

## [South Dakota War College](#)

South Dakota Politics, Campaigns, Personalities, Elections, Political Advertising, and a bunch of rambling nonsense from a smart aleck Republican.

---

**Tuesday, June 19, 2007**

---

### **Should this bother us? RC Council votes to give Cabela's a carrot. A really, really expensive carrot.**

I was reading the [Rapid City Journal](#) on-line today, and I noted the story on how Cabela's just got a massive incentive package to come to Rapid City, and how they're going to host a municipal visitor's center:

Touting the future economic development benefits, the Rapid City Council approved agreements and incentives Monday that will bring outdoor outfitter Cabela's here.

The incentive package includes \$2 million in economic development funds and 30 acres of land where the Black Hills Visitor Information Center now sits.

In return, the city will get an 80,000-square-foot "destination retail store" that includes hunting, fishing, camping, hiking and boating gear, as well as clothing, gifts and furnishings with elaborate animal displays, aquariums and other sights.

[Read that all here](#). It's not dissimilar to what Brookings did to lure Lowe's to town, where huge financial bonuses are offered to lure employers, which makes it an even more timely statewide topic.

And it's not as if such moves aren't political. In fact, there were some political differences in the Rapid City vote as there were in the Brookings vote.

I am all for economic development. In fact, it's arguably the most important thing for South Dakota Government to be doing in an environment where we desperately need to broaden our economic base.

But on the other hand, it tugs at my conservative heart to see incredible amounts of taxpayer money being spent in such a way. Is spending that kind of money really going to influence and impact the free market in the long term? Is it going to bring in new money from the outside, or is it simply going to redistribute what's available locally.

In other words, it's a conundrum. Would they have come to Rapid City anyway, absent the "jumper cable jolt" of huge financial incentives?

Are communities who decline to pay such incentives cutting off their nose to spite their face? Or are cities that do go the extra mile, mortgaging their future for a short term gain at the expense of their local businesses.

[Adam Smith](#), where are you when we need an answer?