

2020

Annual Report



**Tom Johnson**  
*President & CEO*

**Matt Brunner**  
*Economic Development Director*

**Dana Borowski**  
*Finance Director*

**Shiloh Francis**  
*Communications Director*

**Anna Hays**  
*Public Policy Director*

**Brandis Knudsen**  
*Director Of Small Business  
Development And Investor Relations*

**Mitch Nachtigall**  
*Director Of Innovation  
Entrepreneurship*

**Rachel Day**  
*Events & Training Manager*

**Andy Greenman**  
*Creative Services Manager*

**Liz Highland**  
*HR Coordinator/Office Manager*

**Debbie Leber**  
*Finance Manager*

**Samantha McGrath**  
*Workforce Development & Talent  
Attraction Manager*

**Becky Knox**  
*Executive Assistant*

**Loni Reichert**  
*Admin and Data Services Coordinator*

**Ryan Boyd**  
*DOD SkillBridge Program Intern*

## **MISSION**

*Elevate the Rapid City region for everyone.*

## **VISION**

*Rapid City and the Black Hills region is the place people want to be.*

## **CORE VALUES**

- Work Hard
- Face the Challenge
- Lead the Change

Elevate Rapid City is a public-private partnership organization leading the economic and community development, entrepreneurship, and small business efforts in the Black Hills region. We work to elevate the Rapid City region for all with the strong vision of making Rapid City and the Black Hills region the place people want to be.

Elevate Rapid City is committed to promoting and advocating for business and personal advancement in western South Dakota through a targeted spotlight on jobs, infrastructure, and overall quality of life in and around the Black Hills region and Rapid City metro area.

Together, we strive to embrace the heart and soul of our community through diversified and inclusive growth and strong professional opportunities advocating the strengths of the Black Hills.

# While pandemic lingers, Elevate Rapid City remains optimistic heading to 2021

*A complete staff, renewed mission and dozens of business prospects highlight the year to come*

It is probably an understatement to say that 2020 was a year of uncertainty. Pandemics, masks, hand sanitizer, social distancing, partial lockdowns—these were all things no one could have foreseen. In the Rapid City area unemployment rose to 13.8%, which was a level not seen since the great depression.

We are proud of the way Elevate Rapid City responded with courage and with a risk-taking spirit. We worked to help small businesses with emergency bridge loans, kept small businesses going with the promotion of curb-side pickup, helped front-line workers stay in their homes in partnership with the United Way, provided grant and loan support to childcare providers, and provided information and support to the community with online training, events, and educational seminars, all for no-or-little cost.

Additionally, we launched a new business and quality of life magazine called Elevate, grew tenfold our reach on social media, helped dozens of businesses with business intelligence,



**Tom Johnson** // CEO, Elevate Rapid City



**David Lust** // Chairman, Elevate Rapid City

workforce analytics, and market research through a program called EPIC (Elevate Prosperity Insight Center). We also added a legislative scorecard and new capacity to recruit companies and remote workers. The numbers don't lie: Elevate went from just a few prospect companies looking at the area a year ago to more than three dozen today.

Unemployment has returned (at least as of August 2020) to a somewhat normal 5.2%. And though we are still not out of the woods yet, there are reasons to be optimistic.

Elevate as an organization continues to evolve. We've brought on a full team of professional staff members, completed several organizational mergers, and renewed our mission, values and created six foundational pillars upon which we measure ourselves everyday: economic development, innovation & entrepreneurship, workforce and talent attraction, small business, business advocacy & quality growth, and finally, military affairs as we support our partners with the South Dakota Ellsworth Development Authority (SDEDA) and their mission to continue to enhance the area for the B-21 and beyond.

Each of these pillars has metrics by which we measure success. Those metrics feed into our five-year goals:

- ≥ **4,000 jobs created**
- ≥ **15% increase in incomes**
- ≥ **\$125 million annually in consumer spending**
- ≥ **\$300 million annually capital investment**

Although some economists do not expect the national economy to fully recover until 2022, we find no reason why we should not stick to these goals. After all, if we expect to be world class, we should continue to strive for worthy goals, even as the rest of the nation lowers its expectations.

In 2021, expect to continue to see the organization evolve and develop new programs for downtown, existing businesses, workforce training and skill development, and to continue to work towards elevating the region for all.

Thank you to the more than one thousand businesses who have invested in our mission. The work we do would not be possible without your trust and belief in our mission.

**Tom Johnson,**  
**President and CEO**

**David Lust,**  
**Chairman**

**Elevate went from just a few prospect companies looking at the area a year ago to more than three dozen today.**

# 5 Year Goals

In January 2018, goals were set for Elevate Rapid City.  
Here is where we currently stand.

**CREATE  
4,000  
JOBS\***

\*BY 2023



**INCREASE  
INCOMES  
BY 15%\***

\*BY 2023



**INCREASE  
IN ANNUAL  
CONSUMER  
SPENDING BY  
\$125 MILLION**

AS OF OCT 1, 2020



**REACH \$300  
MILLION IN  
ANNUAL CAPITAL  
INVESTMENT**

AS OF OCT 1, 2020



Sources: Job numbers from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Average weekly wages from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Rapid City Gross Sales from FY19 through FY20; Rapid City valuations, October 2020.

# Accomplishments

## Advocacy

Elevate maintained a full-time presence lobbying for pro-business issues during the South Dakota Legislative Session. As a result of that work, we released our first Legislative Scorecard. This annual report will serve as a tool for voters to consider the pro-business stance of elected officials.

We hosted virtual town halls for the primary election and included nearly all candidates for the region's districts.



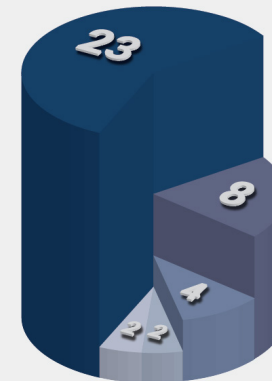
The former Governmental Affairs Committee has been restructured. Now the Governmental Affairs Connection, these monthly events are open to the public.

Topics will range from current headline issues to updates from all levels of government.

## Economic Development

Jeff Haverly retired in February and we welcomed Matt Brunner in July.

### CURRENT PROSPECTS



- Energy
- Aerospace and Defense
- Technology
- Professional and Scientific and Technical Services
- Manufacturing

We refined our targeted industries to: Manufacturing (*advanced manufacturing, metal works, and food processing*); Technology (*IT/Software Development and Research & Development*); Aerospace and Defense; Professional and Scientific and Technical Services; Energy (*Natural Resources & Mining*)

We went from zero prospects to more than three dozen to date with interest from WA, CA, IL, NV, GA, WY, NH, ND, ME, OR and more.

# Accomplishments

## Innovation & Entrepreneurship



Construction progress continues on the new innovation center at 18 Main Street. The building is scheduled to be opened Spring 2021.

Ten South Dakota companies made the list of Inc. Magazine's 5,000 fastest growing businesses in the nation. Four

were West River Businesses: VRC Metal Systems of Box Elder (1,967); B9Creations, of Rapid City (2,318); N2 Communications of Kyle (3,276); Independent Trust Company of America of Rapid City (4,447). B9Creations and VRC Metal Systems got their start in the Ascent Innovation technology startup incubator.

Nanopareil was recently acquired by global company, Gamma Biosciences. It started as a SD School of Mines and Technology research project and now calls the Ascent Innovation technology startup incubator their home.

The top 4 places of the 2020 Governor's Giant Vision award went to Black Hills companies: Novum Nano, HomeMetrics, Innoraymond Power Products, and Scobi Kombucha. Novum Nano is a current member and Innoraymond Power Products a former member of the Ascent Innovation technology startup incubator. The 1st and 4th place awards in the student competition went to students from SD Mines.

## Military

Transformed the Military Affairs Committee to the Military Advisory Coalition. This will provide a unified voice of the Black Hills that strengthens the connections between the military and community

Secured a \$6.3M matching grant for the Liberty Center in Box Elder. A fitness and community center being built to support the growing fitness needs of Ellsworth AFB and the broader community caused by the B-21 mission.

Launched the Black Hills Wire website to connect military personnel and families to resources, information, discounts, and events in the Black Hills Community.

Transferred 40 + acres of otherwise non-valued land to the City of Box Elder for open space along Box Elder Creek to help with flood plain issues and for future bike and walking path.

Continued to work on solving incompatible uses around the Base to ensure all mission can be completed without restrictions.

Connected EAFB leadership with local businesses and experts to address issues pertaining to water contamination and energy resiliency

## Small Business and Investor Relations

We launched a new tiered investment model. This opens the door to welcome even more businesses to invest in the future of Rapid City. The tiered structure gives businesses more benefits than were available under the old model. It also allows businesses the flexibility to choose the benefits they want to receive.

### 2020 SMALL BUSINESS BY THE NUMBERS



61 NEW INVESTORS



17 RIBBON CUTTINGS



6 BEAUTIFICATION AWARDS

## Workforce Development & Talent Attraction

Our Workforce Development Manager, Samantha McGrath, joined the team in September.

With the launch of E.P.I.C. we have been able to help businesses fill positions from nursing to trades.

We have begun initiatives reaching out to remote workers.

Elevate has partnered with Rapid City Area Schools and sponsors the Business, Entrepreneurship and Hospitality Academy for the new Pathways programming.

# COVID-19 Response

Elevate Rapid City has three core values: **work hard, face the challenge, and lead the change together.** When COVID-19 began affecting our community, we did not hesitate to act. Here is a quick overview of the work we have done on behalf of small businesses and the region at-large.



Offered more than 40 free **virtual trainings.**

Hosted candidate townhalls to give the public a chance to hear from candidates and make an educated decision at the polls.

**Provided loans** for 18 area businesses totaling over \$220,000 through our Emergency Bridge Loan fund. The average time from receipt of complete application to putting a check in their hand was less than 4 days, in some cases less than 48 hours.

Donated \$25,000 to the **UNITED We Stand COVID-19 Relief Fund** through United Way that helps those less fortunate who have been affected by the crisis with housing, food security, and childcare.

Donated \$150,000 to the **Rapid City Strategic Housing Trust Fund** at the Black Hills Area Community Foundation – half of which is designated for immediate needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.



Created **Rapid City to Go** – A Facebook Group for businesses to share how they serve the community while respecting social distancing. To date there are more than 14,000 people in the group.

Launched a **Child Care Loan Program** to help providers stay open as parents return to work and school resumed.

Coordinated a supply chain **donation drop-off** with Monument Health and Dakota Warehouse. This helped to ensure our medical providers had enough personal protective equipment to stay safe and healthy while caring for patients.

# Pledged Investors

In April 2018 Elevate Rapid City came to be thanks to the support of these early business investors. The organization was founded with a mission to unify the Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Partnership, Ascent Innovation and SDEDA. Together, we work to elevate the quality of life and employment opportunities for the region.

## DIAMOND - \$50,000+



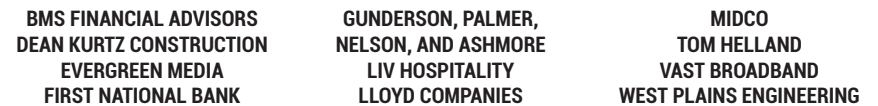
## PLATINUM - \$20,000+



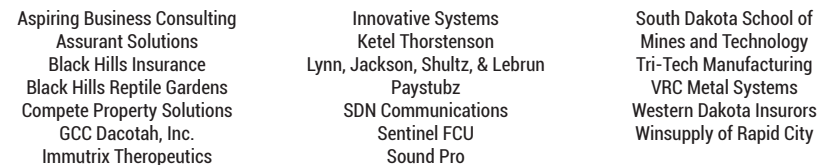
## GOLD - \$10,000



## SILVER - \$5,000



## BRONZE - \$1,000



## Board of Directors

**Jack Lynass**

*Black Hills Community Bank*

**Roger Heacock**

*Black Hills Federal Credit Union*

**Al Rieman**

*Black Hills Harley Davidson*

**Jodi Anderson**

*Black Hills Regional Eye Institute*

**Hani Shafai**

*Dream Design International*

**Tom Weaver**

*First Interstate Bank*

**Jim Haar**

*Golden West Technologies*

**Carol Rae**

*ImmutriX Therapeutics, Inc.*

**Scott Barbour**

*Northwest Pipe Fittings*

**Jennifer Trucano**

*Rapid City Medical Center*

**Todd Kenner**

*RESPEC*

**Jody Bender**

*US Bank*

**Bryan Mickley**

*Wells Fargo Bank*

**Matthew Tranquill**

*Rapid City Journal*

**Scott Landguth**

*SDEDA*

**Dr. Ann Bolman**

*Western Dakota Tech*

**Dr. Lori Simon**

*Rapid City Area Schools*

**Dr. Jim Rankin**

*South Dakota School of Mines & Technology*

**Caleb Arceneaux**

*Liv Hospitality, LLC*

**Andy Bartling**

*Modern Woodmen*

**Shannon Brinker**

*True North Asset Group*

**Jeff Carsrud**

*Beacon Companies, LLC*

**Mark Schreiner**

*Print Mark-et*

**Pat Kurtenbach**

*West River Foundation*

## Executive Committee

**David Lust, Chair**

*Gunderson, Palmer, Nelson & Ashmore, LLP*

**Darren Haar, Vice Chair**

*Complete Property Solutions*

**Dick Johnson, Treasurer**

*West River Electric Association*

**Stuart Wevik, Secretary**

*Black Hills Energy*

**Mayor Steve Allender**

*City of Rapid City*

**Hugh Boyle**

*BMS Advisors*

**Paulette Davidson**

*Monument Health*

**David Dolan**

*Sanford Health*

**Tom Johnson**

*Elevate Rapid City President & CEO*

**Jack Kaup**

*Black Hills Surgical Hospital*

**Larry Larson**

*Mayor of Box Elder*

**Pete Lien**

*Pete Lien & Sons*

**Larry Oswald**

*Montana Dakota Utilities*

**Alan Solano**

*John T. Vucurevich Foundation*



[elevaterapidcity.com](http://elevaterapidcity.com)