

# Downtown parking

**Question:** Where will the Michigan National Corp. employees park? We heard they work from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m., and if they take the parking places at the Fifth and St. Joe city parking lot, where will those who presently park there go? K.N.

## Action Line answer

Darrell Rickman, president of Michigan National, said his company is trying to provide private parking for its employees. "We realize the impact it would have (if our employees parked on city lots), and have a number of alternatives we're working on."

Michigan National is looking at a two-year lease with the option to buy a vacant lot north of Baer's Furniture. A city ordinance requires that parking lots be kept free of dust, and Michigan National is reluctant to hard-surface a lot it may not buy. "We're wondering if we could dust-cover it first, then if we decide to buy, hard-surface it," said Rickman.

The Rapid City Area Chamber of Commerce recently offered downtown businesses the opportunity to provide parking for their employees at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center east parking lot for a daily fee of 25 cents a car, but downtown merchants didn't respond, said Wes Shelton, the chamber's vice president of economic development. A shuttle bus was to pick up employees in the morning and to take them back to the parking lot after work.

"I guess they couldn't get their employees to agree to it," said Shelton. "We would have had a drawing and prize once a month as an incentive to park here. They would have had to check in and out every day. That plan would've paid for the shuttle bus. Michigan National can't afford a shuttle for just its own employees, but if all (downtown) employers had agreed, it would've been enough. And that's unbelievably cheap parking."