

May 2024

Horizons

A Golden West Customer Newsletter
& Award-Winning Publication

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Blooming Legacy

Family flower business spreads color
from Avon roots for nearly 70 years

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



Left to Right: Carol and Vern Tolsma plant roots in Avon.

Blooming Legacy



For nearly 70 years, the Mensch family in Avon has helped color the world for locals and thousands of people in the surrounding five-state area with high-quality plants.

“We try and grow the best quality,” Lyle Mensch says. “It almost has to be perfect.”

Lyle and his son Korey Mensch grow vegetables, flower baskets, and plants at Mensch Greenhouse on the southwest edge of Avon, specializing in petunias and geraniums. They sell their products wholesale to thousands of customers through more than 120 independent retailers in South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wyoming.

The father-son duo also supplies the Mensch Retail Greenhouse & Flower Shop with what they need to make and sell floral arrangements directly to customers. Lyle’s niece Carol Tolsma and her husband Vern run it on the other side of Avon.

“It’s nice, because we just put our flowers onto the back of the flat bed and bring them across town,” she says.

A separate retail location helps

differentiate between retail and wholesale, Carol says. This allows her to provide a more focused and personalized experience for her customers.

Ada Mensch opened her own greenhouse in Avon in 1957. Her son Lyle joined her a decade later, and 2024 is his 57th year with Mensch Greenhouse. Ada’s granddaughter Carol and her husband Vern have also spent decades in the family greenhouse business. The Mensch family members have well over 100 years of greenhouse and floral experience combined.

Deep community roots

The family supports Avon and the surrounding communities, as well. Lyle and Korey take care of the plants on Avon’s Main Street. They also maintain a community garden where locals can harvest fresh produce and contribute to local schools and projects in different towns.

Carol and Vern have a garden, too, growing all types of produce over two acres. They preserve their harvest by canning and even make wine, and they offer their fresh and canned goods to locals through their retail business. In addition, the couple commemorates countless community milestones such as weddings, anniversaries, and funerals with their local deliveries of floral arrangements.

The Mensch family all appreciate their hometown of Avon. “We’ve always lived here,” Carol says. “I couldn’t think of being anywhere else.”

Embracing technology, services

Lyle and Korey say technology has made their entire business expansion easier. As Golden West customers, they’ve also adapted to a digital approach.

“The whole business is on a handheld phone,” Lyle says. “We couldn’t operate without Golden West services.”

Carol and Vern appreciate the support they receive from Golden West and the opportunities their services provide.

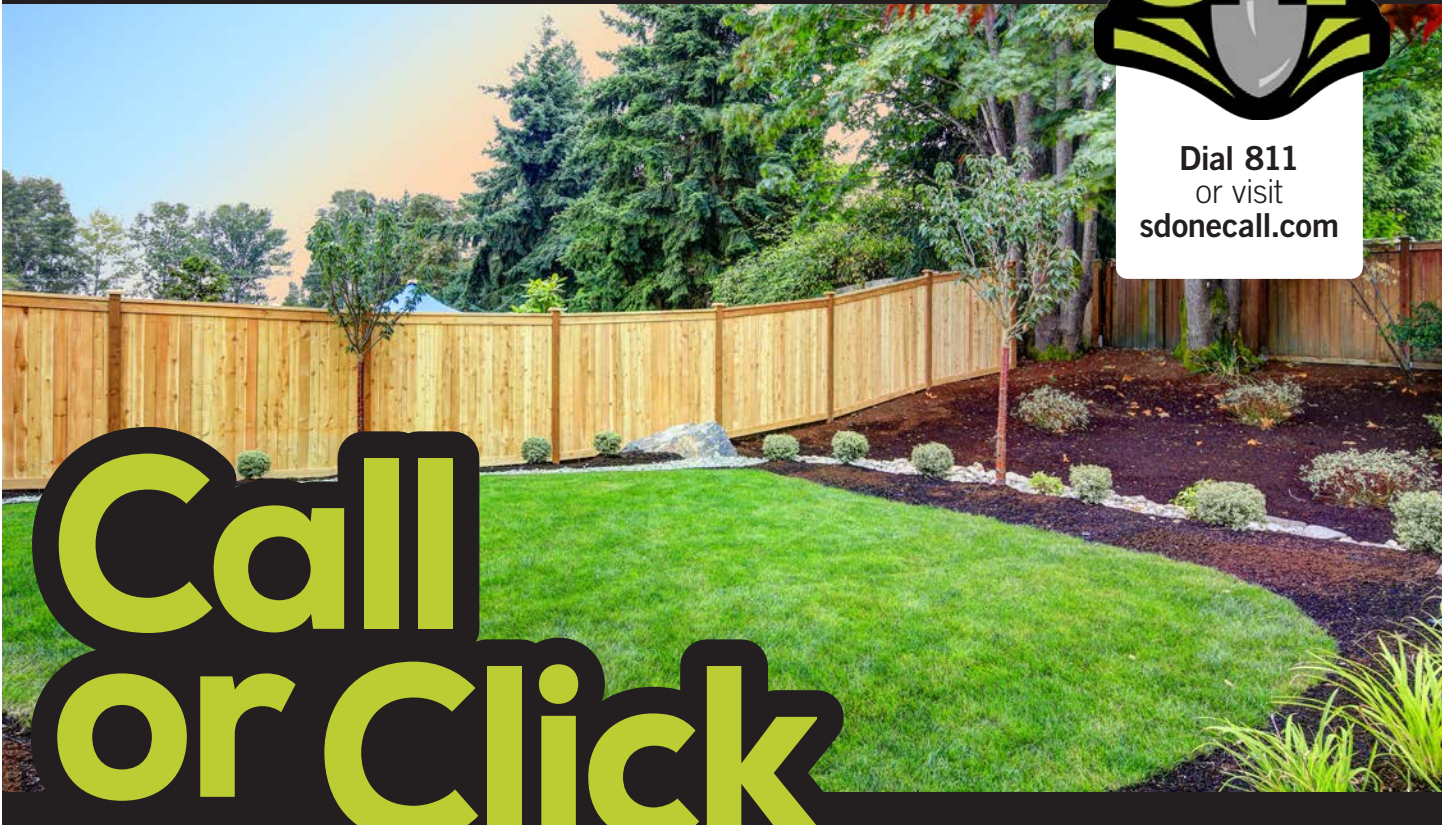
“Golden West services have allowed us to successfully run our business web pages, Facebook, and order placements,” Carol says. “We couldn’t get by without it.”

“Golden West services have allowed us to successfully run our business web pages, Facebook, and order placements. We couldn’t get by without it.”

– CAROL TOLSMA



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Don't let buried lines turn your dream project into a nightmare

Safety is in your hands. Every dig. Every time.

As summer starts this year, you might be raring to get to your project list. Before you do, make sure you call 811 or visit sdonecall.com. Here's why you should call or click before you dig:

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- **You save yourself pain.** Accidentally damaging the wrong utility line could potentially cause personal injuries. Save yourself the pain and call 811 before you get your shovel out.

At sdonecall.com, you can enter a form online before you plan to do any digging. By notifying South Dakota 811 at least two business days ahead of time, you can save yourself time and money.

Don't hit a line when you can rest easy knowing all your projects can be completed risk-free. Staying productive in the summertime doesn't have to involve guesswork – click or call before you dig.

For more detailed instructions, call 811 directly, visit sdonecall.com, or read more at call811.com.



Online education resources for lifelong learning

Page-turners and typewriters tap-tap-tapping away at night aren't too hard to imagine for many adults – especially when that's what school meant for some. In an age of information, education has moved from paper and typewriters to the internet.

While the landscape of learning has certainly changed over time, new technology makes it easier than ever. Opportunity is in high supply for anyone wanting to involve themselves in the learning process.

Staying involved also stretches your brain to keep it healthy. Research shows that just like yoga helps your body stay agile, lifelong learning can keep your mind flexible. Finding resources to learn might seem like a daunting task, but an online connection can make it easier.

Sources: Symonds Research, OLLI - Golden West does not endorse any product or service it does not sell.

The online transition has meant many resources are available for learners of all ages to continue growing in their areas of interest. These options can be accessed in just a few clicks anywhere you have an internet connection:

- **OpenMIT** is a website from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that contains reading materials and lectures for courses that have been recorded and uploaded for free online. One search for any array of topics often yields hundreds of results. From there you can download lectures, syllabi, and find course reading materials.
- **Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)** is part of the University of South Dakota and allows people above 50 to continue learning at an affordable price. There are a lot of classes available right from your computer for a tenth of the cost of most college courses.
- **TED-Ed** is another online resource available for learners of all ages that explores all sorts of questions. Explore history, art, math, and riddles in bite-size pieces or in collections.
- **EdX** is a collaborative effort between businesses and universities across the world. This website offers courses from Word and Excel to English grammar, and everything in between. Enrolling in classes with a university flair is just a click away.
- **Community education classes** might also be offered in your area! With many universities and community centers across the state, even a quick search can locate nearby community education courses.



Scan to visit this article online for clickable links to the resources mentioned.



VOTING OPTIONS ADDED

for 2024 annual meeting

There are many reasons to attend the 72nd Annual Meeting of the Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative on Sept. 28. You can learn more about the cooperative, and you'll get complimentary lunch and other goodies. You can enjoy a fall visit to Wall and the neighboring Badlands and Black Hills, as well.

In the past you also had to attend the annual meeting to vote in director elections and on any other cooperative business. That's changed this year as now members can vote electronically online or by mail in advance, as well as in-person during the meeting in Wall.

More members can participate

"Golden West looks forward to giving more members the opportunity to participate in co-op business by voting from the comforts of their home or business," says Golden West General Manager and CEO Denny Law.

"The co-op proudly serves members from Edgemont in the southwest to Trent in the east and most places in between. While a trip to Wall in the fall may be nice, it isn't feasible for everyone," Law says.

The Golden West Board of Directors voted to make this change following amendments to the organization's articles and bylaws that members approved in recent years. The cooperative is working with Survey & Ballot Systems (SBS) to manage this year's hybrid voting options. SBS provides dependable and secure voting systems for many types of organizations, including cooperatives.

Election and voting timeline changes

The move to multiple voting options requires a new timeline for director elections. The notice of vacancy will be published in newspapers and mailed to members in

affected districts during the second half of May. The last day to file a nominating petition is June 28.

If there are two or more valid candidates for the same open seat, voting in the required election will begin mid-August. At that time Golden West will mail members instructions for voting electronically online. Those who prefer to vote by mail must request a paper ballot.

Vote online or by mail before meeting

Golden West will include the member's Golden West member number in the letter detailing online voting instructions. For validation, online voters must enter their member number and the last four digits of the social security number, which must match what Golden West has on file. Non-individual entities will enter the last four digits of their tax identification number or TIN.

Ballots must be received by Sept. 24 either electronically or by mail to be counted. SBS will provide Golden West with certified election results from the electronic and mail-in ballots.

In-person voting at the annual meeting

To maintain the integrity of Golden West's one vote per member rule, only members who did not vote in advance will receive an authorization to vote slip at the annual meeting. Non-individual entities must follow the authorization to vote process in advance to vote in person at the meeting. Vote totals from in-person voting at the meeting on Sept. 28 will be combined with the electronic and paper mail-in by request vote totals to determine the final results.

More information about these new voting options will come in future issues of the Horizons newsletter, by mail, and through email, or visit goldenwest.com/voting.

72nd Annual
Meeting of the
Golden West
Telecommunications
Cooperative
Sept. 28, 2024

May

17	Vivian	Norwegian Independence Day
18	Burke	Burke Lake Carnival

June

1	Hill City/Custer	Crazy Horse Volksmarch
13-16	Hartford	Jamboree Days
20-22	Kadoka	Buffalo Stampede Rodeo
21-23	Dell Rapids	Quarry Days
28-30	Hot Springs	47th Annual Main Street Arts and Crafts Festival

July

3-4	Springfield	4th of July Celebration
4	Menno	4th of July Celebration
4	Wasta	4th of July Celebration
5-7	Badlands Ntnl. Park	Badlands Astronomy Festival
12-13	Wall	Wall Celebration
12-14	White River	Frontier Days
13	Buffalo Gap	Buffalo Gap Blowout
19-20	Murdo	Murdo Ranch Rodeo and Gumbo Ridge Bronc Ride
19-21	Colton	Colton Country Days
19-21	Custer	Gold Discovery Days
26-28	Montrose	Montrose Music Festival
26-28	Winner	55th Annual Winner Elks Rodeo
27	Freeman	South Dakota Chislic Festival
31-Aug. 4	Edgemont	Fall River County Fair

August

1-4	Pine Ridge	Oglala Nation Wacipi and Rodeo
7-11	Martin	Bennett County Fair
7-11	Faith	Faith Stock Show and Rodeo
8-11	Lower Brule	Annual Kul Wicasa Wacipi, Fair, and Rodeo
9-11	Philip	Scotty Philip Days
21-25	Rosebud	148th Annual Rosebud Fair, Rodeo, and Wacipi
24-25	Interior	Interior Frontier Days Rodeo

Find South Dakota activities near you!

Summer is starting in South Dakota, which means it's time for the festivities to begin! Make the most of your summer with events across the state. Here are some great ways you can celebrate the warm weather.

Whether you spend your summer roping or celebrating your town's history, family-friendly fun is available all over!

Find and share additional events occurring across the Golden West service area by region on The Exchange at theexchangesd.com/events. Twice a month, events are also shared through email from Golden West.



There are lots of parades, rodeos, and wacipis (pow-wows) planned.

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HORIZONS – Volume 25, Number 3
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 • 1-855-888-7777