**A Masterpiece of Art & Engineering**

*I would rather be remembered as an artist than as a United States Senator.*

- Peter Norbeck

**THE NEEDLES HIGHWAY**

Norbeck was guided by a persistent desire to preserve natural beauty while making special areas accessible to as many people as possible. To that end, Norbeck assembled teams of engineers who would become leaders in a new form of road building—where the road itself was a work of art.

Norbeck searched through the Harney Range for routes that would provide the grandest views—routes that would bring the visitor in intimate contact with the forests, the rocks, and the streams. His road would engage the senses, in a masterpiece of engineering.

**THE IRON MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY**

The Needles Highway was good training ground for Norbeck’s next venture—the Iron Mountain Road. Norbeck mapped out a route that required three tunnels to be blasted through the mountains. In addition, the tunnels were to frame the four faces emerging from Mt. Rushmore. More than twice as long as the easy part.

Norbeck asked the Superintendent of Lamoille Canyon, C.C. Gidson, to design the road that would connect the tunnels. Gidson designed a remarkable across-the-sky road connecting the tunnels to lift the traveler from one level to another without adding miles of road. Gidson (who was school at age 14) referred to them as ‘spiral jumps’—Norbeck called them ‘whiffly jigs.’ Today they are known as the Pigtails Bridges.
Welcome to the Peter Norbeck Scenic Byway

The Peter Norbeck Scenic Byway is a 66-mile double loop that honors a South Dakota conservationist, Governor, and U.S. Senator, "An Ordinary Man with an Extraordinary Vision," Peter Norbeck. It is replete with conservation accomplishments. To the people of South Dakota and the nation, he bequeathed an enduring legacy through the Peter Norbeck Scenic Byway.

Near the geographic center of the continent, the Black Hills rise 4,000 feet above the high northern plainlands, like an "island in the plains." At 7,242 feet, Harney Peak is the highest point east of the Rocky Mountains and west of the Spanish Pyrenees.

Nearly percent of the area is blanketed in ponderosa pines, decorated with ribbons of aspen, birch, buckwheat, spires, and willow. The older and larger pines are called "yellowbark," because of the film they take on in maturity.

The Lakota Sioux people called the Black Hills "Pah Utha" meaning "hills of black," which is how they appear from the plains.

As you drive toward the center of the hills, the rocks get older (more than 2 billion years). In fact, they are some of the oldest in North America. Age after age, these outcroppings have been sculpted by wind, water, and ice to create the monoliths and spires that you see along the byway today.

An Extraordinary Man's Masterpiece of Art & Engineering

SCENIC WANDERS

Washington Profile

Iron Mountain Road

Needles Highway

Golden Valley

Iron Mountain Road

Norbeck Wilderness

Wildlife Loop Road

The Badger Hole

Peter Norbeck Visitor Center

Mt. Rushmore National Memorial

Custer State Park

The Great Spirit gives movement to the Native Nation People.

Mt. Rushmore National Memorial, "The Spirit of Democracy," became a reality when Gutzon Borglum sculpted his vision, evoking the birth of a great nation, and the heritage of the United States.

Established in 1999, Custer State Park preserves the beauty of its landscapes while providing recreation. Whether you are seeking vehicle or on-foot adventures, this 71,000-acre park is the place to go.

For More Information

Black Hills National Forest
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Custer, SD 57730
(605) 673-9200
www.fs.fed.us/r2/blackhills

Mt. Rushmore National Memorial
13000 Hwy 244
Building 31, Suite 1
Keystone, SD 57752
(605) 574-2523
www.nps.gov/moru

Custer State Park
383, Box 70
Custer, SD 57730
(605) 225-4915
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