



CITY of RAPID CITY

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA

COMMUNITY RESOURCES DEPARTMENT Communications Division

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HOLOCAUST DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE PROCLAIMED IN RAPID CITY *Council to reflect on Holocaust, see video, open April 6 meeting with Jewish prayer*

RAPID CITY--In conjunction with similar observances nationwide, Rapid City Mayor Sam Kooiker is proclaiming April 12-19 as Days of Remembrance in memory of victims of the Holocaust, in honor of survivors, rescuers and liberators, and to reflect on the need for respect of all peoples.

At next Monday's meeting, the Council session will open with a Jewish prayer offered by Dr. Steven Benn of the Synagogue of the Black Hills. The session will also include a brief video about the Holocaust in a presentation from the late Jack van der Geest of Rapid City, who provided an emotional speech in Council Chambers March 2, 2009 in memory of the 66th anniversary of his extraordinary escape from the Buchenwald Death Camp (<http://www.rcgov.org/Mayors-Office/special-recognitions.html>).

Three days after his Council presentation, van der Geest died. Of 238,380 prisoners interned by the Nazis at the Buchenwald Concentration Camp during World War II, van der Geest was one of only eight people to escape.

"The people of Rapid City should always remember the terrible events of the Holocaust and remain vigilant against hatred, persecution, tyranny and to stand up to the presence of the dark soul of Totalitarianism," Kooiker said in the proclamation. "I encourage our citizens to promote human dignity and confront hate whenever and wherever it occurs."

The United States Holocaust Memorial Council designated April 12-19 as the Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust, including the Day of Remembrance known as Yom HaShoah on April 15.