



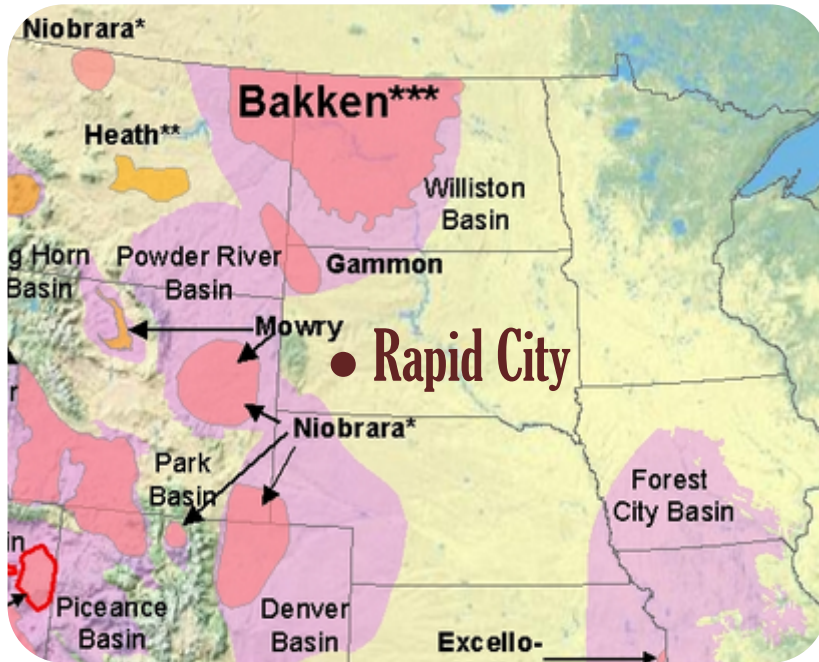
Black Hills Region Reaches Out to the Energy Industry

By Benjamin L. Snow
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The Best of Both Worlds

Located on the eastern edge of South Dakota's Black Hills, Rapid City serves as the economic hub for a broad swath of the High Plains. It's a trade area that extends out 300 miles and includes dozens of counties in five states. The region serves a population base of nearly a half-a-million people.

In fact, within this region, three of North America's biggest energy plays -- the Bakken, the Niobrara and the Powder River Basin --



are less than a day's drive from Rapid City. That means our region is perfectly situated as a servicing and supply-chain hub for the extractive-energy industry. The Black Hills region is surrounded by energy activity, and we expect to take full advantage of that as we continue to drive our economy forward.

And the Black Hills have a long tradition of mining, minerals and extractive industries.

Since 1876, the Black Hills have yielded gold, silver, feldspar and other minerals from deep beneath its pine-covered surface. In fact, the former Homestake Mine in Lead, S.D., which

reached the depth of 8,000 feet, is now home to the Sanford Underground Lab. The lab, at the 4,850-foot level, is home to some of the world's most cutting-edge physics experiments.

We believe Rapid City and the Black Hills have a great deal to offer the energy industry.

For one thing, we are close the action. A service firm, for instance, could dispatch crews to the Bakken, the Powder River Basin next door in Wyoming and to the Niobrara south of the Black Hills -- all from the same headquarters.

However, we're not too close. The Black Hills are far enough from the energy centers to avoid the boomtown hassles of high prices, labor shortages and growth pains.

And for both business and pleasure, Rapid City's climate is optimal. Our dry mountain air means warmer temperatures than Minneapolis, less snow than Denver and more sunshine than Miami. Low taxes and less regulation provide corporate comfort that few states can offer. South Dakota has no income tax. And the regulatory environment has won praise from business groups throughout the nation.

In fact, many companies in a variety of industries have found Rapid City and the Black Hills to be the perfect place to relocate or expand. We also enjoy several competitive advantages for businesses, including:

Air Service: Rapid City Regional Airport offers direct flights to Houston, Dallas, Chicago, Denver, Salt Lake City, Minneapolis, Phoenix and Las Vegas.

Education: One of America's top-rated engineering schools, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, is in Rapid City. Nearby Spearfish is home to Black Hills State University. At the West River Campus in Rapid City, classes are offered by both South Dakota State University and the University of South Dakota. Western Dakota Technical Institute trains workers in a variety of trades and professions.

A diverse economy: Rapid City is not a one-company or one-industry city. A variety of robust industries drive our economy, led by agriculture, tourism, medical services, financial services and manufacturing. That's especially important for professional couples and working families.

An active, athletic culture: The Black Hills are a million-acre playground for skiing, snowmobiling, fishing, hunting and hiking. The 110-mile Mickelson Trail takes mountain bikers through some of the Black Hills' most scenic back country. Rapid Creek, which snakes through Rapid City, is one of the few urban waterways with a naturally spawning brown trout population. The Rushmore Plaza Civic Center features entertainment ranging from Rapid City Rush professional hockey to Black Hills Symphony – sometimes on the same night.

Cost of Living: The Black Hills offer a lower cost of living over large cities and oilfield boomtowns. Home prices are affordable and stable. The market is large and robust enough to let you sell your home and trade up when the time is right.

There are a number of other advantages as well. If you'd like more information about our programs or have contacts in the energy industry we should be talking to, please let us know. Our goal is to make your decision to invest in our community easy and your experience positive. We hope you respond to our invitation to learn more about the benefits of doing business in Rapid City, South Dakota – a strong, stable and growing business location that combines the best elements of a mid-western workforce and an inter-mountain western lifestyle.

To find out more about Rapid City and South Dakota's Black Hills, visit our website, www.RapidDevelopment.com. You can also contact me directly.



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