Growth must follow a sensible path

Commentary by Buzz Knapp, President of the Rapid City Common Council

It is my goal to see Rapid City grow and progress through a sensible process. It is essential that we continue to annex properties into the city when the situation properly presents itself. Most importantly, though, we must do that in a contiguous manner and stop costly annexations through a bridging, angular process. Keeping the city boundaries square up has a major impact on cost reductions of such things as streets and utilities and eases the flow for planning in the future.

If we expect Rapid City to continue to grow, it is essential that we develop new jobs and that can only be done through continued economic development. New businesses will be attracted to Rapid City through signs of a progressive city. Parks and recreation play a role as well as other family-oriented facilities. Development of fine arts is also a key to attracting new business to Rapid City. As the city grows, other things must develop along with that growth, such as water availability to include water quality.

The city's Vision 2012 program is on track to ensure that Rapid City progresses into the 21st century. None of this can occur without cost. It is as essential that the 1/2 cent sales tax, which is currently being used to pay for the Civic Center, be continued. The Civic Center debt will be repaid in 1995. Continuation of the 1/2 cent sales tax will initially allow the city to continue action on recycling, new job creation, restoration of Custer Lake to ensure water quality, partially fund a world-class museum, advance family recreation facilities, establish a first-class visitor center and continue development of fine arts facilities. Can this happen without the 1/2 cent sales tax continuation? Perhaps, but at a much slower rate, and it will come from the property tax dollar. Sales tax in the Rapid City area is commonly paid 50 percent by city residents and 50 percent by those who live outside the city, plus the visiting tourists. Those who live outside our city place a heavy burden on the city's facilities and should share in the cost. It is imperative that people who want to see Rapid City progress over the next 20 years, vote YES for the sales tax continuation.

Buzz Knapp

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