



July 18, 2014

Mayor Kooiker and Members of the Rapid City Common Council  
300 Sixth Street  
Rapid City, SD 57701

**Re: Support for Civic Center Expansion Project**

Dear Mayor and Council,

On behalf of the Rapid City Economic Development Partnership, we submit this letter of support for the expansion of Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, subject to identifying a specific financing plan. There are times in a community's evolution when **bold decisions are required** to keep pace with the growth we have seen as a community and to remain competitive nationally and regionally. We believe this expansion project represents an opportunity for both civic leadership and bold decisions.

As the economic anchor for the entire Rushmore Region, Rapid City enjoys a fundamentally strong business climate, labor pool, IT infrastructure and local economy. In addition, Downtown Rapid City has recently undergone an exciting renewal, making the area an exciting draw to both visitors and residents, especially to our growing young professional and active retiree demographics. Our region and City also enjoys year-round recreation and lifestyle amenities, another important benefit to boost retention of those already call our region home and to attract those who will call our region home in the years ahead. **Having a modern, safe, and active Civic Center and Arena is integral component to this larger base of recreation amenities.**

We wholeheartedly endorse the work and recommendations of the Civic Center Future Committee from last year and the most recent recommendation of the City's Legal and Finance Committee from last week. Further, the team of design and construction professionals who have been actively working on this expansion have done a tremendous job in reaching out to the larger community and presenting compelling options. **We endorse the "Blue Plan", as it offers the most efficient leverage of the current facilities and arena space.** The Civic Center expansion project represents an opportunity for our community to solve the challenge of an aging, non-compliant, and increasingly irrelevant Civic Center by investing in a community asset for the next several decades. We express our trust and faith in you as our elected leadership, to move forward responsibly, yet boldly.

Sincerely,

Benjamin L. Snow, President

Cc: Steve Conzet, EDP Chair