Statue represents struggle
Artist hopes to ‘evoke different thoughts’

By Terry L. Struse

When Glenna Goodacre created the bronze sculpture of a Native American man standing head down with hands tied behind his back, she wanted it to have a contemplative effect. The Caucasian native of Santa Fe, N.M., said, “You either like it or you don’t. It is important for viewers to form their own opinion. I hope all of my sculptures evoke different thoughts in spectators.” The name of the sculpture, “He is They are,” occurred to her in a dream. A previously-constructed, 30-inch-high copy of the work that she completed in 1977 was named “Banished From His Land.”

When Ray Hillenbrand purchased the piece, he petitioned the Rapid City Common Council for permission to display it on the corner of Sixth and Main streets in front of the Prairie Edge market, which deals heavily in handmade Native American artifacts. The council had no problem approving his request. However, according to at least two members of the council, they did not recall seeing the tied hands in the photos they observed.

The sculpture is accompanied by an engraved plaque, which reads, “The Sioux and the plains Native Americans were moved from their homelands and placed on reservations. Though their ‘hands are tied,’ the dream of their homeland remains.”

In an informal survey of opinions of local citizens conducted by The Reporter, it was apparent that Goodacre was getting the kind of varied response she desired from this area.

One Native American woman remarked, “I think the message is fantastic. I also think it took a lot of guts for Mr. Hillenbrand to display it on Main Street in Rapid City. I love it.”

A Native American girl observed, “The homeland is gone forever, and I don’t think too many Native Americans are dreaming about it.

The statue “Iye Na Oyate Ki,” created by Glenna Goodacre, was placed in front of the new Prairie Edge building recently. A forklift was used to lower the statue into place. It will be a permanent fixture in the downtown landscape.

PHOTO BY TINA BAR DONNER

Reporter - 12/15
Artist has another work in Washington, D.C.

STATUE
Continued from Page 1

anymore. I think the statue represents the struggle between the Native Americans and the white man; an ongoing struggle; a struggle that has been dominated by the white man for a long time. But a struggle that our people will recover from and break any bonds placed on us by the whites, whatever they may be.”

One Native American man reflected, “It’s art—it’s an artist’s opinion. As to how people feel about it ... time will tell.”

A Native American man involved in educating people on the issues of racism reasoned, “I have not actually seen the sculpture yet, so I cannot really form an opinion about it. But there is no doubt that racism is alive and well in this area and that Native Americans are the brunt of much of it. I work toward reconciliation between the Native Americans and Caucasians. Recently, I have begun to feel that very little effort is being expended by either race towards that goal.”

A Sioux man stated, “I guess I can’t really give you an opinion about the idea of Native Americans being tied by whites because I do not subscribe to that concept at all. I believe that we are what we make ourselves. I don’t think it is our place to stand around crying for years. We need to go out and do something about it.”

Among the Caucasian popula-

tion, it seems that more offense was taken to the tied-hands concept. One alderman reported several calls from constituents expressing varying degrees of disapproval for the most part.

One woman reported that she appreciated the beauty of the sculpture very much. But she wished that the artist had not included the political message as a part of it.

A young Caucasian male announced, “I think the message is clear and true. We have exploited the Native Americans in the past and we still are doing it in many ways.”

A young woman noted, “It sure makes you notice that corner. You naturally look over there every time you go by. It’s a good marketing tool.”

One man stated, “I was shocked by the symbolism of the bound hands. We are trying so hard to promote reconciliation between the two races; we have so far to go, I think the bonds could injure race relations. It is such a powerful piece. I think a quiet reflective environ-

ment, like in a park, would be a more suitable place to observe it.”

Mayor McLaughlin said, “I have not really taken the time yet to look at it seriously. I’ve only seen it in passing while walking by. If it provides a marketing tool for Native American arts and crafts, it certainly serves a useful purpose. It would seem to me that it’s appeal, which attracts people to that area and perhaps into the Prairie Edge, would represent the untying of the Native American’s hands. The chance to compete along with other races for profits ... increasing the opportunities to market Native American products.”

Goodacre recently received acclaim for another of her sculptures. Her Viet Nam Women’s Memorial was dedicated on Veteran’s Day this year in Washington, D.C. She is currently working on a piece for a Texas community. It depicts three deceased literary figures from Texas sitting together on a rock. It will be placed on an island in the middle of a lake.