

Cabela's invests \$90,000 in election, according to initial report

By Tom Lawrence and Lana Bradstream, Black Hills Pioneer

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The company made three \$30,000 donations to the Vote Yes for Cabela's committee, according to the report. The donations were made on Sept. 9, 10 and 12.

No report was made on how the money was spent, but Cabela's bought newspaper, radio and billboard advertising and also sent mailers out to voters.

The No Free Lunch Committee, which opposed the land donation, collected \$2,708, according to its pre-election report.

Two men - Dwayne Coleman and John Barta - made \$1,000 donations and Fred Weishaupl, who led the effort to place the issue on the ballot, donated \$500. There was \$208 in unitemized donations.

The committee listed \$1,445.54 in cash on hand in the report, filed Sept. 11.

A post-election report must be filed in a few weeks,

In other campaign notes:

* Cabela's executives and employees and supporters gathered at the Rushmore Plaza Holiday Inn Tuesday night.

Mayor Alan Hanks and several members of the City Council were at the victory party, which was low-key but packed with smiling faces who sampled from a buffet and sipped drinks.

The No Free Lunch Committee met at Thirsty's, a bar in downtown Rapid City. "They have more money than I do," Weishaupl said with a laugh.

* An argument over who had the floor erupted between Hanks and citizen Steve Brendan during the general public comment period at the regular Monday, Sept. 17, Rapid City Council meeting. Brendan began speaking about the Cabela's vote and the Sept. 10 forum sponsored by The Rapid City Weekly News and the Rapid City Chamber of Commerce. According to Brendan, Alderman Bill Okrepkie used fear tactics at the forum to try to get people to vote in favor of the land giveaway.

Okrepkie got upset at Brendan's remarks and Hanks asked Brendan to respect the council members and not make accusations against them.

"If you want to talk about the issues, that is fine," Hanks said. "But picking on specific council people is not allowed."

Brendan asked if he could get back the time it took for Hanks to speak and he was denied that time. An argument then ensued over what was being said and who had the floor. Hanks banged his gavel after Brendan interrupted a number of times. After Hanks finished speaking and Brendan began talking again, Hanks held the gavel in the air as a warning.

