Downtown signs would highlight local history

By Dan Daly
Journal Staff Writer

The Rapid City Historic Preservation Commission hopes to erect signs in downtown Rapid City to give visitors and residents a better perspective of the district’s past.

The signs would include historic photos, architectural drawings, text and portraits of some of the colorful people who have made a mark on downtown Rapid City.

Plans call for at least eight signs, each measuring 2 feet by 3 feet, to be erected in the street corner sidewalk nodes surrounding the Downtown Rapid City Historic District.

The district comprises the block surrounded by Main, St. Joseph, Sixth and Seventh streets, and all the buildings that face that block from across those streets. For example, Prairie Edge, the Elks Building and the Neugebauer’s Jewelry building at the corner of Sixth and Main are all in the district.

Signs will be similar to those erected in downtown Deadwood.

The photos, drawings and text will be baked onto the signs with a porcelain finish, and the surface will be further protected by Plexiglas. The signs are durable, but expensive.

Commission member Jim Quinn said letters had been sent to service clubs and various nonprofit groups, asking them to sponsor signs. Sponsors would be named on each of the signs, giving them public recognition for their contributions to the project. Businesses also will be able to participate.

Tim Powell, a commission member and manager of Red Wing Shoes in downtown Rapid City, said the signs will help businesses better market downtown Rapid City’s history.

“Summer foot traffic is good for business now, and this will help get people to get out of the car and walk around downtown longer,” Powell said.