Girls give downtown node TLC

Saturday, 11 members of Job's Daughters Bethel 39 spent the noon hour downtown. Not unusual for teen-age girls, but it wasn't shopping spree bargains they stuffed into bags.

The group is the first to adopt one of the Rapid City business district's 16 nodes, those landscaped intersection islands.

Spokesman Dena Nicolussi said the 18-member group, ages 11 to 20, has cleaned the node three times, usually every other Saturday after meetings.

Adviser Bob Morrow said the group took over the southeast corner of Sixth and St. Joseph streets because pedestrians complained about its looks the most.

The cleaners Saturday swept up or gathered by the handful fallen leaves, paper and other debris, not just from the sidewalk and gutter but also from below heavy metal grates that they tugged out of the way and replaced. Clean leaves became mulch for shrubbery; the rest was sacked and carried away.

That's the example the Rapid City Downtown Beautification Committee hopes other individuals and groups will follow in adopting the other nodes.

People wishing to volunteer may call the Rapid City Area Chamber of Commerce or beautification committee member Gale Holbrook at 341-4902.

With the node tidied up, will the Bethel members attack their household chores with the same vigor?

"No comment," replied one member.

Shea Taylor, left, steadies a sack as Mandy Hannant pitches in debris that members of Job's Daughters Bethel 39 collected at the base of a tree in downtown Rapid City Saturday.