

BID will be on ballot, but votes disallowed

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A measure to repeal a Rapid City downtown Business Improvement District (BID) will be listed on next week's special election ballot, despite a judge's ruling Tuesday which canceled the BID vote.

Ballots for the July 24 special election were printed two weeks ago. They list both the BID measure and a measure which would limit the size of garbage cans to not more than 30 gallons.

Even if voters mark the BID side of the ballot, their votes will not be counted, said Connie Elwood of the city finance office.

The tabulator that counts votes will be programmed with a new circuit board that will ignore all BID votes.

"Also, we'll probably give our election workers instructions, too," Elwood said Wednesday. "We're kind of thinking of putting up signs (at the polls) to let people know the BID is no longer a valid measure."

7th Circuit Judge Merton Tice Jr. on Tuesday ruled invalid 549 signatures on petitions calling for the BID to be put to a citywide vote. That meant anti-BID forces no longer had enough signatures to refer the BID to a vote.

Attorney Walter Bradsky said Wednesday BID opponents would "rest" for a few days before deciding what action to take next. After the judge's ruling Tuesday Bradsky said opponents weren't yet ready to give up their fight.

The BID is a plan to assess downtown business and property owners based on the square footage of their property and use the money to promote and improve the downtown. BID opponents have said the BID was unfair because its \$2,000 assessment cap favored big businesses.