DON'T BE FOOLLED BY SCARE TACTICS!

Over the past several days you may have seen an advertisement in this paper "warning" you about our effort to form a business improvement district in downtown Rapid City. Because of some of the content of that ad, we would like to set the record straight:

FACT: The Downtown Development Corporation is the organization coordinating the establishment of the downtown improvement district. This action follows many years of discussion and debate, and includes input from businesses and consumers who have said we need an action oriented program to get downtown improvements started. You may recall, the BID idea was first officially proposed last June.

SCARE TACTIC: If you own or lease property in downtown your improvement district assessment could be as high as $5,000 in additional taxes.

FACT: There are about 9 businesses out of the several hundred in downtown that actually would have an assessment level of $5,000. Eight of those nine have indicated their support for the improvement district program. In reality, the average annual assessment rate for downtown businesses would be about $575, or $1.57 per day. For that, it is proposed that the downtown would have the means to make parking improvements, make capital improvements such as public restrooms, increase downtown maintenance, and increase efforts at recruiting new businesses downtown.

SCARE TACTIC: The ad implies that downtown businesses will not be heard or listened to regarding the BID.

FACT: When this plan was introduced last June, it was substantially different. After 5 public meetings (two where the author of the "warning" ad and other opponents were specifically heard), EIGHT MAJOR COMPROMISES OR CHANGES were made to the plan. These changes include the election of the improvement district’s board of directors by downtown business operators, an automatic "sunset" or expiration of the BID, elimination of a minimum assessment levels and other compromises.

FACT: The Downtown Development Corporation does not contend to have cornered the market on what is needed to improve our downtown. We have offered a proposal. WE HEARD CONCERNS. WE LISTENED. WE ACTED. We revised the proposal. Unfortunately, there will never be a program that satisfies everyone. But, by listening to each other and working together, we can improve our community.

This is a "pull yourselves up by your own bootstraps" type of proposal. The long and short of it is: We have pursued this type of improvement plan rather than asking for the direct assistance of the Rapid City taxpayers at large. If someone has a better plan — if someone has any plan, bring it forth. Otherwise, this is what is on the table. THE FUTURE OF A STRONG AND VIABLE DOWNTOWN IS AT STAKE — NOTHING LESS!

Paid advertisement by supporters of the Downtown Development Corporation
Cris Palmer, Chairman; John Brewer, Vice Chairman; Tom Didier, Treasurer.