

Parking depends on persistence, luck

Editor's note: Shoppers are the first to admit they're lazy. Many won't walk more than a block or so to reach a downtown store, even though they'll walk farther than that through a parking lot at a mall. For today's story, part of a series on the downtown parking situation, we asked downtown shoppers at about 4:30 p.m. one day if they had trouble parking. Tomorrow, we look at parking through the eyes of downtown employees.

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How's your karma?

You might find a parking place in downtown Rapid City, and it might be close to your destination. It depends on the day, and the hour, and yes, it seems it depends on your karma.

"Somebody just backed out," said Michelle McLain, who lucked into a parking spot right outside the 99 Cent Store on a recent Monday afternoon. The rest of the block was almost completely filled with cars.

Annette Gilby also found a space



with no problem. "Which is a miracle," said Gilby, a regular downtown shopper. "You can never find one."

Wanda Hirschert had to work a little harder. She circled the block several times looking for a spot near Noble's Ceramics. Just when she was about to give up and go grocery shopping instead, she found a space.

Even better, it was less than half a block from her target. "Otherwise, I'd have said forget it," she said cheerfully, admitting that she didn't want to walk farther than a block.

"I feel if I can't get any closer than that I really don't care that much," Hirschert said. "I don't shop downtown very much, because of the parking, I think."

For out-of-town folks, a block or more isn't too far to walk for some unique shopping. Pierre residents Ann Holzhauser and Lola May Moser were willing to walk a ways to get to

See Parking on page A2

Source/S.D. Dept. of Labor

Parking: Karma

Continued from page A1

Prairie Edge, but they considered themselves lucky to find a parking space within one block of the store.

"We didn't have to drive around the block or anything," Holzhauser said.

Lisa Stainbrook had to drive around the block and through the parking lot across the street to get a spot near Bag Ladies, but she did it.

"We don't come downtown very often," her shopping partner said.

"We just never have the chance," Stainbrook explained.

Even people who say they "never, ever can find a parking place," sometimes do.

"Darn," said one woman, admitting she and her companions had had no trouble parking downtown on that particular afternoon. "I'd have liked to complain."