A redesigned master plan of the Pennington County fairgrounds, including a civic center with a seating capacity of 8,500 people, was viewed for the first time Friday morning by representatives of the county, city, Central States Fair, and a special civic center committee.

The new master plan was received from Gaylord R. Lewis of Findlay, Ohio, planning consultant and authority on fair and exposition improvements.

It was the consensus of those at the meeting that the best location for a new civic center for the Rapid City area would be at the fairgrounds where it could be used for many county-wide events, including the Range Days Rodeo, horse shows, sporting events and possibly year-around ice skating.

Lewis suggested in a letter to Harry C. Knight, manager of the Central States Fair, that a civic center should be 200 by 300 feet in size with space for a rodeo arena 110 by 250 feet.

A structure of this size would allow for 8,000 permanent seats and 2,500 portable seats on the arena floor for certain type events, making a total of 8,500 seats.

It is estimated that a structure such as the planning consultant envisions would cost between $2.5 million and $3 million. Present parking at the fairgrounds accommodates 3,400 cars and land adjacent to the fairgrounds would possibly be available if more parking space is needed in the future.

Preliminary discussion indicated that a county-wide bond issue would be necessary, but that general obligation bonds would be paid off by the imposition of a “room tax” on motels, hotels, and campgrounds.

It was estimated that the annual income from these businesses amounts to more than $6 million in Rapid City.

While no definite agreement was reached on additional steps that should be taken toward construction of a civic center, the feeling was that the fairgrounds would be the best location if one is built.