Nov. 9 vote likely on sales tax extension

By Bill Harlan
Journal Staff Writer

Rapid City likely will vote Nov. 9 on whether to extend a half-cent sales tax.
The city would use $20 million collected over five years to pay for five big projects.
Mayor Ed McLaughlin said Tuesday that volunteers had collected more than 2,500 signatures on petitions calling for the election. The petitioners needed to collect 1,867 signatures.

McLaughlin asked for support for the election earlier this month.
The volunteers will file the signatures today during a special city council meeting at 1:15 p.m. at the City/School Administration Center.

McLaughlin said he expected the council to set Nov. 9 for the election.
The mayor and other city officials favor extending the sales tax but said city voters should decide the issue.
The half-cent tax, which will expire in 1995, was first enacted to help pay for Rushmore Plaza Civic Center.

McLaughlin and the city council will ask voters to extend the tax to pay for five major projects over the next five to seven years.

Those projects are:
- An economic development fund that offers low-interest loans to new and expanding businesses.
- A visitor information center near Interstate 90.
- A museum and various recreational facilities.
- Canyon Lake Park restoration.
- A recycling plant.