

# Voters turn lights out on BID

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Now that Rapid City's downtown Business Improvement District has been abolished by Rapid City voters, a chief supporter of the BID says it is up to BID opponents to come up with an alternative for the downtown.

"This was the best alternative after three years of consideration and a lot of work by over 200 people that served on the board downtown to bring this proposal forward," said John Brewer. "If this doesn't work I'm still hopeful that those who violently opposed it have a plan. I don't think there is any plan."

A key opponent of the BID agreed that someone would have to lead the way. He said BID opponents had lots of ideas for the downtown but no

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plans for funding them.

"I'm sure that after a short period — I think everybody wants to sit down and rest and recuperate," Jack Brand said. "There's a lot of bad blood and I hope that goes away and maybe we can get together and do

something. Someone will have to pick up the slack."

Rapid City residents on Tuesday voted in favor of two initiated measures that repealed the two city ordinances that had created the BID.

The first measure was to repeal the

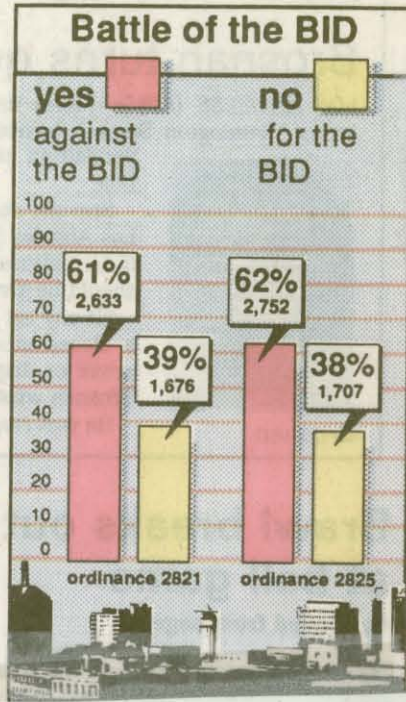
ordinance that created the BID. The vote was 2,633 yes and 1,676 no. The second measure on Tuesday's ballot was to repeal the ordinance that set the BID tax. The vote was 2,752 yes and 1,707 no.

The voter turnout — 14.2 percent —

was about what was expected, said city Finance Officer Richard Wahlstrom. It was the lowest voter turnout in a city election since April 1986.

The BID was voted down by as much as a 3 to 1 margin in some city

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BID defeated

# BID defeated

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precincts. The BID was supported in the West Boulevard area and a precinct in southeast Rapid City. There also was a razor-thin edge of support in one precinct in the northwest part of the city.

After the votes were counted, pro-BID forces gathered at Hotel Alex Johnson were somber. Anti-BID forces were jubilant at their party at the Missing Link.

Brewer, president of the board elected to administer the BID, said the election outcome might have reflected the difficult issues facing downtown.

"I think that to propose a vote on issues as difficult as this and have the issues that are addressed in the Business Improvement District ordinance subjected to the lies and misstatements the opposition put up, that people were somewhat puzzled about how to vote," Brewer said.

He said the "onus" was on BID opponents now to promote and continue the economic revitalization of the downtown.

Brand said he was not surprised by the election outcome because it was the first time there had ever been "an honest open vote" on the BID. Despite the defeat of the BID, he expects the downtown to move forward.

Another leading opponent, Richard Hoff, said he wanted to take a break from the "two-year battle" over the BID that led to Tuesday's election.

"But I believe downtown can pull together, and I think we have the people to pull it together," Hoff said. "It doesn't really have to be the people who are leading the BID thing. I really don't believe they were pulling for downtown. They were setting up a bureaucracy to favor a few."

Hoff said he saw the election as the people of Rapid City coming to the defense of BID opponents, who he said had been shabbily treated by the press.

A BID supporter, James Taylor, said even though the BID had been defeated, downtown promotion would continue.

The BID was a plan to assess downtown property owners, businesses and tenants, and use the money to promote the downtown. It had been mired by controversy ever since it was proposed a year and a half ago.

The BID election marks the defeat of the fourth ballot measure put before Rapid City and Pennington County voters this year.

Rapid City voters in April turned down an ordinance that would have stopped businesses from selling six packs of beer on Sundays. Then a couple of months later, city and county voters through out a county ordinance that would have combined the offices of register of deeds, treasurer and auditor.

In July, city voters rejected an ordinance that would have allowed the study of semiautomated garbage collection.

Here is a precinct-by-precinct unofficial vote tally for Tuesday's BID election.

On the first measure, calling for the repeal of the ordinance creating the BID:

Ward 1: Precinct 1, 117 yes, 57 no; Precinct 2, 148 yes, 68 no; Precinct 3, 202 yes, 86 no.

Ward 2: Precinct 1, 200 yes, 106 no; Precinct 2, 133 yes, 49 no; Precinct 3, 169 yes, 199 no.

Ward 3: Precinct 1, 100 yes, 34 no; Precinct 2, 166 yes, 114 no; Precinct 3, 174 yes, 156 no; Precinct 4, 180 yes, 212 no.

Ward 4: Precinct 1, 158 yes, 53 no; Precinct 2, 201 yes, 70 no; Precinct 3, 125 yes, 41 no; Precinct 4, 36 yes, 21 no.

Ward 5: Precinct 1, 110 yes, 67 no; Precinct 2, 217 yes, 129 no; Precinct 3, 197 yes, 208 no.

On the second measure, calling for the repeal of the ordinance setting the BID tax:

Ward 1: Precinct 1, 121 yes, 64 no; Precinct 2, 153 yes, 69 no; Precinct 3, 210 yes, 86 no.

Ward 2: Precinct 1, 206 yes, 114 no; Precinct 2, 145 yes, 49 no; Precinct 3, 172 yes, 194 no.

Ward 3: Precinct 1, 99 yes, 35 no; Precinct 2, 175 yes, 118 no; Precinct 3, 187 yes, 158 no; Precinct 4, 193 yes, 223 no.

Ward 4: Precinct 1, 168 yes, 54 no; Precinct 2, 205 yes, 74 no; Precinct 3, 132 yes, 42 no; Precinct 4, 39 yes, 17 no.

Ward 5: Precinct 1, 116 yes, 67 no; Precinct 2, 220 yes, 133 no; Precinct 3, 211 yes, 210 no.