Members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee,

On behalf of Rushmore Little League, I am writing to you to formally request that Rushmore Little League and the Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Rapid City formally name our existing Minors division field “Craig Tieszen Field”. It is the request of our league that this naming take effect on June 13 following a 6 pm ceremony and before a 7 pm baseball game.

As a coach and administrator, the best thing that I can hope for is that more than a few of our athletes grow up to be like Craig Tieszen. While many coaches are focused on the Little League World Series or on developing the next Major League Baseball all-star, I believe that more coaches should focus on developing quality people. I believe that we should seek to instill the values of community, service, compassion and leadership in our athletes and children in general.

As I’m sure you are aware, Craig Tieszen was an incredibly thoughtful and compassionate man with a heart for service. Whether as a member of the Peace Corps as a young man, as a Rapid City Police Officer, volunteer with the Rapid City Club for Boys, a referee, or as a legislator, Craig demonstrated compassion and service in every aspect of his life.

One of the last conversations I had with Craig was regarding Rushmore Little League. His wife, Deb, is the daughter of the founder of Rushmore Little League, Red Pesek. For 60 years, the family of Red Pesek has been tremendously supportive of Rushmore Little League. In the fall of 2016, Rushmore Little League had a number of significant incidences of vandalism that resulted in significant damage to the area around Red Pesek Field. It was Deb and her siblings that rallied to help gather funds to help us fix the damage. Craig told me how excited he was that we rebounded from the vandalism. He was pleased to see that his wife had a renewed excitement for Rushmore Little League baseball and he congratulated us on a successful 2017 season.

On May 4, 2018 the members of the Rushmore Little League Board of Directors unanimously voted in favor of the name change. The RLL Board of Directors feels that naming our Minors Field is a small way to help carry on the legacy of service and compassion set forth by Mr. Tieszen.

Director of Parks and Recreation, Jeff Biegler, provided me a copy of the policy for naming parks within Rapid City. After thorough reading of the document, I believe that naming our existing Minors field “Craig Tieszen Field” satisfies the requirements in a number of ways.

Outstanding Individuals

The criteria reads:
The City has benefited, through its evolution, from the contributions made by many outstanding individuals. This category is designed to acknowledge the sustained contribution that has been made by such individuals to the City and the development and management of the City’s park and recreation system."

This was clearly demonstrated through 32 years of service to the citizens of Rapid City as a police officer and as the police chief, as a legislators, and as a member of various charitable and civic organizations.
General Principals

According to the policy:

In considering proposals for the naming or renaming of a park and/or recreational facility, the following general principles will be taken into account either collectively or individually. When naming a new park and/or recreational facility, the proposed name will:

• Engender a strong positive image—For those who are familiar with Mr. Tieszen, a field bearing his name will most certainly generate a positive image. For those not familiar with Craig Tieszen, a sign will be placed outlining his personal and professional commitment to service that will help the reader clearly develop the aforementioned positive image.

• Give appropriate consideration to the park and/or recreational facility's location and/or history
• Have historical, cultural, or social significance for future generations—As previously stated, it is important to our league to continue to carry on the legacy of community service and selflessness demonstrated by Mr. Tieszen. We feel that, by naming the field after him, we will help continue to carry on his legacy and propagate those values.

• Commemorate places, people, or events that are of continued importance to the city, region, state, and/or nation—See above.

• Have symbolic value that transcends its ordinary meaning or use and enhances the character and identity of the park and/or recreational facility

• Have broad public support—Since announcing our intent to name the field after Mr. Tieszen, Rushmore Little League has been the recipient of positive feedback. Some of that feedback has been shared via our social media platforms. Some of that feedback can be found at https://www.facebook.com/Rushmore-Little-League-301385016638235/

• Shall not result in the undue commercialization of the park and/or recreational facility if it accompanies a corporate gift

Naming/renaming parks and/or recreational facilities for Outstanding Individuals

In the policy, it is stated “Naming or renaming a park or facility for an outstanding individual is encouraged only for those who have been deceased for at least one year and where that person’s significance and good reputation have been accepted in the City’s, State’s and/or Nation’s history.”

While we certainly appreciate and understand the desire to wait for a period of at least one year after the passing of the individual, we respectfully request to re-name the field during this season. This happens to be the 60th anniversary of the founding of Rushmore Little League. We, as a board, desire to make it a meaningful and memorable season. We believe that making this renaming happen this season would do exactly that. Additionally, we believe that the June timeframe lends itself to having a more meaningful dedication ceremony as the facility will be full with families attending games. This is also the time in which the field and facility itself will be at its aesthetic peak.
The policy states; “The naming of a park and/or recreational facility after people who may have lost their lives due to war or a tragic event will be considered only after the shock of such event has lessened within the community.” I spoke with Deb Tieszen personally after the vote and prior to the announcement. Rushmore Little League has the full support of Deb to pursue the naming of the field. We felt this was an important step and are pleased that she is in support of the proposal. It is my belief that an appreciable and sufficient amount of time has passed since the tragedy that additional trauma to the community will not occur.

I would like to thank the committee for their time and consideration. I am available to meet with the committee or provide any additional information, documentation or reasoning behind the request that you may require. Please feel free to contact me via email at jim.bussell@rcgov.org or via phone at 605-863-0606.

Thank you once again for your consideration. I’ll look forward to your decision.

Respectfully,

Jim Bussell  
President- Rushmore Little League