

Half-cent sales tax issue in council race

By Hugh O'Gara
Journal Staff Writer

It won't end for more than 18 months, but the city's half-cent sales tax has become an issue in this year's Rapid City Common Council race.

Ward 2 Alderman Delores Coffing says campaign literature by her opponent, R. Lee Kellar, misrepresents her position on the tax. Kellar says Coffing had her chance to speak up and didn't.

The sales tax is used to pay off the bonds for construction of Rushmore Plaza Civic Center. The bonds will be paid off next year and the tax is scheduled to end Dec. 31, 1994.

However, the tax already is being eyed as a possible source of funds for future major projects in the city.

One of the focal points of Kellar's campaign has been allowing the half-cent sales tax to lapse.

City officials had promised it would be used only until the civic center was paid for and, as a matter of principle, it should not be extended to



Kellar



Coffing

other projects without a vote by city residents, Kellar said.

In recent campaign literature, Kellar said Coffing would like the tax extended "to pay for her various pet projects."

"I have never said that," Coffing said.

The tax should end on schedule unless voters approve of extending it, Coffing said.

"I've said that so many times, I wonder where he has been," she said.

But at a recent dinner meeting, Kellar said he was the only candidate

Correction

Half-cent sales tax

Information on the Ward 2 Rapid City Common Council race, appearing in Saturday's Rapid City Journal, incorrectly stated candidate R. Lee Kellar's stand on the half-cent sales tax.

Kellar strongly opposed extending the half-cent sales tax on meals and entertainment, and he actively fought the proposal last year when it was discussed and subsequently passed by the Rapid City Common Council.

who voiced his opposition to using the tax to pay for any of the projects in the city's Vision 2012 plan.

"Delores did not stand up," he said.

Like Coffing, Kellar believes the half-cent sales tax should be extended past 1994 only if the voters first approve.