

Historic Preservation Commission of Rapid City

300 sixth st. rapid city, s.d. 57701

The Rapid City Historic Preservation Commission is endeavoring to restore a window and a door from the 1890 First Baptist Church, which was destroyed by fire in 2002. The Historic Preservation Commission salvaged from the burned building a complete window with trim and the majestic interior entry door. This salvage work was deemed important for two reasons: 1) the First Baptist Church was the last surviving example of a pioneer era, wood framed church; and 2) the window and door are fine examples of the outstanding Victorian craftsmanship of which these churches were constructed. During the pioneer era, many vernacular, American gothic, wood framed churches were built. South Dakota history and literature, such as Rolvaag's *Giants in the Earth*, evidences the powerful force of religion in the pioneering spirit of the people. The harbor religion provided against the hardships of pioneering is manifested in the priority afforded to church construction in the early years. As Rapid City grew, the pioneer era, wood framed churches either were replaced one-by-one with stone structures, or were lost to fire. The First Baptist Church structure is the last to succumb to the disaster of fire. We have attached photographs of the salvaged window. The pieces are fire damaged and coated with a century of paint, but, ironically, the heat from the fire blistered enough of the paint in select areas that the original staining scheme can be ascertained. The thick coat of paint, ironically, protected the wood from any damage.

The intent is to restore the window and door as a demonstration/education project at the Black Hills Home Builder's Show. A contractor will speak to methods for restoring historic windows and doors, both as to structural repair and as to finish work, i.e. staining. Eventually, the window and door are proposed for public display in Rapid City, either at the Journey Museum, or some other public venue. The display would interpret the historical presence of vernacular church architecture in Rapid City, which is well documented in historic photographs, and will serve as a tangible demonstration of pioneer era Victorian craftsmanship.

Based on past experience with window restoration work (Feigel House, Rapid City Laundry) it is estimated that the restoration portion of the project will cost \$5,000, and the display component of the project will cost another \$5,000. The funding for the restoration project will be provided by the \$2,500 cash match from the Feigel House Preservation Foundation and the proposed \$2,500 CLG grant amendment. The Historic Preservation Commission has secured a Letter of Interest from The Journey Museum regarding display of the restored materials.

The Rapid City Historic Preservation Commission requests approval of the Amendment #2 Award of Allocation for Historical Preservation by Rapid City, Project Number #46-02-021 in the amount of \$2,500.00.

