construction of new homes in South Dakota dipped to about 3,000 in 2019, then peaked at about 9,000 in 2022 and came down to about 4,000 in 2023 with a slight uptick since.

Santos said he believes the Federal Reserve Board has taken appropriate steps in regard to managing lending rates to reduce inflation and stave off a possible recession in the U.S. and in South Dakota.

Rising interest rates in recent years, followed by the recent lowering of rates, was appropriate, he said. The lower rates should now stimulate more residential and commercial development and sales activity that will bolster the overall economies of the state and nation, Santos said.

In their final analysis, all three economists said they see a positive economic future for South Dakota.

Santos said he expects the state to continue to benefit from government policies that generally tend to be pro-business and pro-growth.

"There is a kind of a deregulatory, pro-free enterprise mindset in the state, and I suspect that's a tailwind, not headwind," he said. "There is a kind of a business-first orientation that if we have issues, let's see if the private sector can deal with them first."

This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, an independent, nonprofit news organization. Read more in-depth stories at sdnewswatch.org and sign up for an email every few days to get stories as soon as they're published. Contact Bart Pfankuch at bart.pfankuch@sdnewswatch.org.

Black Hills



A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE FOR EATERS • A SPACE TO ADVERTISE FOR EATERIES

Custer EATS	Black Hills Burger & Pizza Co. Tues. - Sat. 11 am - 2:30 pm Wed. - Fri. 5 pm - 7:30 pm	Three Forks Bar, Grille & Casino Daily 11 am - 7 pm	Hot Springs EATS	Edgemont EATS	Isabella's Sunday - Wednesday 11 am - 8 pm Thursday - Saturday 11 am - 9 pm
Buglin' Bull Restaurant & Sports Bar Sun-Thursday 11am-8 pm Friday-Saturday 11am-9pm	Skogen Kitchen Tuesday - Saturday 5-8 p.m.	Turtle Town Sunday-Thursday 10am 4 pm Friday-Saturday 9am-5 pm	American Legion Monday - Saturday 10am - close	Igloo Bar Daily 9 am - 12 am Friday & Saturday 9am - 2 am	Perkins Tavern Monday - Wednesday 11 am - 8 pm Thursday - Sunday 7 am - 9 pm
Calamity Jane's Seven Days a Week 7 am to 2 pm	Subway Restaurant Mon-Sat 8 am - 9 pm Sunday 8 am - 8 pm	Hermosa EATS	Dairy Queen Daily 10:30 am - 9 pm	Khantong Thai Cuisine Monday-Wednesday- Friday 11 am - 4:30 pm	Pizza Barn Monday - Thursday 4 pm - 9 pm Friday & Saturday 4 pm - 10 pm
Custer Beacon Wednesday - Saturday 4 pm to close	Hill City EATS	Corner Pantry Deli Daily 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.	Mornin' Sunshine Monday-Saturday 7am-2 pm Sunday 7am -1pm	The Hat Creek Grill Friday & Saturday Noon - 10 pm	Uncle Vito's Tuesday - Friday 7 am - 2 pm Saturday 7 am - 10 am
Custer County Candy Co. Daily Sun-Fri 11-5 Sat 11-6	All Aboard Monday - Saturday 11 am - 8 pm Sunday 11 am - 7 pm	Your Restaurant Here Monday- Saturday 4am - 9pm	Pizza Hut Monday - Saturday 11 am - 9 pm	Victory Steakhouse & Lounge 11 am - 9 pm Tuesday - Saturday	Pringle EATS
Custer Deli Mon-Thurs 8 am - 4 pm Friday 8 am 5 pm Sat. 9 am-3 pm Sunday -Closed	The Alpine Inn Monday - Saturday 11 am - 2:30 pm LUNCH 5 pm - 9:30 pm DINNER	Your Restaurant Here Monday- Saturday 4am - 9pm	Silk Road Experience Thursday-Saturday 3pm-7pm	Yesway Monday-Saturday 6 am - 9 pm Sunday 8 am -9am	The Hitchrail Bar & Restaurant Tuesday - Sunday 11 am - 8 pm
Custer Wolf Monday-Saturday 11:30 am- 8 pm	Bumpin' Buffalo Bar & Grill Monday - Sunday 11 am - 9 pm	Lintz Bros. Pizza Thursday - Monday 3 pm - 9 pm	Sick-N-Twisted Thursday - Monday 11 am - 8 pm	Yesway #1174 Daily - Open 24 hours	Rapid City EATS
Dairy Queen Mon.-Saturday 11am-8 pm Sunday 11am-7 pm	Caboose Coffee Company Monday - Saturday 7 am -1 pm Sunday - Closed	Hermosa Senior Citizens Center Monday - Thursday Noon to close	Southern Hills Diner & Bakery Thursday-Monday 8am-2pm closed Tuesday & Wednesday	Newcastle EATS	Shipwreck's Bar & Grill Monday - Wednesday 11 am - 8 pm
Dakota Broasted Tuesday - Saturday 11 am - 6 pm	Chute Rooster Thursday - Monday 11 am - 9 pm Sunday 10 am - 6 pm	79 Lounge Daily 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.	Southern Hills Golf Course Daily 7 am - 8 pm	Boopa's Tuesday - Friday 7am - 2 pm Saturday 7am - 10 am	Belle Fourche EATS
Feel Good Cafe Open Daily 6:30 am - 11:00 am	Cream Tuesday - Saturday 10 am - 3:30 pm	Keystone EATS	Springs Coffee Kiosk Mon-Fri 5:30am-4:30pm Saturday 5:30am - 2pm Sunday 5:30am - Noon	Donna's Main St. Diner Daily 6 am -2 pm	Black Hills Diner Tuesday-Saturday 7 am - 2 pm
Frontier Bar & Grill Daily 11 am to 9 pm Closed Tuesday	Dairy Twist Monday - Saturday 11a.m. - 7 p.m. & Sunday Noon -7 p.m	Big Thunder Bar & Grill 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Daily	Taco John's Monday - Saturday 7 a.m. to 9 pm Sunday 8 am - 8 pm	Kaffee Klatsch Mon-Wed 5:30 - 12:30pm Tues,Thurs, Fri. 5:30 - 1pm Saturday 6:30am-10:30am	YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE. WITHOUT OUR READERS , SUBSCRIBERS & ADVERTISERS WE WOULD NOT EXIST. WE STRIVE TO GIVE THE BEST LOCAL COVERAGE YOU WILL NOT GET ANYWHERE ELSE EXCEPT IN OUR NEWSPAPERS. WE BELIEVE IN FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. WE ARE NOT CORPORATELY OWNED. THE CUSTER COUNTY CHRONICLE HAS BEEN A PRIVATELY OWNED & INDEPENDENT PUBLICATION IN WESTERN SOUTH DAKOTA FOR 143 YEARS EST. IN 1880 SUBSCRIBE TO THE CHRONICLE OR PREVAILER 605-673-2217
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