

# Parking violators owe city up to \$30,000 in unpaid fines

Bill Harlan  
Staff Writer

May 26, 1985

Deputy City Attorney Mitch Johnson says the city computer has surprised him.

Later this summer, 160 Rapid City motorists could be even more surprised.

The computer told Johnson Thursday that 160 car owners here have 10 or more unpaid parking tickets. All together that's more than 3,000 tickets worth a total of \$25,000 to \$30,000.

"I couldn't believe it," Johnson said. He thought 30 to 40 people had that many tickets.

Under a proposed city ordinance, if police spot cars with 10 or more unpaid tickets they could immobilize them with a mechanical boot.

The ordinance was approved at its first reading Monday. Final approval is expected June 3, and it will probably take effect about July 1.

If police immobilize a car, the boot

wouldn't come off until the tickets were paid, and for some car owners that means hundreds — or even thousands — of dollars.

In fact, one violator has chalked up 253 unpaid tickets, to the tune of about \$2,000.

Johnson said that before the ordinance goes into effect he'll send letters to all 160 violators advising them to pay up.

If a car is booted, the owner must pay a \$35 fee in addition to any parking violations. If the car remains booted for 48 hours, the city will tow it.

One purpose of the ordinance is to catch out-of-town car owners who frequently get tickets in Rapid City. By state law, the city cannot enforce warrants for parking violations outside city limits, Johnson said.

He also said that many of the offending autos are registered to companies, making prosecution more difficult.

The boot, he hopes, will end that.