

An Open Letter To:

May 27

Mayor Art LaCroix

Rapid City Engineering, Public Works, and Planning Staffs

Brablec Construction

TSP West, Architects

Recently all of you have received a good deal of criticism about the downtown beautification project including the pedestrian nodes and the landscaped parking areas.

It seems to me that there are several things that haven't been mentioned but should be.

- 1 - The activity taking place is the result of several years of planning by both the Downtown Association and the Downtown Beautification Task Force. Dozens of meetings were held by each of these groups to get citizen input into these projects. FOR THE MOST PART THOSE WHO ARE COMPLAINING THE LOUDEST NEVER ATTENDED A SINGLE MEETING.
- 2 - I own the Buell Building on the corner of 7th and St. Joe. Throughout this entire project I have received nothing but excellent cooperation from City Officials, the general contractor and the architects. There was never a time when any request, suggestion or complaint wasn't handled quickly, ably, and in the spirit of compromise and cooperation.
- 3 - The work on the Buell Building Corner is somewhat more extensive than on the other corners. This is because of the City's and TSP's cooperation with my architect, SYNAGO, Inc. It was felt that certain changes could be made to set off architecturally this significant Rapid City Landmark. For that cooperation I am most sincerely appreciative.
- 4 - I am paying, **not the taxpayers**, for over \$40,000 of the sidewalk area improvements. It is almost a perfect example of how local government and the private sector can work together for their mutual interests.
- 5 - Those who are now complaining about losing three or four parking places per block are the SAME PEOPLE who two years ago said we didn't need a downtown parking district since when Penney's and Sears were gone there would be more than enough parking places.
- 6 - Mayor LaCroix, I know that you have worked diligently for the last five years to see that City Hall got rid of its anti-business attitude. I certainly hope that the notable success you have had is not reversed because of the actions of a few DOWNTOWN WHINERS.
- 7 - Someone said their business is down 20%? Too bad. Mine is down about 40% from last year. We happen to be in a recession. Downtown corners have nothing to do with it.
- 8 - Look at the people who are **doing something** downtown — the owners of Alex Johnson, The National Bank of South Dakota, American State Bank, the Costello Porter Law firm, Prairie States Life Insurance, KOTA, the Knecht Brothers, the Hilton development group — they are not the ones spending their time complaining. They have the vision to see what downtown Rapid City can become and they are willing to spend their own dollars to create that vision.

None of us likes inconvenience. But change doesn't take place without some. Brablec Construction personnel have gone out of their way to minimize it.

I hope that you who have been the subject of much of the criticism will listen to those who are looking forward instead of just the complainers who are looking only backward.

A downtown isn't a place just for cars and concrete. Downtown is a place for people. What you are doing is making it a better place for people to be. I for one sincerely thank you.

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