

# GRAND GATEWAY HOTEL

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Connie Cont... 2

Department of  
the Month 2

Feature  
Attraction 3

BSC of Month  
Winner 3

Word Search 4

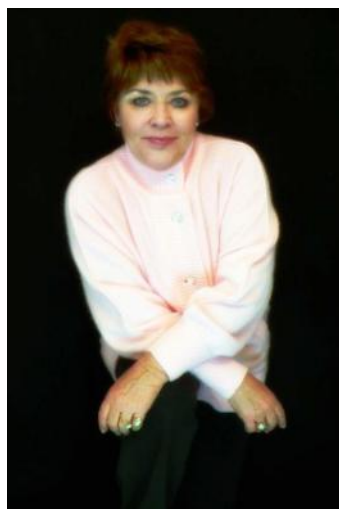
Contact  
Information 4



## About Our Owner

While the face of the Grand Gateway is the staff, the heart of the hotel is its owner Connie Lester-Uhre.

Connie's interest in the hotel business comes from spending her childhood years working at her father's hotel. Connie did not just work in one area in the hotel; she actively participated in each department in the hotel. Thus enabling her to have a firm understanding of how each department works.



Connie Lester-Uhre, owner

Connie can remember working back in 1968 when the room rates were a whopping \$12.50 per

night. They were often thrilled to get \$18 a night. Rates may have changed since then, but Connie's interest in every aspect of her hotel has not.

At the age of 16, Connie married. By the age of 18, she had two children while she continued working. Connie even attended beauty school. In 2001, Connie bought the hotel from her father and became the proud owner of the Ramada Inn. Connie brought in 4 of her 6 children to help manage different areas of the hotel. *(Connie cont on Pg 2)*

## Event Calendar

### June 3

Crazy Horse's 62nd  
Birthday

### June 5

-Crazy Horse  
Volksmarch  
-Belmont Stakes Horse  
Race

### June 10-13

Black Hills Overdrive

### June 11-13

Black Hills Quilt Show

### June 20

Father's Day

### June 23-27

Arabian Horse Assoc  
Championships

### June 25-27

-Fast Pitch Softball  
Tournament  
-Rushmore Soccer  
Tournament

### June 26

Crazy Horse Blast:  
Ruth's 84th Birthday

### June 26-27

Western Dakota Gem  
and Mineral Show

## CHEERS

### June 6: 9 PM

Jensen Jordan & Young  
perform live

### June 26: 9 PM

Orion and Company  
perform live

### Wednesdays: 9 PM

Orion Potter sings  
Cowboy Songs

## Connie Continued

Then in 2007, Connie made the move to go from owning a franchised hotel to an independently owned hotel. To go along with the change, a new name was decided upon: the Grand Gateway Hotel. The name was thought of by Connie's son Nick as a way to express the hotel's central location in the Black Hills. Its central location makes it a gateway to everything the Black Hills has to offer.

Although she puts plenty of work into her hotel, Connie loves adventure, golfing, and spending time with her close friends. When asked what her favorite memory from all her years of working in the hotel business was, Connie said it was building the new Ramada building because her entire family was involved with the huge project. She also was excited that it was full service, having a bar and restaurant.

Connie does not currently live in

Rapid City, where the hotel is located, but she is searching for a home in the area. She hopes to find a home where she can entertain her entire family as well as have a barbeque area for the grandchildren to enjoy.

Although she does want to keep improving and expanding her hotel business, Connie says her biggest goal in life is to take care of her children and grandchildren.

**Cowboy Songs**  
**with Orion Potter**  
**Every Wednesday night**  
**9-10:30 PM**  
**In Cheers Lounge**

## Director of Housekeeping



Maria Salas has been working at Grand Gateway for nine years this June. Maria has a lot to do while she is working. She has a lot of paper work to do as well as double checking the rooms after they are cleaned. She must make sure that the rooms are clean, dusted, disinfected, and organized in preparation for that night's guest.

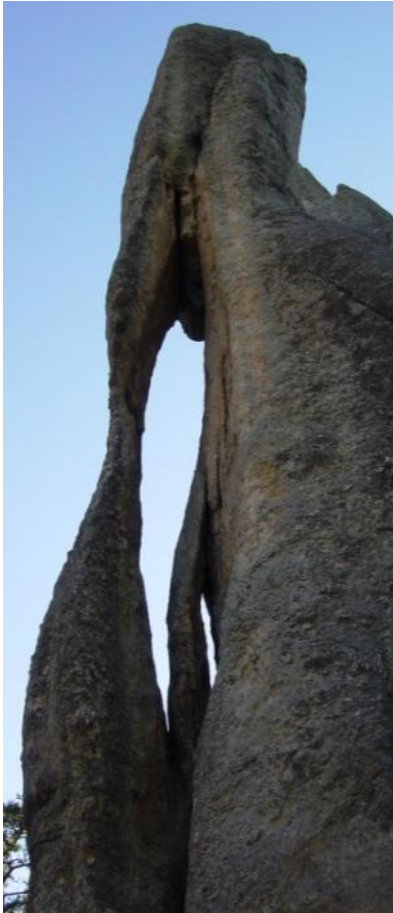
Before coming to work at the Grand Gateway, Maria had never had a job. She took her responsibility of raising her five daughters seriously. Because she had never had a job, Maria was not able to start at the top as Director of Housekeeping. Instead,

she worked her way from the bottom all the way to the top with hard work and determination.

It was this same determination that enabled Maria to move to the United States from Puerto Rico while in her thirties. Before moving to the states, Maria had never learned English. One of Maria's best memories is teaching herself English by carrying around a dictionary wherever she went.

Maria moved to Rapid City fifteen years ago because she wanted a change and a good place to raise her daughters. Maria enjoys living in Rapid City but says it took her awhile to adjust to the cool temperatures after living in a tropical climate for most of her life.

# The Needles Highway



By Jeremy Donlon

Built back in 1919 and labeled as the impossible road to construct, the Needles Highway (SD HWY 89) is one of the most scenic highways in America. The Needles portion of the highway stretches fourteen miles long and provides many breathtaking views, beautiful relaxing lakes, and an abundant wildlife. With trails to hike and places to stop, traveling this exciting and beautiful road is a pleasant way to spend a few hours.

Our staff recommends heading North to South on this scenic route. Spend your late morning and afternoon driving slowly, taking in the sites as you drive along the narrow twisting road. Make

sure to honk before the single car tunnels! Stop by Sylvan Lake to enjoy a relaxing afternoon. Picnic lunch at this gorgeous lake as seen in National Treasure 2: Book of Secrets!

As you head further south you will come across the Needles Eye! Park here and take plenty of pictures of the 3-4 foot wide gap in the rock that expands vertically 30-40 feet. You might even get to see rock climbers attempting to scale the Eye. Once your scenic photos are taken, pass through a carved single car tunnel and proceed further towards Custer State Park. Don't forget to stop and take awe inspiring nature photos at the Cathedral Spires!

Continue on driving further south and begin a journey around Custer State Park! You'll have the chance to see a multitude of wild life from mountain goats to bison.

This whole amazing journey begins with a trip down Needles Highway!

## Navy Cruisers

During May, we had the opportunity to host a group of our military veterans also known as Navy Cruisers. These veterans served our country during many different conflicts through the years.

It was great to hear their comments about our area being beautiful as well as patriotic.

The veterans were surprised several times with standing ovations, children shaking their hands and singing to them, and with many people thanking them for their service.

Our hats off to them for keeping our sights on freedom.

## Kim Potter from the Potter Fur Company

in Bridgewater, SD dropped his business card in our drawing bowl and is now the lucky winner of a **FREE one night stay** in our hotel!



