Half-cent sales tax should have long-term benefits for entire community

Commentary
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The voters of Rapid City should know exactly how one member of the city council feels about the proper use of the 1/2-cent sales tax during the next few years. First and foremost, I believe that this extra revenue should be used to benefit the community as a whole rather than for a limited number of special interests. Second, I do not believe the money should be spent on projects which will compete with existing private enterprise. And finally, I do not believe that the city should use this money as collateral for borrowing far into the future.

For at least 20 years committees and planners have been aware of the importance of a connecting street between southwest and southeast Rapid City. The only present routes connecting these two areas are West Main Street and Omaha in the gap. Because of the growth in these areas it is a matter of public safety to have a route for police, fire and emergency medical trips to the hospital. This would benefit all of the people of Rapid City.

I also believe that our neighborhood streets have been neglected for too long. We have a long list of streets in all areas of the city which have been overdue in receiving repairs and rebuilding. I think that the sales tax would be a dependable source of revenue for this purpose. We also have a continual problem with maintenance of alleys in the city. It would save the city a lot of money in the future if these alleys could be surfaced with the cooperation of property owners.

These are the type of projects which will benefit the community as a whole. I would not like to see the city build a water park costing millions of dollars to be used 80 days of the year when we already have a private business in providing this recreation in the community where we have so many other urgent needs.

I also believe that since the city has already spent more than $100,000 in front-end expenditures on a new museum that we should not further obligate the city for its construction. I do not know of any museums of the scope that is envisioned for Rapid City that doesn't depend on yearly subsidies for its operations.

My main goal for the use of the 1/2-cent sales tax money in the future is to fund projects with long-term benefits to the general public.