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NOAA's National Weather Service Weather Forecast Office  
**Rapid City, SD**

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AUG 18 2008

Rapid City Growth  
 Management Department

## The Rapid City Flood of 1972

### Historic Black Hills Floods

**1878** - Flooding caused minor damage in April, May and June. On July 12, a freight train of at least 10 ox wagons loaded with machinery for the Home Stake Mine were washed downstream. Rapid Creek rose 10 feet and one life was lost.

**1883** - Heavy, wet spring snowstorms caused flooding that washed away most of Deadwood on May 16. Several days of torrential rain over the Black Hills caused flooding on Hat Creek, Rapid Creek and the Belle Fourche River on May 17 and 18. The floods caused an estimated \$250,000 in damage and claimed four lives.

**1885** - More than \$25,000 damage occurred when Rapid, Box Elder and Elk Creeks flooded.

**1890** - Heavy rain and floods (4-5 June). Flooding in Deadwood (17 June). On August 15, flooding in Rapid City caused water to run down the streets at a depth of two feet, filling basements and causing considerable damage. According to U. S. Weather Bureau (now the National Weather Service) documents published in the 1950's, eleven members of a wagon train camped on the banks of Beaver Creek drowned when thunderstorms produced flash flooding.

**1892** - Flooding caused damage to railroads and roads on June 6. Just six days later, rain began falling and continued for 46 hours, causing slight damage.

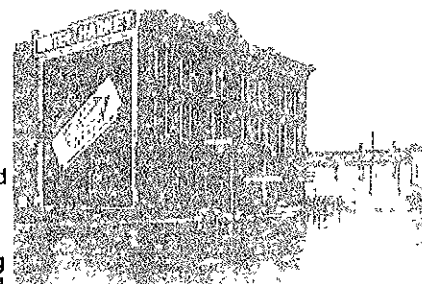
**1901** - Streets flooded July 22 in Rapid City.

**1907** - On June 12, an average of five inches of rain caused rapid melting of accumulated snow in the Black Hills. Over seven inches of rain was reported at Fort Meade, with 6.1 inches falling in just 2 1/2 hours. The flooding along Rapid Creek claimed four lives, Rapid City sustained over \$100,000 damage, railroad losses were estimated at \$100,000 and every bridge over Rapid Creek between Mystic and Creston was destroyed. Canyon Lake was washed out and remained dry until 1932. This was the largest flood in Rapid City prior to 1972, with the peak flow estimated at 13,000 cubic feet per second (cfs).

**1909** - Thunderstorms and high winds struck the Deadwood, Lead and Spearfish area on May 9. Most of the damage was due to flooded streets, railroads and mines. Spearfish Creek was half a mile wide near its mouth at the Belle Fourche River, with flooding on Elk and Box Elder Creeks also. In Belle Fourche, over half a million dollars in damage was reported.

**1909** - A week of heavy rain in the Black Hills caused flooded streets, damaged railways and forced the evacuation of 20 homes near Bear Butte Creek on June 11.

**1920** - On May 10, Rapid Creek was already 3.5 feet above average when rain began falling on ground saturated by rain and melting snow. By the time the rain ended on May 12, a total of 4.75 inches had fallen. Eight people died, 20 railroad bridges were badly damaged or washed out and all private and country bridges on Rapid Creek were destroyed. Total damages were approximately \$200,000.



*Flooding in Rapid City, June 11, 1909  
 (photo courtesy of the Rapid City Journal).*

**1924** - Warm temperatures and showers falling over approximately five feet of snow melted quickly, causing flooding in Belle Fourche beginning on April 9. No lives were lost, but 55 families were left homeless and damages were estimated at \$150,000.

**1926** - On May 27, three inches of rain fell in three hours in Rapid City, Sturgis and Deadwood.

**1927** - Flooding occurred over the Cheyenne, Bad, White and the Missouri Rivers (below the mouth of the Cheyenne) in May. South Dakota had been in a drought the previous three years, but had an extremely wet and snowy spring in 1927. From March 31 to April 15, 51.9 inches of snow fell at Rapid City. Similar conditions are thought to have extended over the Black Hills region and much of western South Dakota. This snow and subsequent lighter snowfall amounts melted enough to saturate the soil by May 5. Heavy rains, with 6 5 inches reported at Belvidere, began falling over the Cheyenne, Bad and White River basins on May 5. The rivers quickly flooded, with the worst flooding occurring on the Cheyenne and Bad Rivers.

**1937** - Flooding caused an estimated \$200,000 in damage on June 17 in Hot Springs

**1947** - Flooding in Hot Springs along Fall River (see photo at right), prior to the construction of Cold Brook Reservoir

**1949** - Thunderstorms on August 15 produced flash flooding and large hail. Peak flow on Rapid Creek was 450 cfs and damage was estimated at \$198,000.

**1952** - Flooding on May 22 caused heavy damage to the Canyon Lake area of west Rapid City. Flow on Rapid Creek was 2,500 cfs. Landslides occurred in Deadwood and in Sturgis, flash flooding caused rock slides, damage to streets and gas lines, and washed out bridges. The ranger at Pactola reported 5.55 inches of rain in a 24-hour period and a storm total of 6.26 inches.

**1955** - Up to five inches of rain on July 28 caused minor flooding in Mystic, Rochford and Pactola.

**1960** - On June 20, a thunderstorm hit the Rapid City and New Underwood areas with hail, gusty winds and about an inch of rain in a short period of time. Basements and streets were flooded.

**1962** - On June 15, Rapid Creek went over its banks. Just nine days later, over three inches of rain fell over the Black Hills. In Rapid City, 120 mobile homes, two motels and over 400 houses were damaged by water. Bridges, roads, sewer systems and recreation areas along Rapid Creek were also damaged. Sturgis, Deadwood, and Whitewood received extensive damage to roads and bridges throughout the area. Road equipment lost during this flood was estimated at \$200,000. On June 30, about an inch and a half of rain fell in Rapid City, damaging north Rapid City and the South Canyon area for the second time

**1962** - Thunderstorms dumped heavy rain over Rapid City again on July 13. Three to five inches of rain fell over Cleghorn, Dark and South Canyons and the Canyon Lake area on July 13. Fifteen hundred people were evacuated, six bridges were washed out and 35 units at a mobile home business at the corner of Mountain View Road and West Main Street were damaged. Several injuries were reported. Damage to public property was estimated at \$70,000. Total flash flood damage during the summer of 1962 was estimated at over \$1,900,000.

**1965** - On May 15, flash floods caused by heavy rain falling on up to 30 inches of snow damaged portions of Deadwood, Spearfish and Sturgis. Record crests were reported on Spearfish Creek near Spearfish and Rapid Creek near Silver City. Many houses in the Spearfish-Sturgis area sustained major damage or were destroyed. Damage was estimated at over \$2 million.

**1972** - On June 9, strong easterly surface winds pushed moisture laden air against the Black Hills. Nearly stationary thunderstorms developed and dropped up to 15 inches of rain in about six hours along the eastern slopes of the Black Hills. Record flows were reported on tributaries of the Cheyenne River including Rapid Creek, Boxelder Creek, Battle Creek and Bear Butte Creek. The flood claimed 238 lives and caused \$164 million in property damage (\$664 million 2002 dollars). Canyon Lake breached, adding to the wall of water that poured through Rapid City. Flow on Rapid Creek was estimated at over 10,000 cubic feet per second. Following the flood, approximately 750 acres of land adjacent to Rapid Creek was designated as a floodway.

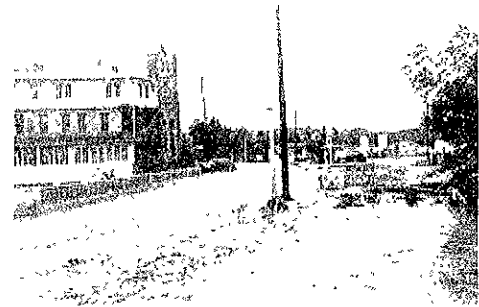
**1975** - On June 8, almost two and a half inches of rain fell in 30 minutes, causing damage to homes, cars and city parks.

**1976** - Three to 10 inches of rain fell over the Black Hills in 24 hours on June 13 and 14, with two to three more inches of rain on June 15 and 16. The heavy rain caused \$1.5 million in damage to buildings, roads and water systems. Most of the damage occurred in Belle Fourche, Deadwood, Galena, Spearfish and Sturgis and one death was reported.

**1981** - On July 23, 0.71 inches of rain fell in just 15 minutes in Rapid City. Streets Rapid City were flooded and a youth suffered minor injuries when he was swept into a culvert by rushing water.

**1991** - In the Keystone area, one to three inches of rain in an hour resulted in minor flooding of roads.

**1993** - Two inches of rain in 20 minutes caused \$5,000 road and culvert damage near Hill City on May 5 and flooding along Battle Creek and tributaries.



*Hot Springs, prior to construction of Coldbrook Reservoir (photo courtesy of the Rapid City Journal).*



*Street flooding in Rapid City, June 1962 (photo courtesy of the Rapid City Journal).*



*Tree damage at Canyon Lake Park following the 1972 Rapid City flood (photo courtesy of the Rapid City Journal).*

1993 - On June 7, three inches of rain in 10 hours caused localized flooding and forced the evacuation of a campground near Keystone. Several roads closed due to water, mudslides or debris.

1993 - Brief, heavy rainfall caused three to four feet of water over a road near Rapid City on August 6.

1995 - On May 7 and 8, just over three inches of rain in 12 hours washed out culverts and damaged roads near Hill City.

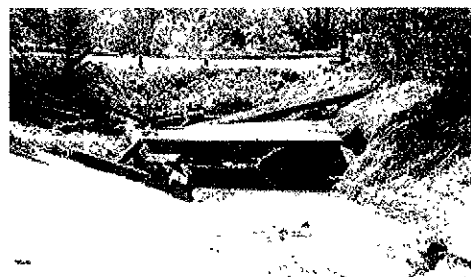
1995 - Near Rapid City, 4.34 inches of rain in 36 hours caused flooding of roads on May 8 and 9.

1996 - A slow moving thunderstorm dumped three to six inches of rain on saturated ground near Rapid City on May 30. Two to three feet of water covered the Highway 79 bridge at Spring Creek near Hermosa. The Hart Ranch Campground and homes near Rapid Creek evacuated.

1996 - On June 14, nearly stationary thunderstorms dumped five to 10 inches of rain, washing out the road from Sturgis to Hereford. The flood waters damaged cars, houses and ranches, including sweeping away livestock and destroying fences. Total damage was estimated at \$260,000

1997 - Stationary thunderstorms produced four to five inches of rain, causing minor flooding on Rapid Creek and its tributaries on May 24.

1997 - On June 2, two to three inches of rain fell in less than an hour from Deerfield to Rapid City. Up to four and a half inches of rain fell in 30 minutes in the Chapel Valley area and caused extensive damage. Six to eight feet of water in Cleghorn Canyon washed out driveways and bridges. Eight to 10 feet of water in Red Rock Canyon washed out driveways and bridges. Minor flooding was reported near a golf course near Chapel Valley and six to 12 inches of water poured over roads in Rapid City area. Flows on Rapid Creek were the highest since the 1972 flood.



*Bridge damage in Cleghorn Canyon, June 1997.*

1999 - Three to four inches of rain fell in less than 90 minutes near Keystone. Sections of the Old Hill City-Keystone Highway were washed away on June 18.

2001 - Thunderstorms dumped 1 to 3 inches of rain on July 21, causing flooding in Keystone. Highway 16A was under water, several local businesses were damaged and damage was sustained at several homes. The Rapid City-Pennington County emergency manager estimated damage at \$50,000.

Back to The Rapid City Flood of 1972

NOAA's National Weather Service  
Rapid City, SD Weather Forecast Office  
300 East Signal Drive  
Rapid City, SD 57701-3800  
605-341-9271  
Page Author: UNR Webmaster  
Web Master's E-mail: [w.unr.webmaster@noaa.gov](mailto:w.unr.webmaster@noaa.gov)  
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Journal Photo by Don Polovich

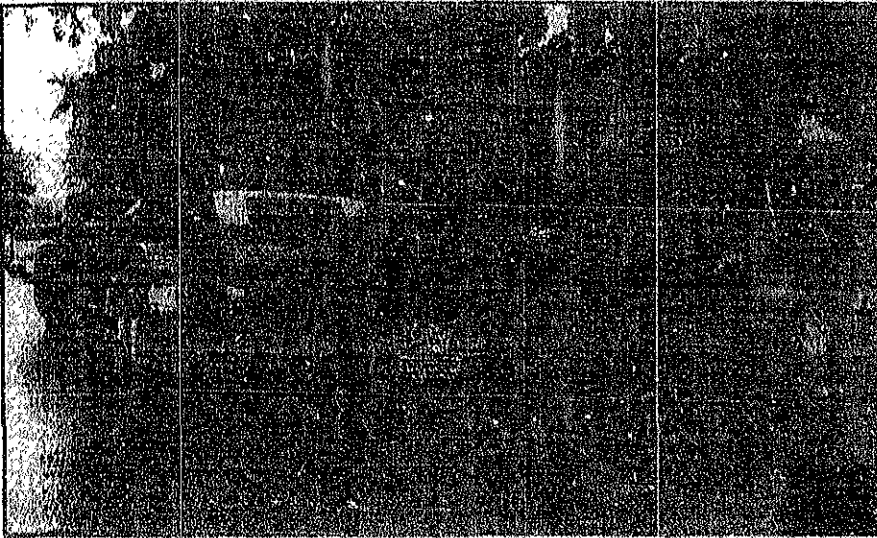
rushing down Chapel Lane in west both floated another 50 yards before stopping at a this tool shed into a pickup. They guardrail. See more photos on page B4.

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rough portions of Rapid pushing cars off roads, closing major highways are reported. vly pushed its way out of e the city dumped rain ches west of the city to 2 thin a 30-minute period, h the National Weather

apid City Police Depart d "significant residential vning authorities weren't unage, hicles off roads, includ n East Meade Street in ve have checked all of re of, and there are no were of at this point," t. Craig Tlesan. lent James Thelen, who hood for about a dozen an flooding in the area en this much water. It



Journal Photo/Steve McEnroe

Floodwaters on East Meade Street washed the car at right down the street. Water pushed the pickup at left until it came to rest on its side against the large tree on the berm. Note the blacktop along the edge of the street, which was also torn up by water.

Fuller, the owner of the three-quarter ton pickup truck said. "It's a diesel and heavy-loaded." The Robbinsdale area suffered a "fair amount"

About 7 p.m., Mount Rushmore Road was closed to traffic near the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center when water covered the major downtown street.

# Jury a with v

Timothy McVeigh found guilty in Oklahoma City bombing.

By Michael Freeman Associated Press Writer

DENVER -- Timothy McVeigh was convicted Monday in the deadliest act of terror on U.S. soil, a verdict that brought jubilation and bitter tears to relatives of the 168 people killed in the Oklahoma City bombing. The jury will now decide whether he should pay with his life.

McVeigh sat at the defense table with his hands in a white-knuckle clasp and an impassive expression as U.S. District Judge Richard Matsch announced the verdict of guilty on all 11 counts of murder and conspiracy.

In the audience, tears welled in the eyes of the more than two dozen bombing survivors and victims' relatives. After the court session, they broke into sobs and embraced.

"We were holding hands and praying and crying," said Katherine Alantz, whose father, Claude Medearis, died in the bombing. "My mom reached into her purse and handed me his wedding ring, and of course, I just lost it. ... I started crying."

The momentary joy was tempered by memories of the losses in the April 19, 1995, bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. The blast shattered America's sense of security and belief that this level of terror could never have come from within.

A 18-year-old Spearfish woman died in the explosion. Cartney Koeh McRaven was in the federal building registering at the Social Security Administration office under her new married name when the bomb went off. The 1993 Spearfish High School graduate had enlisted in the Air Force and was stationed at Tinker Air Force Base.

Bud Welch stood in downtown Oklahoma City near the site of the bombing, where cheers erupted from more than 500 people who got news of the verdict on televisions set up on the sidewalk.

"You heard most all of them clap. I couldn't do that because McVeigh has

See Guilty on page A9

PHOTO BY DON POLOVICH

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Inside College rodeo be The nation's top college rodeo athletes an



Journal Photo by Don Polevich

The surge of water rushing down Chapel Lane in west Rapid City pushed this tool shed into a pickup. They both floated another 50 yards before stopping at a guardrail. See more photos on page B4.

# City drenched

## Flash floods fill streets

By Journal Staff Writers

Flash flooding raced through portions of Rapid City early Monday evening, pushing cars off roads, rippling up asphalt, and closing major highways, but no deaths or injuries were reported.

A thunderstorm that slowly pushed its way out of the Black Hills and across the city dumped rain ranging from nearly 3/4 inches west of the city to 2 inches in east Rapid City.

Most of the rain fell within a 30-minute period, according to officials with the National Weather Service in Rapid City.

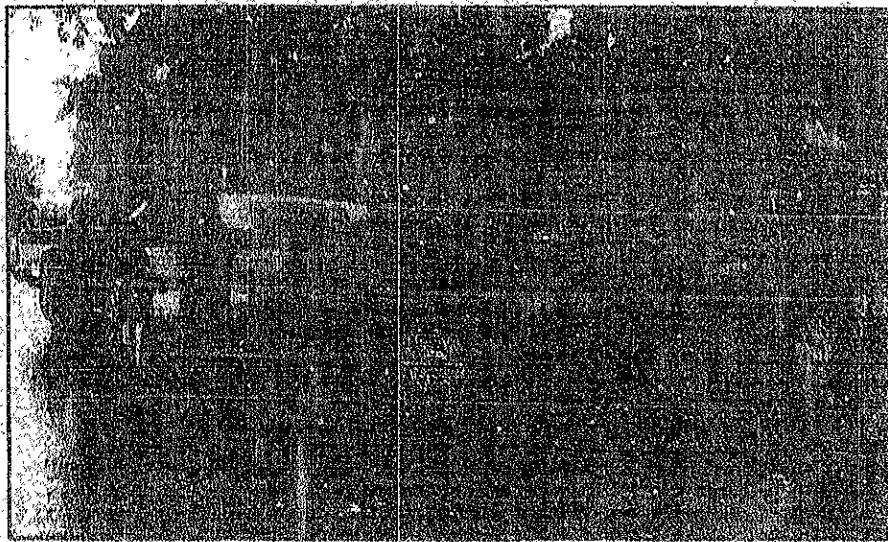
A spokesman for the Rapid City Police Department said the storm caused "significant residential flooding," but Monday evening authorities weren't certain of the amount of damage.

The flooding washed vehicles off roads, including at least six vehicles on East Meade Street in southeast Rapid City. "We have checked all of those (vehicles) we're aware of, and there are no injuries or deaths we're aware of at this point," said Rapid City Police Capt. Craig Tension.

East Meade Street resident James Thelen, who has lived in the neighborhood for about a dozen years, said there had been flooding in the area before. "But I've never seen this much water. It sure was a washout."

Duane Bascom, who was visiting the area, said he watched waves turn a parked Chevrolet into a battering ram along East Meade Street. The Chevrolet Cavalier slammed into a pickup truck, and the two vehicles then pushed a sports car about 80 feet.

"I'd never thought that truck would move," Art



Journal Photo/Steve McEntroe

Floodwaters on East Meade Street washed the car at right down the street. Water pushed the pickup at left until it came to rest on its side against the large tree on the berm. Note the blacktop along the edge of the street, which was also torn up by water.

Fuller, the owner of the three-quarter ton pickup truck said. "It's a diesel and heavy-loaded."

The Robbinsdale area suffered a "fair amount" of road damage, including manhole covers blown off by the overwhelmed storm sewers. There also were hunks of asphalt pavement ripped off roads in the Fairmont Boulevard area in southeast Rapid City.

Authorities closed South Valley Drive in Rapid Valley after it was covered by 3 to 4 feet of water.

About 7 p.m., Mount Rushmore Road was closed to traffic near the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center when water covered the major downtown street.

S.D. Highway 44 was closed west of Rapid City due to a rock and mud slide near Nameless Cave Road. The highway was reopened to one-lane travel at 8:45 p.m.

A wall of water came down Red Rock Canyon in the Chapel Lane area of southwest Rapid City.

See Water on page A2

WV

## Timothy found guilty Oklahoma bombing

By Michael F. Associated Pr

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More stories and photos on page A9

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Bud Welch to Oklahoma City, ne bombing, where more than 500 p of the verdict on the sidewalk.

"You heard me couldn't do that I

See Guilty or

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For more on

**Index**

# Downtown Sturgis becom

street from Junction Avenue to Second Street will be blocked off to vehicle traffic. So will First Street from Lzelle Street to Sherman. The street will remain open to pedestrians.

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McNenny

have promised to try to minimize impact.

Most say the benefits of filming far outweigh the drawbacks. And compared to the Sturgis Rally, this inconvenience is nothing.

"So far, everybody we've worked with has been just great," said Jeanne Setera of Sturgis Drug, which sits across from the bank.

And no, you're not losing your mind — Sturgis Drug is not brick, and it does not have second-story windows. The blue-and-white building has undergone a major transformation for filming, with a fake-brick facade, pillars and curtained windows upstairs.

House plants, suncatchers and even an air conditioner make the upstairs "apartments" especially convincing.

Local residents will be able to spot a few other changes as well. Toy store and art supply store signs have appeared where there are no toys or art supplies. The Sturgis Rally &

Races sign has been replaced by one advertising "Francis' Bridal Shop/Rentals."

In fact, all visible references to the Sturgis Rally & Races seem to have been deleted for filming. Large painted plywood panels were fastened to the outer east wall of the Tom's T's building, which bears a Rally logo. Rally Director Francis Ruebel-Alberts said she didn't know why those decisions were made.

Sturgis Drug still bears a "Sturgis Drug" sign, though. From the corner window, Setera and her employees will have a great vantage point for filming. "See if you recognize any noses," she joked.

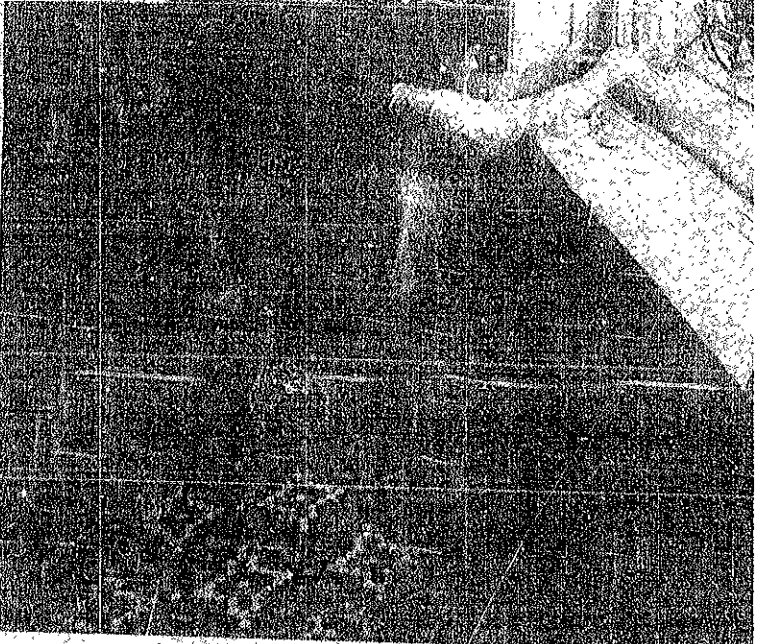
For Jan Weimer, the movie has turned work into a social event.

"We have made some of the most wonderful friends," she said from behind the lunch counter at Weimer's Diner & Donuts, just a few doors down from the bank. "Like Michael there."

Michael is Michael Gianneschi, an on-set dresser for the movie. He had stopped in to pay for a morning coffee and buy a soda. "We come here for our morning coffee and our morning doughnuts," he said. "We have to divide our business between here and Bob's (Family Restaurant)."

This is Gianneschi's first visit to Sturgis, but he said it won't be the last. "It's a great town," he said. "Nice people, too. ... I told my wife we've got to plan a vacation out this way."

Asked whether any of the movie's stars — including Willis and Alec



A set dresser puts the finishing touches on one of the windows in Most of the interior will be destroyed in the filming, according to a

Baldwin — had visited, Weimer said firmly, "There is nobody that isn't a star."

She pulled out a white guest book partly filled with signatures of set decorators, drivers and painters working on the set. Weimer asks them all to sign her book.

"They are all very, very important,"

she said.

Weimer didn't ask Oliver Solcher to sign her book, even though the tall, decidedly un-Bruce-Willis-looking German tourist claimed he was serving as Willis' double.

"We have several doubles," joked Solcher, who was traveling through Sturgis by motorcycle. "They just

take me fr Weimer's name, but the movie has already set a few watching v "They're people," sl anybody w

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# Water: Chapel Lane a river

Continued from page A1

knocking a shed from its foundation at 4601 Guest Road and pushing it downstream.

Chapel Lane became an impassable river for several hours. Water inundated the grounds around the Lake Park Motel. By the time the stream dumped into Canyon Lake, it was 50 feet wide.

Police set up roadblocks at Chapel Lane and Jackson Boulevard to stop cars headed up Rimrock Highway, where water was flowing across the pavement and Chapel Lane.

Residents of both areas waited out the storm in the parking lot of Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church. Some people waded through the knee-deep water to get to their homes in Chapel Valley.

At the east end of Meadowbrook Golf Course, off Jackson Boulevard, Rapid Creek had fanned out beyond its banks, turning the fairways into broad, sweeping rivers. Only the railings on the golf course foot bridges

were visible above the water. Rapid City Regional Hospital reported water on its first floor but not enough to disrupt operations.

Flood waters closed Fairmont Boulevard, neatly slicing sheets of asphalt between the hospital and the S-Meat Plaza. Hunks of road also crumbled on East Indiana Street near Robbinsdale Elementary School.

According to NWS meteorologist Jon Zeidler, the storm began brewing about 3:30 p.m. over the Black Hills and moved east. About 4 p.m., it hit the Johnson Siding area west of the city on Highway 44.

"That's when the really heavy rain began to develop and move through the city and into Rapid Valley," Zeidler said.

The storm gradually moved across the city at about 5 mph, Zeidler said.

"The upper level winds were so weak that the thunderstorms that developed weren't going anywhere," the meteorologist said.

Rapid Creek rose from 6.37 feet at 5 p.m. at the 12th Street checkpoint

to 11 feet at 6 p.m. The water flow went from the typical summertime rate of 200-300 cubic feet per second to about 3,000 cfs.

The highest total rainfall reported from the storm was 3.48 inches at Thunderhead Falls Road near Johnson Siding. There was 2.3 inches recorded along Sheridan Lake Road and 2.25 inches near Arrowhead Country Club, both in southwest Rapid City.

The weather service office in east Rapid City recorded 2.08 inches of rain. "Generally, everywhere else got 1 1/2 to 2 inches of rain," Zeidler said.

Marble- and pea-size hail piled up 2 inches deep off Sheridan Lake Road, but hail up to three-fourths of an inch in diameter hit Rapid Valley.

In addition to Monday's heavy rain, the flash flooding resulted "from all the rainfall we had over the Memorial Day weekend (3 to 4 inches) and thunderstorms yesterday (Sunday)," Zeidler said. "The ground was easily saturated."

# Sunday storm home, phone

Lightning strikes take out phones, start home fire.

HOT SPRINGS — A lightning storm knocked out telephone service and struck possibly three homes in the Hot Springs area Sunday night.

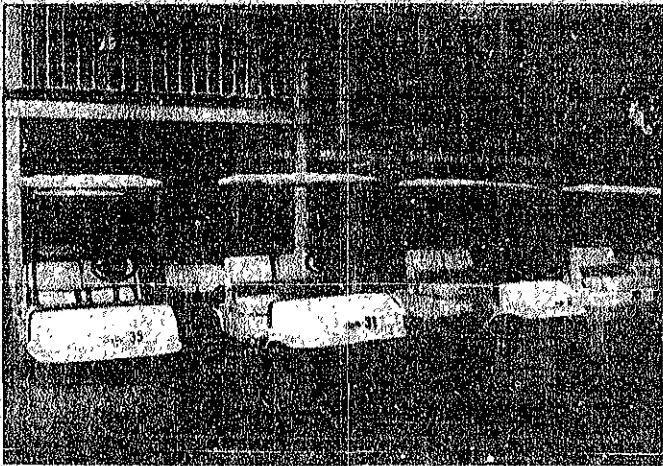
There were no injuries, but a lightning strike caused fire in Tom and Norma Davis' home on Evans Street. Tom Davis said the fire burned in the attic and inside walls at the front of the home.

"The clap of thunder came, and the fire started about four minutes later," he said.

A Hot Springs Police Department spokesman said Monday there were two other unconfirmed reports of lightning strikes to homes. Neither case required assistance.

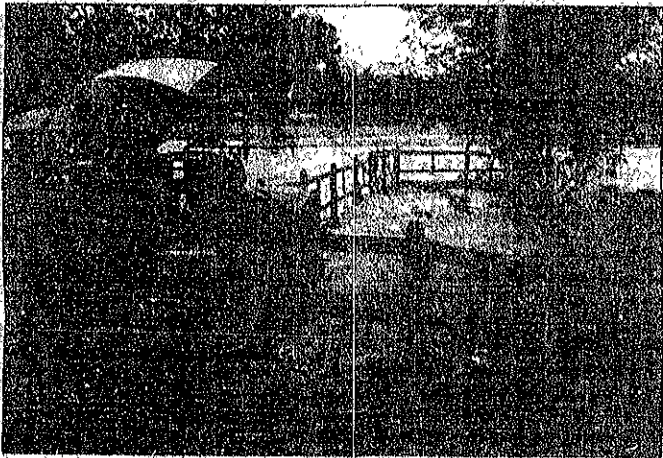
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# Flash flood scenes



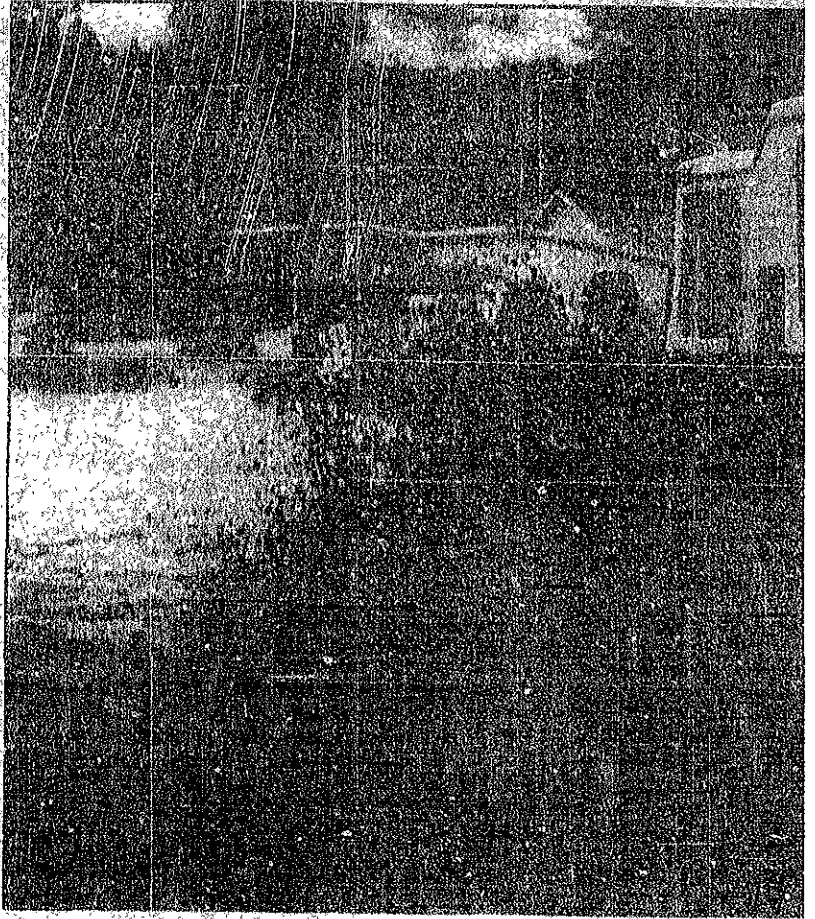
Journal Photo by Don Polovich

Golf carts sit in the rising waters from flooding Rapid Creek at the Meadowbrook Golf Course Clubhouse.



Journal Photo by Don Polovich

Spectators watch debris smash into the service bridge at Meadowbrook Golf Course. The floodwaters from Rapid Creek spread over the course.

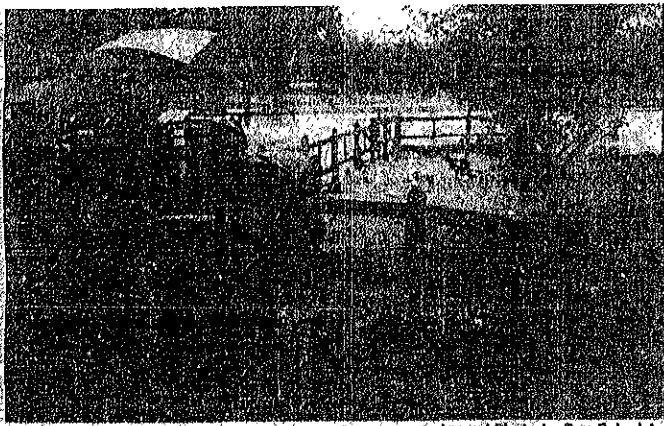


A Rapid City fire truck sends up a big spray of water on Chapel Lane



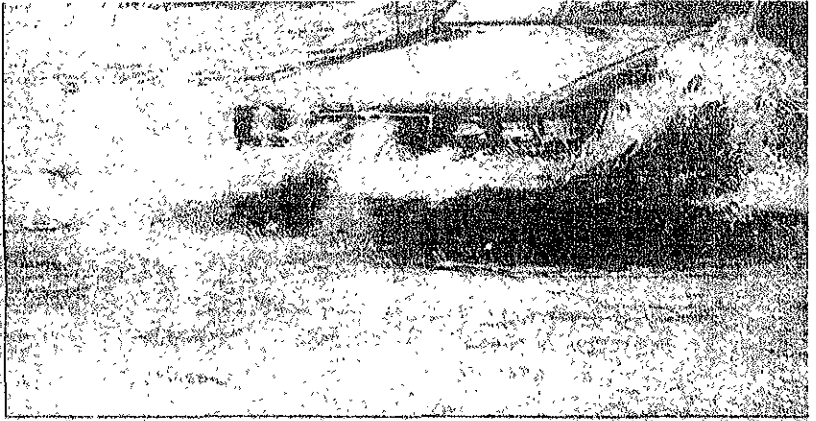
Despite warnings on the radio and stalled cars along the flooded streets, motorists like this person attempted to travel through flooded intersections. This across a flooded southeast side.



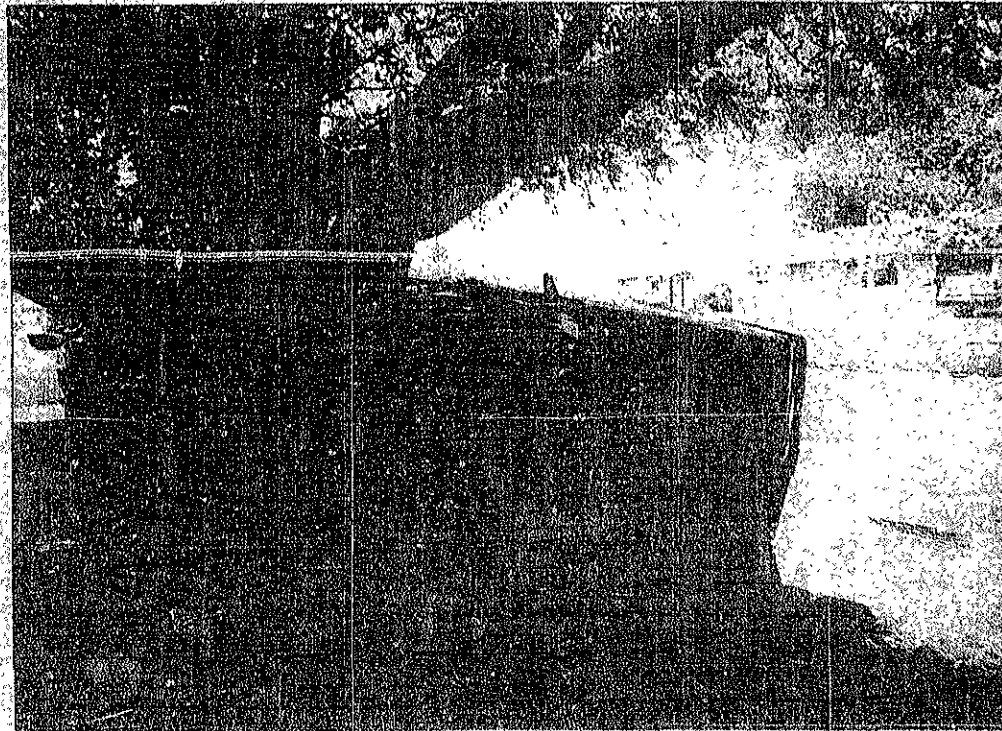


Journal Photo by Don Felovich

Spectators watch debris smash into the service bridge at Meadowbrook Golf Course. The floodwaters from Rapid Creek spread over the course.



Despite warnings on the radio and stalled cars along the flooded streets, motorists like this person attempted to travel through flooded intersections. This across a flooded southeast side.



Journal Photo/Steve McEwen



In the photo above, a parked and unoccupied car rolled down the 400 block of East Meade Street by floodwaters in Monday's downpour. It pushed a parked pickup truck down the road as well, until the car crashed into this tree on the berm. Above right, Meade Street residents help a motorist move his car off the street. The flooding drove his car sideways. The front left tire was forced off its rim, leaving him stalled in the middle of the street. In the photo at right, Rapid City residents start a cautious trip home up S.D. Highway 44 West after police open roadblocks shortly around 6:45 p.m. Water about a foot deep still stretched across the highway about a mile west of Blessed Sacrament Church.





# Water rolled through right

■ 'The floodway did what the floodway was supposed to do.'

By Pat Dobbs  
West River Editor

Rapid City came through its largest flood in 25 years with water in the right places — mostly back in creek and drainage channels, officials said Tuesday.

Monday's cloudburst — 2 to 3½ inches of rain in 30 minutes — inflated Rapid Creek to 3,000 cubic feet per second at the Omaha Street measuring station.

The overflow flooded some city golf courses, parks and streets with currents strong enough to move groups of parked vehicles and to overturn one.

It was the most water through the city since the killer flood of June 9, 1972, Dan Driscoll of the U.S. Geological Survey said.

But this time, no one died, there were no reported injuries and public property damage appears minimal.

"I don't want to say I'm happy about anything, but I do think the floodway did what the floodway was supposed to do," city Public Works Director Jimmy Hilton said.

So well that nearly 24 hours later, anyone who missed the storm would find few public signs of the flood.

East Meade Street did not have water in its gutters. The day before, a 3½-foot-high wall of storm water pushed six parked cars in a short-lived street fight.

Three of those cars were back out front of the Troy Atkinson home. The family had several items in the driveway, drying out after water gushed under the living room door and into a garage that was open during a remodeling project.

Several other Robbinsdale households and families around town complained to the city about water in their basements.

"Obviously, when you get water that I think in cases probably was the biggest (storm) event we've had since

See Water on page A2



Floodwaters from Rapid Creek overflow the United Softball fields near Jackson Boulevard Monday night. Most of the baseball, softball and

soccer fields in the area flooded designed to do. By Tuesday floodwaters had receded.

# Civic center undergoes rodeo transformation

By Amy Phillips  
Journal Staff Writer

Sunday, two graduations were held here.

Less than 24 hours later, loud green dump trucks crawled in through the big door on the north side of the arena. In less than 24 more hours, the trucks had dumped 70 loads of dirt, covering the floor with a layer from 10 to 18 inches thick.

This is only part of preparations for the 1997 College National Finals Rodeo at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center today through Sunday, June 8.

Seat configurations in the arena had to be changed because they usually extend too far into the arena floor for rodeo. "Curbs" had to be installed to keep the tons of dirt on the floor from pushing in the bleachers. A new scoreboard had to be installed. The 170 and more seats had to be

center. "(The dirt) is rotten stuff."

It also is recycled. The dirt used is the same dirt used for the other rodeos and events requiring a soil surface. When not in use, the dirt is stored at Pete Lien & Sons' quarry.

Workers were up all night Sunday preparing for the rodeo. The new concession area, which includes a Subway shop, pizza shop, grill area and bakery, neared completion. The CNFR will be the first event to use the new area.

Workers were still cleaning up Monday afternoon. Dusty footprints trailed through the halls.

"From 7 last night, we haven't stopped," Manuel Davila, operations manager of the civic center, said Monday. "We" are 10 full-time and 14 part-time workers. No extra workers were hired to help, although less time was available than is usually allowed. Usually the work is done in two to three days, said Davila. This time one day was all

formation was almost complete. The concessions were open for business as promised. The dusty footprints were swept away. Dirt covered the floor of the arena, and a few competitors were warming up. Only a few finishing touches had yet to be made. A welder was busy on the gates, and sponsors' banners covered the floor of a hallway, waiting to be put up.

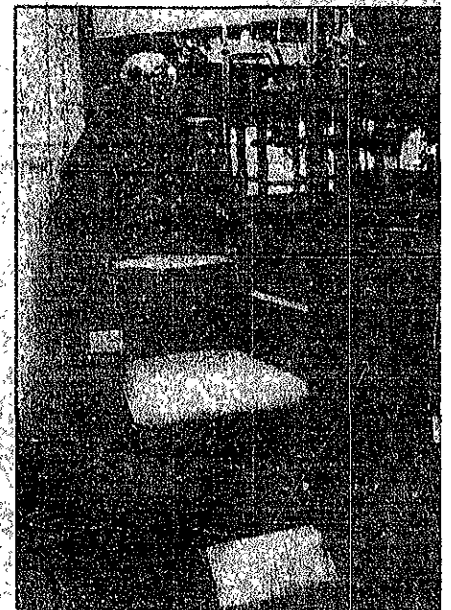
Cleanup is expected to take a week. But it's worth it, Jasinski said.

"Anytime you have visitors in town — up to 1,000 just for this — obviously, the economic benefits are great," he said. "It sure doesn't hurt to have Rapid City exposed to the nation in any way."

While the rodeo is serving Rapid City well, the civic center should serve the contestants well, he said.

For the past 22 years, the rodeo was held in Bozeman, Mont. Bozeman's arena had the atmosphere of a "college field house," Jasinski said. The civic center has more offerings, such as a brand new concession area that can seat 250 on-site visitors.

## Moving on



Barber Vern Johnson in what will be Shop when it opens Tuesday, June 10. Barber Transportation Center 222 S

More rodeo stories and photos on pages D1-D3

# Water: Flooding complaints being logged

Continued from page A1

June of '72 ... we are bound to have that happen, there is no question about it," said Hilton.

City engineering staff are investigating flood-related complaints, and consultants are reviewing problems in areas with chronic sewage backup problems, he said.

The Western Pennington Storm Drainage & Flood Management Commission also is logging flooding complaints. Coordinator Mike McMahon said residents on Pioneer Drive, School Drive, Leroy Street and around Black Hills Speedway in Rapid Valley had contacted his office.

McMahon said the storm underscored the need to fund drainage projects and floodplain maintenance.

"This was a hint, a very small hint," he said. "This was maybe, according to rainfall intensity curves ... maybe a 20-year event, tops. This was not a major storm as storm events go."

Driscoll said USGS records backed that up. The 3,000 cfs peak measured Monday compares with 50,000 cfs for the 1972 flood and 3,300 cfs for a 1962 flood.

Hilton said officials were collecting damage estimates for a federal disaster grant application. But there were no large road, bridge or public property damages, he said.

Canyon Lake, a soupy stew on Monday, was again a placid — al-

## Runoff: Swollen

Continued from page A1

The Pactola drainage basin received nearly 2 inches of rain on Sunday and Monday. The storm waters followed record May inflows. Pactola Reservoir received 20,000 acre feet of water, enough to cover 20,000 acres with 1 foot of water. The previous record was 19,800 acre feet in May 1965.

Upstream of Pactola, Deerfield Reservoir is slowly rising and was just 6 inches from full Tuesday. In May, Deerfield took in 3,500 acre feet, also a record that broke the 1995 record. Releases at 60 cfs will be increased to 60 cfs this week and continue high all summer, according to the Bureau of Reclamation.

though, creamed-coffee brown — fishing pond on Tuesday.

The city's multi-million park renovation, completed last year, is intact. The concern is the rapid re-introduction of silt, which was hauled out by dump-truck loads.

"Structurally, we're at 99 percent. We may have little stuff here and there, but structurally it held up very well," Hilton said.

Bridges throughout the city without the high water. Some streets, most notably Fairmont Boulevard near Wisconsin Avenue, have been patched and need further repairs, but it's nothing municipal crews can't handle, he said.

Up Red Rock Canyon and over at Cleghorn Canyon, Pennington County

highway equipment worked on road repairs. In Cleghorn Canyon, two private driveways were closed, their culverts eroded by long-gone gully washers.

Dirty water that had covered Cleghorn Springs Fish Hatchery Monday was gone Tuesday, and visitors were back to gazing at trout that remained in their concrete raceways.

"Believe it or not," said Manager Greg Young, "we didn't appear to lose any fish." He said the trout dropped to the bottom of the tanks, swirling in clean water that continued pumping in while murky runoff water covered the top.

It's too soon for state fish biologist Ron Koth to know how the storm will affect Rapid Creek and Canyon

Lake's fish habitat. But he doesn't expect in a year to blame the storm for significant lasting effects.

For now, he cautioned people against straying too close to stream banks. "Because the ground is soft and saturated, there is potential for somebody to get a surprise dip."

Some city recreation users will be idle until their favorite fields dry.

The Executive and Meadowbrook golf courses are closed until probably Friday. The Sioux Park playground also is closed, needing its protecting wood chip covering replaced.

The citywide bike and walking path is open but has scattered slippery spots. Underpasses along Rapid Creek remain closed, as they were before the flash flood. Clogged culverts at Storybook Island need cleaning, but the amusement parks open.

Swimming pools, except for the new Parkview complex, are to open June 11 on schedule.

And the outlook is good for plants at the Sioux Park Formal Gardens. Last seen Monday, only the canna leaves stood above the river that outgrew Rapid Creek's banks at Baken Park shopping center. City workers had just completed planting before the storm.

"When the water receded, actually everything was in place," said Rapid City Parks Director Lon Van Deusen. "It was a little muddy, but I think everything will recover."

# Holdup: Robbers encountered problems

Continued from page A1

The pair tied up the legs on a spare pair of black jeans they had and stuffed the money in the pants, losing some of it in the motel parking lot. Investigators said the pair then fled west in a small red Chevrolet Corsica, right into problem No. 2.

Going west on Rimrock Highway, the pair ran into a state Department of Transportation (DOT) crew operating a pump clearing water off the state highway from a flash flood about six hours earlier.

With the crew was a Highway Patrol officer and a sheriff's deputy slowing traffic as vehicles approached the water line running across the highway near the entrance of Dark Canyon.

One of the DOT workers spotted loose money scattered in the Chevrolet as it slowed for the water line, and he told the two nearby law enforcement officers.

The Custer youth driving the vehicle tried to elude the officers but got it stuck off Highway 44 shortly after the chase began. Investigators say both suspects ran from the car into the woods in the 7200 block of West Highway 44.

A search dog found the Custer

## Suspect: Armed, considered dangerous

Continued from page A1

thorities warned Tuesday that Vigna may be armed and should be considered dangerous.

Authorities arrested a 17-year-old Custer boy early Tuesday morning in connection with the holdup after the getaway vehicle became stuck during a brief chase on South Dakota Highway 44 in southwest Rapid City.

Vigna eluded officers and was still on the loose Tuesday evening. If you spot Vigna, contact the nearest law enforcement agency immediately.

Vigna is a white male standing 5 feet, 7 inches tall, weighing 140 pounds with brown hair

# Barber: New shop

Continued from page A1

longest running business with the same Main Street address. Johnson estimated that a barbershop had been at 709 Main St. since the 1920s.

"I know for a fact that was a barbershop since 1934," he said. That was the year a previous owner carved his name into a wooden cabinet at the back of the shop. Subsequent owners carved their names and tenures as well.

However, Johnson, who started work there in 1959 and bought the business in 1966, never carved his name. "I wasn't ready to leave yet," he said.

Destroyed in the fire were newspaper clippings, photos and

other memorabilia, including items from the Rapid City Chiefs, a professional baseball team in the old Basin League. The State Barber Shop offered players a free haircut for every home run they hit.

Frank Howard, a slugger who later went on to a major league career with the Dodgers and the Senators, still has several free haircuts coming to him, Johnson said.

The fire was hard for him to watch, Johnson said, because he had spent so much of his life in that shop. With its income, he raised and educated five children.

"I probably spent more time there than I did with my family," he said. "I felt guilty about that, but when you own a business, you've got to do what's needed to keep it going."

# Rodeo: Ready

Continued from page A1

It also has a really good arena for barrel racing, said Rachel Myllymaki of the University of Montana, the leading contestant in the event.

"(The civic center) goes beyond Bozeman in comparison," Myllymaki said. "I was thoroughly impressed."

The best feature of the civic center is that horses can be kept right there rather than being trucked around all the time, she said.

agreed.

"It's nice having the horses right here," he said.

But that's the only thing the civic center has going for it, he said.

"It's terrible. The arena's too little, and there's nowhere to park. I can't even compare it to anywhere else," he said. "It will be super to watch ... but it makes it hard to compete."

The show will go on, though, he said.

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- Weather, B6

June 5, 1997

# Local

## Early flood bill: \$433,000

■ More damage occurred in Pennington County than in Rapid City.

Monday's flash flood caused more damage to public property in Pennington County than in Rapid City, according to early cost estimates.

Combined, the preliminary damage assessment is \$433,425. Officials said they would investigate applying for federal grants.

The Rapid City-Pennington County Emergency Management agency provided this breakdown of flood expenses:

■ Pennington County: Road repairs, \$277,160; debris clearance, \$5,515; emergency work, \$3,750. Total: \$286,425.

■ Rapid City: Recreation and related areas, \$70,000; debris clearance, \$55,000; road repairs, \$20,000; emergency work, \$2,000. Total: \$147,000.

## Gillette man charged in stepdaughter's death

GILLETTE, Wyo. — A 26-year-old Gillette man, who told authorities his stepdaughter was hurt from a slip in the bathtub, has been arrested on a charge of murder in the child's death.

Todd Luther Nixon was arrested Wednesday by the Campbell County Sheriff's deputies on felony charges of murder and assault in the May 5 death of 3-year-old Crystal Lincoln.

An ambulance arrived at the Nixon home May 4 after an emergency call saying the girl had fallen in the bathtub, hitting the back of her head.

The child was flown to a Denver, Colo., hospital where she died early the next day.

An autopsy later revealed the girl's death was due to a blow to her head that fractured her skull and resulted in internal bleeding.

The murder charge carries death or life in prison while the aggravated assault charge has a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison.

Campbell County authorities say no other charges are pending in the girl's death.

Where's Willis?

