

May 2021

Horizons

A Golden West Customer Newsletter

Combining Culture & Curriculum

Lakota Tech High School Offers
Career Exploration

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Lakota Wówaši Waŋǰspe
Waŋkátuya Owayawa
LAKOTA TECH HIGH SCHOOL

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



Combining Culture & Curriculum

Lakota Tech High School Offers Career Exploration

Taylor, a sophomore at Lakota Tech High School, wants to be a sports physical therapist. She credits the school's curriculum — a combination of traditional academics and real-world experience — with helping guide her down that career path.

"It's really opened up all the jobs that are available to me, and what I would need for education to get into those positions," she says. "My health sciences teacher has helped me look into colleges that offer programs for that. We can job shadow over Zoom, and once COVID is over, we can get into places and shadow in person."

Hands-on learning like that is one of the many benefits of a Career and Technical Education (CTE) school like Lakota Tech High School in Pine Ridge. When Lakota Tech opened in August 2020, it was the first CTE school to serve a Native American population on a reservation in the U.S. It is quickly becoming a model for education nationwide.

Benefits of a CTE vs. Traditional School

Schools that focus on career and technical education are gaining popularity among students and educators alike.

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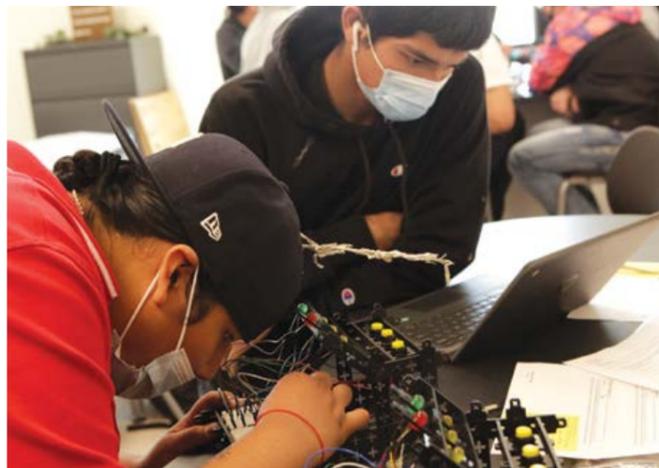
The more I've spent time in the CTE world the more I've seen how much more engaging and meaningful the work that students are doing can be.

Stephanie Eisenmenger
Principal at Lakota Tech

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Principal Stephanie Eisenmenger consults with Taylor, a sophomore.



Students, pictured above and bottom left, work in the STEM lab.

Advances in technology and the shift to a global economy make traditional education models less of a one-size-fits-all solution nowadays. CTE schools provide students with a comprehensive set of both academic and hands-on skills that give them multiple post-graduation opportunities.

"Typically, the electives you take in high school are academic-focused," Principal Stephanie Eisenmenger says. "With ours, you're seeing more skills-based, hands-on, real-life experiences. We're providing resources for students to launch into a career in a way that makes sense for them, their families, and their communities."

Higher graduation rates and increased employability are two other factors that make CTE schools attractive.



At Lakota Tech, students enroll in academies based on their long-term career interests. There are eight total, covering careers like business, engineering, medical tech, and teacher prep, and students can explore different academies at any time.

"They can bounce around and really figure out what they want," Eisenmenger says. "By the time they're seniors, they've at least whittled it down and have some pathways they know they can be happy and successful in."

An Opportunity to Bring the Best Pieces Together

Building a CTE school devoted to indigenous students was important for a variety of reasons. "There were a lot of different pieces at play," Eisenmenger explains. "But ultimately, it's about having the self-governance that comes with living on a reservation. We want to provide students with the ability to make their community exactly what they want it to be."

Planning for the school began five years before it opened, and Eisenmenger was brought aboard a year before. The planning, prep work, and hiring necessary to get the school ready to open involved a lot

of exploration. She visited other CTE schools, not just in South Dakota but as far away as Arizona, to determine what an ideal CTE school would look like.

"It was a lot of trial and error, figuring out what best practices were being utilized elsewhere, then taking those components and putting them together into one thing," Eisenmenger recalls. "You have to learn from the mistakes of others, learn what works well in other places, and bring all the best pieces together. The more I've spent time in the CTE world the more I've seen how much more engaging and meaningful the work that students are doing can be."

Another important step in the exploratory process involved gathering feedback through a community needs assessment — a prerequisite for obtaining CTE funding through the state of South Dakota.

"The nice thing about that is, you get to hear from business owners, parents, and students about what they want and need," Eisenmenger says. "All the programs we offer here are directly connected to the needs of the community and the interest level of students in the program."

"We're providing resources for students to launch into a career in a way that makes sense for them, their families, and their communities."

Stephanie Eisenmenger
Principal at Lakota Tech



Pictured left to right are Yamni Jack, activities director; Alberta Wright, instructional coach; Stephanie Eisenmenger, principal; and Delmar Toczek, career coordinator.

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Combining Culture & Curriculum

Continued from page 3:

“They’re offering classes that have helped me narrow down what I want to do.”

Hannah
Sophomore at Lakota Tech

Student Perspective is Very Positive

Hannah, also a sophomore, is another champion of the curriculum at Lakota Tech High School. She’s taking human service classes to learn more about herself and how to help others and has nothing but positive things to say.

“I like it a lot,” Hannah says. “They’re offering classes that have helped me narrow down what I want to do. We still have that traditional high school experience; there’s just so much more added to it. We get the whole package! My favorite thing is the environment. Everyone wants to be here and is happy that we’re all together.”

With 165 freshmen and 345 total students, Lakota Tech is rapidly nearing its capacity of 400. As a result, they are already exploring expanding the high school through additions.

Another key focus for Eisenmenger is developing partnerships with area businesses to create more real-world opportunities for students. All in all, she couldn’t be more pleased with the school’s inaugural year.

“With COVID, it definitely wasn’t the way I envisioned our first year,” Eisenmenger says. “But I think we made it through very well given the circumstances. It’s exciting to see students’ doors be opened to different experiences.”



Sophomore Hannah Risse practices taking vitals.

Let’s Chat!

Golden West is excited to offer another reliable way for customers to reach us. With web chat, you can communicate directly with a customer service representative for assistance ... without even picking up your phone.

“Web chat allows Golden West to offer an instant and efficient way to assist our customers with service requests, payments, and billing questions,” explains Service Experience Supervisor Joanne Mathis. “Customers are able to multi-task, giving them a convenient way to get real-time responses to their questions.”

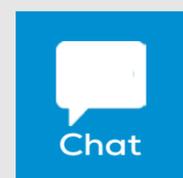
How Web Chat Works

Web chat is simple to use and allows two-way communication through the internet. With web chat, Golden West customers can communicate with a live customer service representative. The parties involved can send each other messages and hyperlinks in real time. Web chatting online with Golden West is fast, conversational, and does not require any type of software – all you need is a browser.

To access web chat, visit goldenwest.com. A link can be found during business hours in the lower right corner of the Golden West website – just look for the blue “Chat” box. It’s impossible to miss! The service is available during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mountain Time.

Benefits of Web Chat

There are many benefits to using web chat. In addition to being a quick and efficient form of communication, you can reach Golden West on your own terms, whenever it’s convenient. You’ll receive fast and knowledgeable responses from real humans – we don’t use “chatbots” or other screening software. You’ll even be emailed a transcript of the chat conversation at the end of your interaction, ensuring you’ll have a record of what was discussed.



Visit goldenwest.com
and give web chat a try!



Golden West Services for the Disabled Communications Solutions for the Hearing / Speech / Visually Impaired

Golden West is committed to making members’ lives easier. Those with specific disability needs can take advantage of options to streamline their telephone and cable TV experiences.

TEDP/TRS Provide Telephone Assistance

Relay South Dakota’s Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP) provides free equipment to qualifying individuals who have difficulty communicating over the telephone due to a hearing or speech impairment. TeleTYpe or Text Telephone (TTY) devices, mobile devices, amplified phones, and captioned phones are available for South Dakota residents with existing home phone service.

Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) allow individuals with hearing and speech difficulties to place and receive telephone calls. The user types their conversation onto a TTY, which is read to the other party by a communications assistant (CA) at a relay center. The CA then types the

recipient’s response back to the caller. Those who prefer to speak directly to the calling party but receive text response can opt for Voice Carry Over instead.

Talking Guides for Cable TV Customers

Blind or visually impaired cable TV customers also have access to devices that will help them enjoy their favorite programs. They can request a device equipped with a “talking guide” – a voice-enabled user interface that reads channel names, program titles, and descriptions out loud. While watching, the guide adds audio descriptions of the visual elements of the program so they can follow along.

Application Process

To apply for TEDP or blind/visually impaired cable TV assistance, call **1-855-888-7777**, option 3. You may also visit goldenwest.com/phoneassist or goldenwest.com/cableassist for more information.



Offices Prepare to Welcome Customers

Golden West’s six public office locations will reopen to customers on Tuesday, May 25.

“Golden West looks forward to serving our members in person in our offices again very soon,” said General Manager and CEO Denny Law. “We appreciate your patience and understanding this past year as we worked to keep you connected while also keeping you and our employees safe.”

The cooperative adjusted operations when the pandemic first hit. Efforts included serving customers online, via phone and mail only. With widespread vaccine availability, Golden West is preparing to return to standard operations

and once again offer in-person service to members in our offices in Dell Rapids, Hartford, Hot Springs, Mission, Pine Ridge, and Wall.

While COVID-19 infection rates have fallen, the pandemic isn’t over yet. Hand sanitizer and masks will be available at all locations for those who choose to use them. Some office layouts have been updated, as well, both to provide more efficient service and to minimize spread.

Offices will resume the same hours as before. For details specific to your location, call 1-855-888-7777, option 3, or visit goldenwest.com/contact and scroll down to view hours.



Badlands Lead to Good Adventures

If you've ever stopped for free ice water at Wall Drug before exploring the rugged pinnacles and spires of the Badlands, you can relate to the editors of *Midwest Living* magazine. The regional publication honored both South Dakota attractions in its 2021 Best of the Midwest awards.

Wall Drug earned the title of "Best Photo Opportunity" and the Badlands were named "Best National Park" in the magazine's February issue. If you've never been out that way – or it's been a while – what are you waiting for? A visit to the Badlands, with a detour through Wall Drug, is an easy and memorable getaway ... whether you're staying for one day or several.

Can't-Miss Highlights

There's so much to see and do in the Badlands, putting together an itinerary is challenging. With 242,756 acres to explore, you can visit dozens of times and never run out of things to discover. But for those whose time is limited, there are certain can't-miss highlights.

Highway 240, also known as the Badlands Loop Road, is a

two-lane paved road that can be accessed from Exit 110 for those traveling eastbound on I-90 or Exit 131 for westbound travelers. The road winds for 31 miles through the park, with over a dozen pull-outs and scenic overlooks. It's the best way to get an overview of all the park has to offer.



Be sure to take time exploring these areas along the way:

Visitor's Centers

Informative and educational, visitor's centers are a must-see for first timers and a great place to stretch your legs after being cooped up in the car.

The Ben Reifel Visitor Center is the park's main visitor center. It's open year-round and offers maps, exhibits, a bookstore, and a working fossil preparation lab. Park staff are on hand to answer questions and provide directions.

The White River Visitor Center, located on the Pine Ridge Reservation in the South Unit of the park, is open during the summer. It offers maps, museum exhibits, water, and restrooms. Rangers often hold talks about the Badlands and Lakota culture.

Overlooks

There are plenty of places to pull over and enjoy the scenery. Each stop is unique, so you'll want to visit as many as you can. Favorites with park visitors, from east to west, include:

Big Badlands Overlook. A great place to view the eastern portion of the Badlands Wall, a 60-mile-long ridge comprised of sedimentary layers that crisscrosses the prairie. On clear days, Eagle Nest Butte is visible on the southeast horizon.

Prairie Wind Overlook. The Badlands boast the largest preserved mixed-grass prairie in the U.S., and this is a great place to get a sweeping view of the native vegetation. It's also a visible reminder of the geological diversity within the park.

Yellow Mounds Overlook. A rainbow of yellow, purple, gray, and red striped rock layers runs through the mounds at this colorful pull-out – a stark contrast to the primarily beige landscape. These are among the oldest rocks in the park.

Pinnacles Overlook. This westernmost overlook is one of the most dramatic, offering sweeping views of jagged pinnacles, the prairie to the south and, on clear days, the Black Hills to the west. If you're planning to catch a sunset (you should!), this is your go-to spot.

Hiking Trail

The Badlands are a great place to hike (but please remember to bring water, as temperatures can soar during the summer months). Trails are available for all skill levels.



On the eastern edge of the park, the Notch, Door, and Window Trails are easily accessible from a large parking lot. Depending on your comfort level, you can peer through a gap in the Badlands Wall deep into the canyon below; traverse flat, moonscape-like terrain for an up-close look at the spires, canyons, and gullies; or climb a short but steep log ladder for expansive views that stretch south to the adjacent plains.

The Cliff Shelf Nature Trail is a short loop along a boardwalk and gives you a chance to escape the heat under the cover of an old stand of juniper trees.

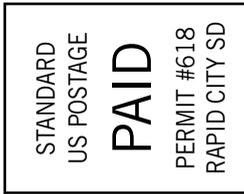
Interested in extinct creatures that once roamed the park? Check out the Fossil Exhibit Trail, a short, self-guided tour along a boardwalk that features fossil replicas and interpretive signs.

Those looking for a longer hike can opt for the Castle Trail (5 miles end-to-end if you bring two vehicles, or a 10-mile roundtrip).

Wildlife

The Badlands are home to a variety of wildlife species including bighorn sheep, bison, coyotes, mule deer, prairie dogs, pronghorn, and more. Please be respectful of all wildlife and keep your distance. Prairie rattlesnakes are found here, too, so pay attention to warning signs and watch your step!

Be sure to dress in layers regardless of the season, bring sunscreen, and don't forget your camera. Above all else ... have fun!



Golden West Doubles EMAIL STORAGE

While there are more options for staying connected now than ever before, email remains an important tool. It's quick, convenient, and easy to use – and a daily ritual for many.



With this in mind, Golden West is expanding the storage limit on all email accounts to 8 gigabytes (GB) with no corresponding price increase. That will give you twice the storage for the same cost, so you can save more of those family photos, personal correspondence, and important documents without worrying about missing any messages. If your account doesn't already reflect the storage upgrade, you should notice it soon.

It's always good to manage your email storage space regardless. There are several easy steps you can take to make room, including:

- Delete unimportant emails from your Inbox.
- Delete unimportant emails from your Sent Items folder.
- Empty your Deleted Items folder and/or empty the Trash.

If you have any questions, call us at **1-855-888-7777**, option 1 (technical support), or visit us at goldenwest.com/emailstorage.



Sign Up for AutoPay Now and Get \$15!

AutoPay is the easiest way to ensure your monthly Golden West bill is paid on time, every time. With AutoPay, your payment will be automatically deducted from your bank account or charged to your credit or debit card – whichever method works best for you!

Payments can be made on the 5th, 10th, 15th, or 20th of each month. When selecting a payment date, be sure to consider your bill due date. You may want time to review your bill before payment while also avoiding late fees.

Sign up by phone or online today and watch our helpful how-to AutoPay video.



Golden West processes all payment options at no charge for members. Promotion expires May 31, 2021. Savings will be applied as a one-time bill credit. Limit one bill credit per account. You must maintain your auto pay status for six months or the promotional offer will be billed back to your account.



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