

## 2024 LIT SWAP PARKS & ATTRACTIONS RECAP NOTES

### 1. Crazy Horse Memorial

- No laser light show.
- Operating hours: 8 AM - 8 PM.
- Spring walks begin on June 1st.
- No hiking later than 1 PM for the last hiker.
- Offers 5k and 10k routes.
- Crew available at the top for information and photos.
- Finished hand revealed last year; hikers can now stand by the thumb.
- Launches 2nd vols during CSP roundup weekend.

### 2. Mammoth Site

- Celebrating its 50th year.
- New exhibits: Permafrost exhibit, giant sloths.
- Offers a free summer camp funded by grants and donors.
- Website: [www.mammothsite.org](http://www.mammothsite.org); Facebook page is The Mammoth Site.
- Summer hours start May 24.
- Features a baby mammoth.
- Mammoth Days, a two-day event, includes a community BBQ on June 21 and an all-day event with food trucks and spearheading competition on June 22. The events feature street dances and a beer garden.

### 3. Buffalo Chip

- Offers summer-long camping from Memorial Day to Labor Day.
- Seasonal reopening on May 31.
- Buy one, get one beverage offer with VIP card.
- Hosting a Buff. Bash demo derby at the new dirt track.
- Yellowstone offroad racing at the powersports venue.
- On July 27, hosts raising of the flags at the memorial field.
- Events include Rib Fest, Rally, performances by Jelly Roll, Travis Trit, and Kid Rock.
- Daredevil Wednesday is part of the festivities.
- Celebrating 85/45 Anniversary.

### 4. Visit Rapid City

- Launch of new visitor center.
- Events can be submitted via the web.
- Introduction of a new, smaller, pocket-friendly visitor guide.
- Rapid City area ambassador program with 200 CTA's certified, holding an international cert.
- Operating City view trolley 7 days a week with stops at 10 AM and 1:30 PM, picking up and dropping off at the Journey Museum.
- City of Presidents audio tour (Nixon relocated due to construction in 2025).
- New dining at Diamond E Collective and Katmandu Momo House, and Bengal kitchen.
- Zen hills gifts offer southwest jewelry and designs.

## 5. Travel South Dakota

- Reports a 5% drop in hotel occupancy and demand, attributing it mainly to concerns over personal finances.
- Enhanced web traffic.
- Introduced a new forecast model projecting a slight decrease in June.
- Short term rentals up by 45% in October.
- Promotions including Forever 605 on sdvisit.com offering free swag like hats, shirts, and gloves, including branded doggy bags and sweatshirts.
- Family Passport Head to the Hills initiative promotes travel to lesser-known areas with a point-based prize system.
- Rally Rush promotion aimed at rally enthusiasts, offering \$500 for swag for promotion and a kit with promotional materials.
- National Travel Tourism Week from May 19 – 25; encourages lighting up attractions in red.
- Hosting a webinar on May 14th with an in-depth analysis of the county.

## 6. RC Regional Airport

- Celebrated a significant milestone with a groundbreaking ceremony for their new project in 2023, aimed at solving pinch points in baggage handling and screening.
- Recorded highest number of passengers boarding flights in 2023.
- Seasonal flights resumption starting May 15.
- Return of flights from Charlotte and Chicago on American Airlines beginning June 5.
- A direct flight from Minneapolis will begin in June.
- The airport contributes approximately \$456,000,000 to the Pennington county area; supporting 2,200 jobs and promoting 2800 jobs within the airport.
- Plans include using larger planes and increasing flight frequency during winter months.

## 7. Belle Fourche Chamber

- Promotes various summer events accessible via their Facebook page or website or by calling directly.
- Events include kicking off hometown Thursday nights from June 6-8 in Belle Fourche, with downtown events on June 7 and River Fest on June 8.
- Hosting the Black Hills Round Up from June 30 – July 4.
- Organizing the Butte Laurence County Fair.
- Offers a variety of attractions including camping, river walk, museum, and family fun days.
- Hosts Labor Day events in Newell, featuring Rodeo and Ranch Rodeo.

## 8. Box Elder Chamber

- This young organization focuses on building attractions and supporting local hotels through initiatives like Watiki with The Box.
- Developing new hotels on Liberty, which will transition into the new downtown area.
- Sees a population projection of 13,000 people by 2024.
- Aims to increase tourism through attractions like the Black Hills Children Museum and the reopening of the Aviation Museum.

#### 9. Deadwood Area Chamber

- Operates several museums including Adams House, Adams Museum, Days of 76, and Brothel Deadwood.
- Offers a combo pass available at the welcome or history/info center (Brother not included).
- Activities include May 25 stagecoach runs (no Sundays or Mondays).
- Hosts the trial of Jack McCall and Deadwood Alive events from Monday-Saturday at Wild Bill Bar.
- The Gold mine reopens on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend and runs through Labor Day.
- Provides event info on [deadwood.com](http://deadwood.com) and historical details on [deadwoodhistory.com](http://deadwoodhistory.com).

#### 10. Hot Springs Chamber

- Premier attraction is the Mammoth Site.
- Features Moccasins Springs nature spa (ages 18+).
- Offers family-friendly experiences at Evans Plunge, one of the oldest attractions in the hills.
- Hosts Pioneer museum and an 18-hole golf course.
- Engages in water sports at Angastora Rec Area.
- Events include a Memorial Day weekend with wine walk and play, stars stripes and steps on Friday.
- Celebrates the Mammoth Site's 50th anniversary.
- Organizes arts and craft festival during the second weekend in June.
- Coordinates the Hot Springs Chamber Fall River Hot Air Balloon festival.

#### 11. Keystone Chamber

- Events and contests: May 11-12 pie contest, Whiskey Day Tours, Trains and Helicopters event on Memorial Day weekend, May 26 lunch at community center.
- Motorcycle groups visiting in July, with End of July motorcycle group focusing on Rally Rush.
- Bigfoot walk and run scheduled for September.

#### 12. Lead Chamber

- Black Hills Renaissance Festival on June 15-16 at Rec Springs Resort, with an anticipated 4,000 attendees.
- Old Camp Jubilee Days scheduled for July 3-4.
- Neutrino Day for Science on July 13 at Sanford Lab.

#### 13. Visit Spearfish

- New additions and community growth: Sawyer Brewing Company with a new coffee lab, Berlin spearfish (German/European inspired restaurant), Jitter Joint Play Café, Vietnamese restaurant offering pho, boba tea, and Vietnamese coffee.
- Skyridge Sport complex newly opened.
- Upcoming events: Black Hills Youth Triathlon on May 25th, Fish Hatchery opening on May 11, Downtown Friday Nights, Festival in the Park, Corvette rally starting in June.
- Visitor center summer hours beginning after Memorial Day weekend.

#### 14. Badlands National Park

- Updated daily operational hours to 8-5.
- White River visitor center open from May 19 (9-4 daily).
- Ranger-led programs, geology and fossil walks beginning May 18.
- Dark Sky program commencement from May 24.
- Astronomy Festival scheduled for July 5-7.
- Seasonal programs featured on park's website and Facebook page.

#### 15. Black Hills National Forest

- Ongoing construction affecting areas beyond 385, including Sheridan Lake day-use area.
- Plans to update beach, picnic locations, and accessibility by Memorial Day weekend, weather permitting.
- Amphitheater at Sheridan Lake undergoing refurbishments for Junior Ranger programs.
- Pactola Visitor Center opening scheduled for May 24.
- National Trails Day set for June 1st.
- Celebrating Smokey Bear's 80th birthday on August 9 with available merchandise.

#### 16. Custer State Park

- Kicks off strong spring season with six campgrounds.
- Open house with events planned from May 17-19.
- Memorial Day weekend to start seasonal events (check Facebook and website for details).
- Sylvan Lake undergoing projects according to master plan, including AVA compliance and ecological enhancements.
- Reel in Memories initiative to encourage fishing with QR code participation.

#### 17. Mickelson Trail/Black Hills Trails Office

- Concluded snowmobile trail system after the season.
- Updates at Bear Butte including new platform atop, trail work, and campsite resurfacing.
- Spearfish Canyon Nature area operational.
- Open House Weekend announced for May 17-19.
- Stockade Spur construction anticipated from May 6 to mid-July to adjust bike trail slopes.

#### 18. Jewel Cave

- Opens daily from May 8 onward into the fall season.
- Tour schedules range from 3-9 daily, expanding to 16-26 on Memorial Day weekend.
- Booking available via Recreation.gov.
- Virtual reality exhibit related to park themes coming mid-June.
- July 27 marked for Junior Caver Day.

#### 19. Minute Man Missile

- Regular operational hours Tuesday to Saturday from 8-4.
- Multiple tours scheduled for May 21 at 9 AM, 10 AM, and 2 PM.
- Host an open house on May 15 celebrating 20 years of public tours; retired missileers present.

## 20. Mt Rushmore National Memorial

- Initiates summer season with expanded hours from May 24.
- Details on programs and visitor enhancements available via NPS mobile app, social media, and website.
- Enhanced focus on cultural and indigenous programming.
- Introduction of a designated pet area for visitors.

## 21. National Grasslands Visitor Center

- Closed due to flooding; lobby and theater now open.
- Renovation ongoing with funding for exterior renovations including a fossil walkway, fossil exhibit wall, and animal track walkway.
- Three permanent positions filled at the visitor center; aims to open year-round.
- Planning to operate 7 days a week.
- Discussing survival techniques at the Pinnacle camping area.
- Hosting special junior ranger days on the 80th birthday of Smokey Bear.

## 22. Wind Cave

- Closed for summer until fall for elevator replacement.
- Virtual tours available.
- Programs offered on the surface; no cave access.
- New exhibits being installed in early June, including interactive displays and strong Native American themes.
- Nice campground available for booking via recreation.gov.
- Focusing mainly on surface activities due to elevator replacement.

## 23. 1880 Train

- Opening weekend in 3 days, starting at 11:30 AM on Saturday.
- Mother's Day promotion: First 50 moms receive flowers and are entered into a giveaway.
- Operating at full strength by Memorial Day.
- Sun night old west shootouts scheduled every night up until the rally starting June 9th.
- Hosting adult events in the fall including wine events.
- Encouraging layovers for locals.
- All cars are enclosed for the first month; half of the seats are open roof starting in June.

## 24. Big Thunder Gold Mine

- Celebrating 66 years in business and 142 years since the mine was discovered.
- Offers tours, on-site panning, and dig sites for durations of 2-4-8 hours, including lessons on equipment use.
- Hosting a new zombie parade as part of the haunting in Keystone event.
- Big Thunder Bar and Grill features local vendors, offering wild game and vegetarian options, open daily from 7 AM to 3 PM.

## 25. Museum of Geology

- Celebrated its 100th anniversary of being open to the public.
- Recently updated several exhibits, including a new rock cycle exhibit, an age of dinosaurs exhibit, and fluorescent minerals exhibit.
- Ongoing campus construction, including a new minerals industry exhibit.
- Transitioning to summer hours starting Memorial Day.
- Free admission for all visitors.

#### 26. National Presidential Wax Museum/Holy Terror Mini Golf/Grapes and Grinds

- The Wax Museum is open from March through the end of October.
- Focused on repaving the entire parking lot.
- Conducting bathroom remodels at the museum.
- Grapes and Grinds offers free wine tasting, new AC installation, outdoor yard games, live music, and a wide selection of local beer.

#### 27. Outlaw Square

- The ice rink is out of season.
- Free concerts scheduled for May 24-25.
- Programming begins on May 27th, including movie nights, Deadwood Alive gunfights.
- Hosts the Glen Millar orchestra on June 12.
- Features Sunrise Yoga sessions and a vendor market on June 7-8.
- Hosting Black Hills Redemption, a western themed Comic-Con, from June 21-23.
- July 4th parade followed by movies.
- Hosting a Freedom Celebration weekend with free concerts on July 5 and July 6.
- Rally week and Christian concerts scheduled, along with Cool Deadwood Nights.
- Free concert featuring Smash Mouth on August 30th; Deadwood Jam on September 13-14.
- For more details, visitors can check [Outlawsquare.com](http://Outlawsquare.com).

#### 28. Reptile Gardens

- Had a strong start in March.
- All mothers get in for free on Mother's Day Weekend and receive a season pass with donation of 3 cans of food.
- Bird and snake shows continue through May 23.
- Alligator show starts on May 24 alongside the snake show.
- No summer bird shows planned.
- Opening Avian Ave. for the summer.
- The Gardening Department is preparing to plant 50,000 flowers.
- Entering the virtual reality (VR) world with moving chairs, offering 5 different experiences such as gorilla track, sharks, humpback whales, dinosaurs, and the great migration, priced at ten dollars or sixteen for two people.

#### 29. RTA (Rushmore Tramway Adventures?)

- Everything open from May 17th weekend.
- Alpine slide and chair lift will open.
- Free aerial park access for 5th grade students.

- Introducing a new membership program, details to be announced.
- Tram Member benefits to be detailed.

### 30. Sturgis Car Museum

- Features 2 military jeeps and over 100 cars.
- Focuses not on technical details but on the stories of the cars.
- Houses celebrity cars.
- The gift shop operates from Memorial Day to Labor Day.
- Car Bar sells local wine and beer, including canned top-selling beers such as Saab oil cans, branded as museum-grade beer.

### 31. The Heritage Center at Mahpiya Luta Center (formerly Red Cloud)

- New website launched: [Mahpiyaluta.org](http://Mahpiyaluta.org)
- Offers art gallery/museum/gift shop with tours available.
- Operating hours are Monday to Friday, 8 am – 5 pm, starting after June 1.
- Hosts the annual art show on June 1st, noted as the oldest Native American art show in South Dakota.
- Supports local Native communities with all items made by authentic tribe members.
- Tours can accommodate up to 50 people, including bus tours.
- Pricing for tours is \$14 per person, or \$250 for groups of 13 or more.
- As a nonprofit, all tour fees are reinvested into the Mahpiya Luta Center.

### 32. Petrified Forest

- Open since 1929, available from April to November.
- Features an informative movie and a museum showcasing dinosaur bones, agates, rocks, and colorful petrified wood.
- Visitors can explore with a treasure map on the trail.
- On-site rock shop where visitors can watch stones being polished.
- Offers services for tours and hosts wedding events.

### 33. Black Hills Helicopters (Keystone)

- Recognized as the only FAA-approved heliport in the Black Hills.
- Operates as a locally owned business.
- Continues to follow its Air Tour Management Plan without changes.

### 34. Black Hills Adventure Tours

- Celebrating 19 years of tourism in the Black Hills and Badlands.
- Provides customized tours in the Black Hills region.
- Offers both full-day and half-day tours.
- Recently added abbreviated tours to Mount Rushmore.

### 35. Fort Hayes Chuckwagon and Mt Rushmore Tours

- Celebrates 50 years of operation, having started with a van and a dream.
- Currently operates 11 Greyhound buses.

- Purchased the movie set from "Dances with Wolves."
- Features an electronic Buffalo hunt; on Mother's Day, moms receive a free breakfast and buffalo hunt.
- Collaborates with the 1880 Train to offer the "Wild West package."