



Pennington County Fire Administrator

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Mayor Sam Kooiker
Rapid City Common Council
City of Rapid City
300 6th St.
Rapid City, SD 57701

Re: Rapid City Regional Airport Fire Services

Dear Mayor Kooiker and Council Members:

It has come to my attention that the Rapid City Regional Airport Board is once again considering contracting with a private vendor for ARFF services. When I heard this I thought I had gone back in time 25 years. What has changed in 25 years that the Airport Board would want to revisit this?

Is it quality of service? Is it a new mission? Is it money? What is lacking that would prompt the Airport Board to consider this action once again? It can't be poor service or a new mission. So therefore it is money. There are so many intangibles that must be considered besides just dollars.

The Rapid City Fire Department and therefore the Airport station has always been an integral part of the entire mutual aid system the volunteer and career fire departments have built. The key component is "mutual aid". The fire departments know that I can assist you on an incident and someday you will assist me. This is based on the fact we each have resources that are beneficial to each other. I wonder if a contracted fire service would have the same resources, or be willing to respond mutual aid? They have nothing to share in return! No one agency can handle a major incident by themselves. The responsible agency must count on mutual aid and other assistance from the outside. There have been incidents outside the airport proper and the local volunteer fire department knew all they had to do was request mutual aid from the airport units.

To solely base a decision on money is shortsighted and I don't believe in the best interest of the traveling public who use Rapid City Regional Airport. I would totally support retaining the Rapid City Fire Department and all their personnel to provide fire protection and other services at Rapid City Regional Airport.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Dennis Gorton, Fire Administrator