Sales tax:
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...would require circulating petitions. McLaughlin said extending the sales tax could help fund some or all of these projects: recycling, a visitor information center, an economic development fund, a museum, water park, expansion of the Dahl Fine Arts Center, a southwest alternate route from U.S. Highway 16 to Sheridan Lake Road, restoration of Canyon Lake, civic center or downtown parking, or an indoor recreation center.

The current sales tax is supposed to end in 1995.

Other speech highlights:

- Airport traffic at Rapid City Regional Airport was up 11.1 percent in 1992 compared with the previous year. There were more than 200,000 boardings, more than ever before.
- Rushmore Plaza Civic Center had a total attendance of more than 1 million people and 977 event days in 1992, also record highs.
- A refinancing of $14 million of borrowed money will save the city between $4 million and $6 million over the next 20 years.
- The city will kick off on June 1 a voluntary program for picking up yard wastes at curbsides or at three designated sites.

Mayor asks help to keep sales tax

By Paulette Tobin
Journal Staff Writer

Mayor Ed McLaughlin asked for help Wednesday in bringing to a fall vote a plan to extend the city’s half-cent sales tax, which has generated $51 million in the last 20 years.

"We need volunteers to speak, circulate petitions and help promote Vision 2012," McLaughlin said in his “State of the City” address, delivered during a luncheon at Hotel Alex Johnson.

Vision 2012 has been a two-year series of meetings and discussions involving city leaders and citizens about what Rapid City should become in the next 20 years.

To build the projects being discussed, the city would need to extend the sales tax. The city in the past has used that money to pay for Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, the City/School Administration Center, the new terminal at Rapid City Regional Airport, as well as streets, parks and drainage improvements and other projects.

The Rapid City Common Council could vote to extend the sales tax but has not been willing to do so. Some aldermen have said such a big decision should be made by voters.

Even if aldermen did approve the extension, it could be referred to voters. The mayor and aldermen have said they want the issue to come to voters as an initiated measure, which...