

Rapid City, South Dakota

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Rapid City (Lakota: *Mni Lúzahąŋ Othúŋwahe*;^[7] "Swift Water City") is the second-largest city in South Dakota (after Sioux Falls) and the county seat of Pennington County.^[8] Named after Rapid Creek, on which the city is established, it is set against the eastern slope of the Black Hills mountain range. The population was 67,956 as of the 2010 Census.^[9] Known as the "Gateway to the Black Hills" and the "City of Presidents", it is split by a low mountain ridge that divides the western and eastern parts of the city. Ellsworth Air Force Base is located on the outskirts of the city. Camp Rapid, a part of the United States Army National Guard, is located in the western part of the city. The historic "Old West" town of Deadwood is nearby. In the neighboring Black Hills are the popular tourist attractions of Mount Rushmore, the Crazy Horse Memorial, Custer State Park, and Wind Cave National Park.

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Rapid City Mni Lúzahąŋ Othúŋwahe

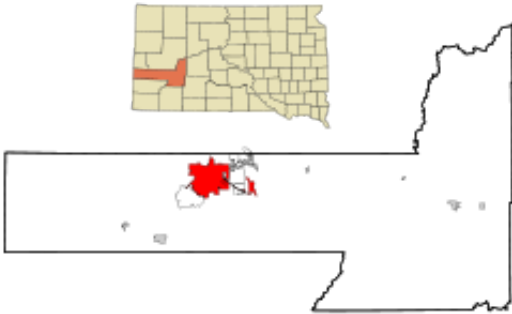
City

City of Rapid City



Downtown Rapid City

Nickname(s): Gateway to the Black Hills, City of Presidents



Location in Pennington County and the state of South Dakota



Location in the United States
Coordinates: 44.076°N 103.228°W﻿ / ﻿

Country	United States
State	South Dakota
County	Pennington

Founded

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History

The public discovery of gold in 1874 by the Custer Expedition brought a mass influx of settlers into the Black Hills region of South Dakota. Rapid City was founded (and originally known as "Hay Camp") in 1876 by a group of disappointed miners, who promoted their new city as the "Gateway to the Black Hills." John Brennan and Samuel Scott, with a small group of men, laid out the site of the present Rapid City in February 1876, which was named for the spring-fed Rapid Creek that flows through it. A square mile was measured off and the six blocks in the center were designated as a business section. Committees were appointed to bring in prospective merchants and their families to locate in the new settlement. The city soon began selling supplies to

	1876 ^[1]
Incorporated	1882
Government • Mayor	Steve Allender ^[2]
Area ^[3] • City • Land • Water	55.49 sq mi (143.72 km²) 55.41 sq mi (143.51 km²) 0.08 sq mi (0.21 km²)
Elevation	3,202 ft (976 m)
Population (2010) ^[4] • City • Estimate (2014)^[5] • Density • Metro	67,956 72,638 1,226.4/sq mi (473.5/km²) 141,431 (US: 287th)
Time zone • Summer (DST)	Mountain (UTC−7) Mountain (UTC−6)
Zip code	57701, 57702, 57703, 57704, 57709
Area code(s)	605
FIPS code GNIS feature ID	46-52980 1265333^[6]
Website	www.rcgov.org (http://www.rcgov.org)



Panoramic view of Sixth and Main Streets in Rapid City, ca. 1912

miners and pioneers. Its location on the edge of the Plains and Hills and its large river valley made it the natural hub of railroads arriving in the late 1880s from both the south and east. By 1900, Rapid City had survived a boom and bust and was establishing itself as an important regional trade center for the upper

midwest.

Although the Black Hills became a popular tourist destination in the late 1890s, it was a combination of local efforts, the popularity of the automobile, and construction of improved highways that brought tourists to the Black Hills in large numbers after World War I. Gutzon Borglum, already a famous sculptor, began work on Mount Rushmore in 1927 and his son, Lincoln Borglum, continued the carving of the presidents' faces in rock following his father's death in 1941. The work was halted due to pressures leading to the US entry into World War II and the massive sculpture was declared complete in 1941. Although tourism sustained the city throughout the Great Depression of the 1930s, the gasoline rationing of World War II had a devastating effect on the tourist industry in the town, but this was more than made up for by the war-related growth.

The city benefited greatly from the opening of Rapid City Army Air Base, later Ellsworth Air Force Base, an Army Air Corps training base. As a result, the population of the area nearly doubled between 1940 and 1948, from almost 14,000 to nearly 27,000 people. Military families and civilian personnel soon took every available living space in town, and mobile parks proliferated. Rapid City businesses profited from the military payroll. During the Cold War, missile installations proliferated in the area: a series of Nike Air Defense sites were constructed around Ellsworth in the 1950s. In the early 60s the construction of three Titan missile launch sites containing a total of nine Titan I missiles in the general vicinity of Rapid City took place. Beginning in November 1963, the land for a hundred miles east, northeast and northwest of the city was dotted with 150 Minuteman missile silos and 15 launch command centers, all of which were deactivated in the early 1990s.^[10]

In 1949, city officials envisioned the city as a retail and wholesale trade center for the region and designed a plan for growth that focused on a civic center, more downtown parking places, new schools, and paved streets. A construction boom continued into the 1950s. Growth slowed in the 1960s, but the worst natural disaster in South Dakota history, the Black Hills Flood led to another building boom a decade later. On June 9, 1972, heavy rains caused massive flooding of the Rapid Creek. More than 250 people lost their lives and more than \$100 million in property was destroyed.

The devastation of the flood and the outpouring of private donations and millions of dollars in federal aid led to the completion of one big part of the 1979 plan: clearing the area along the Rapid Creek and making it a public park. New homes and businesses were constructed to replace those that had been destroyed. Rushmore Plaza Civic Center and a new Central High School (<http://www1.rcas.org/chs>) were built in part of the area that had been cleared. The new Central High School opened in 1978, with the graduating class in that year straddling both the original Central (housed in what is now Rapid City High School and community theater) and the new Central. The rebuilding in part insulated Rapid City from the drop in automotive tourism caused by the Oil Embargo in 1974, but tourism was depressed for most of a decade. In 1978, Rushmore Mall was built on the north edge of the city, adding to the city's position as a retail shopping center.

In 1980 in *United States v. Sioux Nation of Indians*, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that the government of the United States had illegally stolen the Black Hills from the Sioux people when the government unilaterally broke the treaty that guaranteed the Black Hills belonged to the Sioux. The court decision offered money, but the Sioux declined on principle that the theft of their land should not be validated, and still demand the return of the land.^[11] This land includes Rapid City, which is by far the largest modern settlement in the Black Hills. As of 2010, the dispute has not been settled.

In the 1980s, growth was fueled by an increase in tourism, increasingly tied to the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, followed by another decline in the late 1990s. Fears for the closure of Ellsworth AFB as part of the massive base closure process in the 1990s and 2000s led to attempts to expand other sectors of the economy, but growth continued and the city expanded significantly during this period.



Debris along Rapid Creek after 1972 flood.

Today, Rapid City is South Dakota's primary city for tourism and recreation. With the approval of a Deep Underground Science and Engineering Laboratory at the Homestake Mine site in nearby Lead, Rapid City has a future of great advancements in technology, medicine, and scientific research.

1972 Rapid Creek flood

On June 9–10, 1972, extremely heavy rains over the eastern Black Hills of South Dakota produced record floods on Rapid Creek and other streams in the area. Nearly 15 inches (380 mm) of rain fell in about 6 hours near Nemo, and more than 10 inches (250 mm) of rain fell over an area of 60 square miles (160 km²).

According to the Red Cross, the resulting peak floods (which occurred after dark) left 238 people dead and 3,057 people injured.^[12] In addition to the human

tragedy, total damage was estimated in excess of \$160 million (about \$821 million in 2009 dollars), which included 1,335 homes and 5,000 automobiles that were destroyed. Runoff from this storm produced record

floods (highest peak flows recorded) along Battle, Spring, Rapid, and Box Elder Creeks. Smaller floods also occurred along Elk Creek and Bear Butte Creek. Canyon Lake Dam, on the west side of Rapid City, broke the night of the flood, unleashing a wall of water down the creek. The 1972 flooding has an estimated recurrence interval of 500 years,^[13] which means that a flood of this magnitude will occur on average once every 500 years. Every year there is a 0.2 percent chance (1 in 500) of experiencing a similar event. To prevent a similar tragedy from occurring in the future, the city's flood plain is no longer allowed to be built upon. Today the flood plain features golf courses, parks, sports arenas, and arboretums where neighborhoods and businesses once stood.



Cars jumbled together by the 1972 flood.

In 2007, the Rapid City Public Library created a 1972 Flood digital archive^[14] that collects survivors' stories, photos and news accounts of the flood. The Journey Museum has an interactive display on the 1972 flood which is an ongoing project to give future generations the best idea of how the people were affected and the changes made to it because of the loss of 238 lives. It will in the future include the biographies of all of those who died so they will be remembered as more than names on a memorial.

Geography

Rapid City is located at 44.076188°N 103.228299°W. The downtown elevation of Rapid City is 3,202 feet (976 m) and Rapid City sits in the shadow of Harney Peak; which at 7,242 feet (2,207 m), is the highest point east of the Rocky Mountains.

According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 55.49 square miles (143.71 km²), of which, 55.41 square miles (143.5 km²) of it is land and 0.08 square miles (0.2 km²) is water.^[15]

Rapid City is located on the eastern edge of the Black Hills, and is split in half by the Dakota Hogback. Rapid City's "Westside" is located in the Red Valley between the foothills of the Black Hills proper and the Dakota Hogback, so named for the red Spearfish formation soils and the way the valley completely circles

the Black Hills. Rapid City has grown up into the foothills, with both ridges and valleys developed, especially in the last 20 years, and wildfire is a distinct threat to these residential areas, as shown by the Westberry Trails fire in 1988.

Skyline Drive follows the summits of the Dakota Hogback south from near Rapid Gap (where Rapid Creek cuts through the Hogback) to a large high plateau which forms the current south edge of Rapid City. The Central and Eastern portions of Rapid City lie in the wide valley of Rapid Creek outside the Hogback, which includes a number of mesas rising a hundred feet or more above the floodplain.

Rapid Creek

Rapid Creek flows through Rapid City, emerging from Dark Canyon above Canyon Lake and flowing in a large arc north of Downtown. Rapid Creek descends to the southeast as the valley widens. The floodplain of Rapid Creek is mostly a series of parks, arboretums, and bike trails, one legacy of the Black Hills Flood of 1972. To the north, a series of ridges separates Rapid Creek from Box Elder Creek, with large older and new residential areas and commercial areas along I-90. To the south, the terrain rises more steeply to the southern widening of the Dakota Hogback into a plateau dividing the Rapid Creek drainage from Spring Creek.

Climate

Rapid City features a steppe climate (Köppen *BSk*), and is part of USDA Hardiness zone 5a.^[16] Its location makes its climate unlike both the higher elevations of the Black Hills and the Great Plains to the east. It is characterized by long arid summers and long dry winters, with short but distinct spring and autumn seasons. Precipitation averages 16.3 in (410 mm) annually, but has historically ranged from 9.12 in (232 mm) in 1974 to 27.70 in (704 mm) in 1946.^[17]

Winters are cold and dry, with December, with a daily average temperature of 24.9 °F (−3.9 °C), being the coldest month in recent years; however, Chinook winds can warm temperatures above 50 °F (10 °C), doing so on average about 21 times from December to February.^[17] Temperature inversions, however, occasionally produce warmer temperatures in the Black Hills. On average, highs do not climb above freezing on 42 days, while the low temperature reaches 0 °F (−18 °C) on an average 17 nights.^[17] Snowfall is frequent but usually not heavy; March and April are typically the snowiest months, and the seasonal total averages 41 inches (104 cm),^[18] although historically ranging from 16.9 in (43 cm) in 1980–81 to 80.9 in (205 cm) to 1985–86. Extensive snow cover does not remain for long, with only 9 days seasonally with 5 inches (13 cm) or more on the ground.^[18] Measurable snow has occurred in every month except July.^[17]

Compared to locations in the east, spring warms rather gradually, with the last measurable snow *generally* occurring in late April and precipitation totals beginning to increase; May snow occurs several times per decade.^[17] In the latter half of spring, storms typically develop over the Black Hills during the afternoon and move onto the plains in the evening. Indeed, only April thru June have seen calendar-day precipitation amounts exceeding 3 in (76 mm), and June 15, 1963, with 3.78 in (96 mm), holds the single-day rainfall



View of southern Rapid City from the east after a rainstorm, including a view of Harney Peak and the Black Hills.

record;^[17] the record-wettest month is May 1996 with 8.18 in (208 mm). However, Rapid City still sees an average of 20 clear to partly cloudy days^[19] and 67 percent of its possible sunshine in June.^[20] This is the traditional "flood" season for Rapid and other creeks in the Eastern Hills. Temperatures warm rapidly as summer approaches.

Summer in Rapid City is hot, relatively dry, and sunny. July is the warmest month of the year, having a daily average temperature of 87.1 °F (30.6 °C). There is an average of 34 days with 90 °F (32 °C)+ highs and 5.1 with 100 °F (38 °C)+ highs.^[18] Due to the elevation and aridity, lows rarely remain at or above 70 °F (21 °C) and during July and August lower to 50 °F (10 °C) on an average 7.6 days combined.^[17] Rapid City records an average of 9 thunderstorm days in August,^[19] but only 1.56 inches (40 mm) of rain in that month.

Fall is a precipitous transition season, with the average first freeze in Rapid City is October 4 and late August through September in the Black Hills. The Rapid City area's first snowfall is usually in October, although higher elevations sometimes receive significant snow in September. Occasional cold fronts moving through the area bring blustery northwest winds.

Sunshine is abundant in the region, averaging 2850 hours, 64% of the possible total, per year.^[20]

Rapid City holds a record for an extreme temperature drop of 47 °F (26 °C) in 5 minutes on January 10, 1911.^[21] Official extreme temperatures range from −31 °F (−35 °C) on February 2, 1996 up to 111 °F (44 °C) on July 15, 2006; the record low daily maximum is −18 °F (−28 °C), while the record high daily minimum is 75 °F (24 °C) on July 8, 1985 and July 28, 1960.^[22]

Climate data for Rapid City Regional Airport, South Dakota (1981–2010 normals, extremes 1942–present) ^[a]													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Record high °F (°C)	76 (24)	75 (24)	83 (28)	93 (34)	98 (37)	109 (43)	111 (44)	107 (42)	104 (40)	96 (36)	83 (28)	75 (24)	111 (44)
Average high °F (°C)	37.1 (2.8)	39.6 (4.2)	47.9 (8.8)	58.3 (14.6)	67.8 (19.9)	77.8 (25.4)	87.1 (30.6)	86.4 (30.2)	75.6 (24.2)	61.4 (16.3)	47.0 (8.3)	36.9 (2.7)	60.4 (15.8)
Average low °F (°C)	12.9 (−10.6)	15.1 (−9.4)	22.9 (−5.1)	31.8 (−0.1)	42.1 (5.6)	51.2 (10.7)	58.1 (14.5)	56.6 (13.7)	46.0 (7.8)	34.1 (1.2)	22.1 (−5.5)	13.0 (−10.6)	33.9 (1.1)
Record low °F (°C)	−27 (−33)	−31 (−35)	−21 (−29)	1 (−17)	18 (−8)	31 (−1)	39 (4)	38 (3)	18 (−8)	−2 (−19)	−19 (−28)	−30 (−34)	−31 (−35)
Average precipitation inches (mm)	0.30 (7.6)	0.44 (11.2)	0.93 (23.6)	1.80 (45.7)	3.22 (81.8)	2.53 (64.3)	1.85 (47)	1.56 (39.6)	1.29 (32.8)	1.42 (36.1)	0.53 (13.5)	0.42 (10.7)	16.29 (413.8)
Average snowfall inches (cm)	4.4 (11.2)	5.8 (14.7)	8.7 (22.1)	7.9 (20.1)	1.1 (2.8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0.2 (0.5)	1.6 (4.1)	6.0 (15.2)	5.4 (13.7)	41.1 (104.4)
Avg. precipitation days (≥ 0.01 in)	5.4	5.7	7.6	9.5	11.7	12.3	9.5	7.7	7.0	7.2	5.3	5.4	94.3
Avg. snowy days (≥ 0.1 in)	5.4	5.8	5.3	4.4	0.4	0	0	0	0.4	1.5	4.1	5.8	33.1
Avg. relative humidity (%)	63.5	65.1	63.8	58.6	60.8	61.9	56.2	52.6	53.5	54.2	62.2	64.8	59.8
Mean monthly sunshine hours	163.5	174.0	233.9	246.9	274.3	310.5	335.5	323.8	261.9	226.0	156.6	149.9	2,856.8
Percent possible sunshine	57	59	63	61	60	67	72	75	70	66	54	54	64
Source: NOAA (relative humidity and sun 1961–1990) ^{[17][18][22][20]}													

Demographics

2010 census

As of the census^[4] of 2010, there were 67,956 people, 28,586 households, and 16,957 families residing in the city. The population density was 1,226.4 inhabitants per square mile (473.5/km²). There were 30,254 housing units at an average density of 546.0 per square mile (210.8/km²). The racial makeup of the city was 80.4% White, 1.1% African American, 12.4% Native American, 1.2% Asian, 0.1% Pacific Islander, 0.7% from other races, and 4.1% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 4.1% of the population.

There were 28,586 households of which 29.9% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 41.2% were married couples living together, 13.1% had a female householder with no husband present, 5.1% had a male householder with no wife present, and 40.7% were non-families. 32.9% of all households were made up of individuals and 11.1% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.29 and the average family size was 2.90.

The median age in the city was 35.6 years. 23.9% of residents were under the age of 18; 10.6% were between the ages of 18 and 24; 25.7% were from 25 to 44; 25% were from 45 to 64; and 14.5% were 65 years of age or older. The gender makeup of the city was 49.5% male and 50.5% female.^[26]

2000 census

As of the census of 2000, there were 59,607 people, 23,969 households, and 15,220 families residing in the city. The population density was 1,336.7 people per square mile (516.1/km²). There were 25,096 housing units at an average density of 562.8 per square mile (217.3/km²).^[15] The racial makeup of the city was 84.33% White, 0.97% African American, 10.14% Native American, 1.00% Asian, 0.06% Pacific Islander, 0.73% from other races, and 2.77% from two or more races.^[27] Hispanic or Latino of any race were 2.77% of the population.^[27]

There were 23,969 households out of which 31.2% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 46.7% were married couples living together, 12.6% had a female householder with no husband present, and 36.5% were non-families. 29.4% of all households were made up of individuals and 10.0% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.39 and the average family size was 2.96.^[27]

In the city the population was spread out with 25.3% under the age of 18, 11.8% from 18 to 24, 28.7% from 25 to 44, 20.9% from 45 to 64, and 13.2% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 35 years. For every 100 females there were 96.2 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 93.6 males.^[26]

Historical population

Census	Pop.	%±
1880	939	—
1890	2,128	126.6%
1900	1,342	−36.9%
1910	3,454	157.4%
1920	5,777	67.3%
1930	10,464	81.1%
1940	13,844	32.3%
1950	25,312	82.8%
1960	42,390	67.5%
1970	43,846	3.4%
1980	46,492	6.0%
1990	54,523	17.3%
2000	59,607	9.3%
2010	67,956	14.0%
Est. 2014	72,638 ^[23]	6.9%

U.S. Decennial Census^[24]
2013 Estimate^[25]

As of 2000 the median income for a household in the city was \$35,978, and the median income for a family was \$44,818. Males had a median income of \$30,985 versus \$21,913 for females. The per capita income for the city was \$19,445. About 9.4% of families and 12.7% of the population were below the poverty line, including 17.6% of those under age 18 and 6.9% of those age 65 or over.

Healthcare

Rapid City is a major medical care center for a five-state region, centered around the Rapid City Regional Hospital and the Indian Health Service's Sioux San Hospital. Other smaller, independent medical facilities have been established in the area, including the Black Hills Surgery Center, The Heart Doctors, The Spine Center at Rapid City, Setliff Sinus Institute, Black Hills Eye Institute and Regional Behavioral Healthcare. Two Veterans Affairs hospitals are located nearby at Fort Meade, and Hot Springs. Emergency medical services (EMS) are provided by the Rapid City Fire Department. Emergency medical transportation by rotor and fixed wing aircraft is provided by Black Hills Life Flight, operated by Air Methods Corp. based in Denver, CO. Rapid City is also home to a number of non-profit public health organizations that engage in survey and clinic research, epidemiology, and area-based health promotion disease prevention. The Health Education and Promotion Council (<http://heapc.org>) and Black Hills Center for American Indian Health (<http://bhcaih.org>) are two notable non-profit organizations.

Education

Rapid City institutions of higher education include the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, Oglala Lakota College's He Sapa College Center, Black Hills State University - Rapid City University Center (includes classes and degrees through five other South Dakota post-secondary Institutions), National American University, Western Dakota Technical Institute, Black Hills Beauty College, John Witherspoon College, and several small sectarian preacher training schools. Black Hills State University is located in nearby Spearfish and offers several classes in Rapid City. The South Dakota state nurse training program is also based in Rapid City. There are two public high schools in the city, Central High School and Stevens High School. The city also has at least four Christian high schools including Saint Thomas More, Rapid City Christian High School, Liberty Baptist Academy and Open Bible Christian School.



Rapid City Public Library

In 2013, 26.6 percent of Rapid City residents 25 years or over had earned a Bachelor's degree or higher.^[28] This is on par with the average educational attainment in the United States. The highest rates of educational attainment in South Dakota can be found in metropolitan areas of Rapid City and Sioux Falls.

Rapid City Area Schools

The local public schools fall under the Rapid City Area Schools school district. There are three high schools within the district. They are Central High School, Stevens High School and the newly renovated Rapid City High School, which also houses the Performing Arts Center. The middle schools include newly founded East Middle School, North Middle School, South Middle School, Southwest Middle School, and West Middle School. There are 16 elementary schools within the district. These are Black Hawk, Canyon Lake,

Corral Drive, General Beadle, Grandview, Horace Mann, Kibben Kuster, Knollwood Heights, Meadowbrook, Pinedale, Rapid Valley, Robbinsdale, South Canyon, South Park, Valley View, and Woodrow Wilson.^[29]

Sports

- The most successful of South Dakota's sports programs, Rapid City Post 22 American Legion Baseball has won dozens of state titles and made several appearances in the American Legion Baseball World Series, winning a title in 1993. Recently the Former Post 22 head coach Dave Ploof stepped down after 47 years. The new head coach Mitch Messer has won 2 state championships in his first three years at the helm of the baseball program.
- The Rapid City Thrillers was a professional basketball club that competed in the Continental Basketball Association beginning in the 1987–1988 season through the 1996–1997 season.
- The Black Hills Posse was a professional basketball club that competed in the International Basketball Association beginning in the 1995–1996 season.
- The Black Hills Gold was a professional basketball club that competed in the International Basketball Association during the 1999–2000 season.
- The Rapid City Flying Aces is an indoor football team that competed between 2000 and 2006 in the Indoor Football League, United Indoor Football, and National Indoor Football League, changing names from season to season.
- The Rapid City Rush is a minor league hockey team in the ECHL.
- The Rushmore Hockey Association is the home of youth hockey in Rapid City, competing in the South Dakota Amateur Hockey Association. The Rushmore Thunder won 2010 State Championships for Varsity, Junior Varsity, and Pee Wee B. The varsity again won the State Championship in 2014.
- There is also another American legion baseball team in Rapid City Rapid City Post 320 Stars they have yet to win a state championship.

Art and culture

Because of the importance of tourism in the area, and its extensive market area, Rapid City has many cultural resources usually found only in much larger urban areas. Among these are:

- Alternative Fuel Coffeehouse
- The Journey Museum
- Museum of Geology (<http://museum.sdsmt.edu>)
- Dahl Arts Center (<http://www.thedahl.org>)
- The Rapid City Public Library (<http://www.rapidcitylibrary.org>)
- Heritage Festival
- Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
- Black Hills Playhouse (<http://www.blackhillsplyhouse.com>)
- Storybook Island Theater
- Art Alley Gallery (<http://artalley.awardspace.com/>)
- The Performing Arts Center of Rapid City (<http://www.performingartsrc.org>)
- Black Hills Community Theatre (<http://www.bhct.org>)
- Black Hills Symphony Orchestra
- Black Hills Chamber Orchestra
- Prairie Edge Art Gallery (<http://www.prairieedge.com/>)
- Chapel in the Hills

Rapid City also has a large amount of public sculpture on display in many parts of the city. The most visible is "The City of Presidents" – a series of life-sized bronze statues representing each of the American presidents. The statues are located on street corners in the downtown area. Five South Dakota artists created the statues: Edward E. Hlavka, Lee Leuning, John Lopez, James Michael Maher, and James Van Nuys.^[30] These statues are being erected by public subscription over a ten-year period between 2000 and 2010.

Sister cities

Rapid City has three sister cities, as designated by Sister Cities International:

-  Apolda, Germany
-  Nikkō, Tochigi, Japan
-  Yangshuo County, Guangxi, China

Industry and economy

Rapid City's economy is diverse, but has only a moderate amount of industry. Heavy and medium industrial activities include a Portland cement plant (constructed and owned for 84 years^[31] by the State of South Dakota and sold in 2003 to GCC, a Mexican-based conglomerate), Black Hills Ammunition an ammunition and reloading supplies manufacturing company, several custom sawmills, a lime plant, a computer peripheral component manufacturing plant, and several farm and ranch equipment manufacturers. Of particular note, Rapid City is the center for the manufacture of Black Hills gold jewelry, a popular product with tourists and Westerners in general. Rapid City is also the location of the only manufacturer of stamping machines used for the labeling of plywood and chipboard products.

Although most gold mining has ceased in the Black Hills and was never done in or near Rapid City, mining of sand and gravel, as well as the raw materials for lime and Portland cement (including chemical-grade limestone, taconite iron ore, and gypsum) remains an important part of the economy.

The largest sector of the Rapid City economy is government services, including local, state, and federal. Major employers include Ellsworth Air Force Base,^[32] home of the 28th Bomb Wing flying the B-1B long-range bomber; the Army National Guard based at Camp Rapid and hosting annual exercises in the Black Hills drawing troops from five to ten states; and various federal agencies including the National Park Service, US Forest Service, and Indian Health Service.

The Rapid City Regional Hospital Healthcare System covers one of the largest expansions of territory in the United States. The health care sector employs over 8,000 persons in the Rapid City area.^[32]

Tourism is also a major portion of the Rapid City economy,^[32] due to the proximity of Mount Rushmore, Sturgis, home of the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, Deadwood, and other attractions in the Black Hills. Rapid City is the major source of services for the Motorcycle Rally, and the Rally's demand for motel rooms, camp sites, and other services for tourists during the first week of August means that Rapid City has the capacity to host large conventions and large numbers of tourists year-round. Various minor tourist attractions, including wildlife parks, specialty shops, caves, water parks, private museums, and other businesses are found in and near Rapid City.

Other economic sectors include financial service and investing companies such as Waddell and Reed, Citibank, WaMu, Merrill Lynch, and Northwestern Mutual. Rapid City is the headquarters for Assurant Insurance's pre-need division and Rapid City has a strong medical services sector, and institutions of higher education. Rapid City is also the major market town for much of five states, drawing commerce from more than half of South Dakota, and large portions of North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, and the Nebraska Panhandle.

The real compound annual growth rate of the gross domestic product of the Rapid City Metropolitan Statistical Area was 2.6% for 2001–2013.^[33]

Transportation

Rapid City is a major transportation hub for the Northern Plains. Rapid City Regional Airport provides flights to the airline hub cities of Denver, Minneapolis, Salt Lake City, Dallas-Fort Worth, Las Vegas, Phoenix/Mesa, Houston, Atlanta and Chicago. The airport also has extensive General Aviation operations, including wildfire fighting activities and medical flight support to Rapid City medical facilities and Indian Health Service operations in the Dakotas.

Historically, Rapid City was served by three railroads. Presently, the city is served by the Rapid City, Pierre and Eastern Railroad (RCP&E). In addition to Rapid City, the RCP&E serves the Northern Black Hills and run east to Minnesota and south through Nebraska to connect with major transcontinental railroads Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific. South Dakota does not have Amtrak service, one of the few states that doesn't.

Rapid City's central location allows easy transport of products to both coasts, and trucking is a major business activity in the city. Improved connections with Denver and I-80 to the south, via the Heartland Expressway now under construction will primarily benefit local trucking.

Infrastructure

- Interstate 90 is the primary east-west route for Rapid City. Rapid City is served by a series of 7 exits. I-90 skims the northern side of Rapid City. The South Dakota DOT has been reconstructing most of these interchanges in the last five years.
- Interstate 190 is an Interstate spur linking downtown Rapid City to Interstate 90.
- US Highway 16 is the main route to the southwest and the Black Hills from Rapid City. It links Rapid City to Custer and then west to Newcastle, Wyoming, where it connects to US Highway 85 for travel to Cheyenne and Denver. Reconstructed as a four-lane parkway connecting Rapid City to Mount Rushmore in the mid-1960s, major segments have been rebuilt as three-lane or "super-two" highways in the past decade, to support increased tourist traffic.
- South Dakota Highway 44 is a state highway that links the interior of the Black Hills to the southwest of Rapid City, and the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and nearby areas in the Great Plains to the southeast.
- South Dakota Highway 79 is a state highway that is multiplexed with I-90 northwest of Rapid City. SD Highway 79 extends to North Dakota. South of Rapid City to Nebraska, Highway 79 is being reconstructed as the Heartland Expressway, a high-speed four-lane highway which will eventually connect to Interstate 80 in Nebraska and the Colorado Front Range near Denver. The Heartland Expressway may eventually be extended along US Highway 85 north to Regina, Saskatchewan, to create an additional major north-south artery through the Great Plains which would pass through

Rapid City.

Rapid City's location on the boundary of the Western and Eastern power grids, together with the hydroelectric plants of the Mainstem Dams on the Missouri River and the large coal fields and power plants of the Powder River Basin of Wyoming make it one of the points where the two national power grids connect with each other, allowing switching of electrical power from east to west and vice versa. Rapid City previously had its own coal-fired power plant before Federal regulations forced it and many other coal plants in the area such as power stations near Gillette, Wyoming, to shut down. The Ben French power station located within city boundaries shut down September 2012, more than 2 years ahead of its scheduled shut down. Rapid City now obtains much of its power from both the Missouri dams and importing it from elsewhere. Electrical rates used to be considered relatively low until the shut down of the coal plants, so have progressively climbed the last several years as a lack of local power sources means massive expenses to import it from greater distances.

Rapid City obtains most of its water supply from Rapid Creek and the alluvial aquifers associated with the creek, owning significant water rights in Pactola Reservoir located some 15 miles (24 km) west of the city, but does also obtain water from some springs in the vicinity, and has the ability to draw water from deep formations which receive water from recharge in areas of the Black Hills where the formations come to the surface. The heavy dependence on shallow alluvial aquifers is of some concern to planners, as most suburbs of Rapid City use septic systems for domestic sewage treatment. However, water supplies remain relatively good for future growth.

Rapid City has limited city-to-city bus service along I-90, but many charter bus services operate in the area, and connect Rapid City and Deadwood with cities in Colorado, Nebraska, and Iowa. Rapid City does have a municipally-owned bus service with multiple bus stops and a headquarters in the city.

Suburbs

The estimated 2013 population of the Rapid City Metropolitan Statistical Area (Pennington County, Meade County and Custer County) was 141,131.^[34] Most cities and towns in the Black Hills and the surrounding plains have a significant percentage of their population who commute to and from Rapid City, and many residents of Rapid City work in outlying towns. Among the nearer suburbs in Pennington and Meade Counties:

- Ashland Heights
- Rapid Valley
- Blackhawk
- Piedmont Valley
- Piedmont
- Box Elder
- Colonial Pine Hills
- Caputa
- Hermosa
- Nemo
- Rimrock Area
- Johnson Siding
- Rockerville
- Summerset
- Whispering Pines

- Moon Meadows

Communities at a greater distance from Rapid City include:

- New Underwood
- Silver City
- Keystone
- Hill City
- Hayward
- Spearfish
- Sturgis
- Belle Fourche
- Wall

Local media

AM radio

AM radio stations						
Frequency	Call sign	Name	Format	Owner	City of License	Broadcast Market
580 AM	KZMX	580 Country	Country	Mt. Rushmore Broadcasting, Inc	Hot Springs	Rapid City
810 AM	KBHB	Five State Ranch Radio	Farm	HomeSlice Media Group, LLC	Sturgis	Rapid City
920 AM	KKLS	Smash Hits	Classic Hits	HomeSlice Media Group, LLC	Rapid City	Rapid City
980 AM	KDSJ		Oldies	Goldrush Broadcasting, Inc.	Deadwood	Rapid City
1150 AM	KIMM	Kim Radio	News/Talk	Gunslinger Radio, Inc.	Rapid City	Rapid City
1340 AM	KTOQ	ESPN Rapid City	Sports	Haugo Broadcasting, Inc.	Rapid City	Rapid City
1380 AM	KOTA	Radio 1380 KOTA	News/Talk	Duhamel Broadcasting Enterprises	Rapid City	Rapid City

FM radio

FM radio stations						
Frequency	Call sign	Name	Format	Owner	Target city/market	City of license
88.3 FM	KLMP	The Light	Christian	Bethesda Christian Broadcasting	Rapid City	Rapid City
88.7 FM	K204FB		Community Radio KILI-FM	Lakota Communications Inc.	Rapid City	Rapid City

			translator			
89.3 FM	KBHE	South Dakota Public Broadcasting	NPR	SD Board of Directors for Educational Telecommunications	Rapid City	Rapid City
89.9 FM	KQFR	Family Radio	Christian	Family Stations Inc.	Rapid City	Rapid City
90.3 FM	KASD	American Family Radio	Christian	American Family Radio	Rapid City	Rapid City
91.3 FM	KTEQ-FM	K-Tech	Alternative	Tech Educational Radio Council	Rapid City	Rapid City
91.7 FM	K218DX	CSN International	Christian KAWZ-FM translator	CSN International	Rapid City	Box Elder
92.2 FM	KQRQ-FM	Q92.3	Classic Hits	New Generation Broadcasting	Rapid City	Rapid City
93.1 FM	KRCS	Hot 93.1	Top 40	New Rushmore Radio, Inc.	Rapid City	Sturgis
93.9 FM	KKMK	93.9 The Mix	Hot AC	New Rushmore Radio, Inc.	Rapid City	Rapid City
95.1 FM	KSQY	K-Sky	Album-Oriented Rock	Haugo Broadcasting, Inc.	Rapid City	Deadwood
95.9 FM	KZZI	The Eagle	Country	Duhamel Broadcasting	Rapid City	Belle Fourche
96.3 FM	K242BK	The Eagle	Country KZZI Translator	Duhamel Broadcasting	Rapid City	Rapid City
97.1 FM	KFND-LP		Religious	Calvary Chapel of the Black Hills	Rapid City	Rapid City
97.5 FM	K248BT	Hot 93.1	Top 40 KRCS Translator	New Rushmore Radio, Inc.	Rapid City	Rapid City
97.9 FM	KTPT	The Point	Christian Rock	Bethesda Christian Broadcasting	Rapid City	Rapid City
98.7 FM	KOUT	Kat Country 98.7	Country	New Rushmore Radio, Inc.	Rapid City	Rapid City
99.5 FM	KRKI-FM1	99-5 The Range	Classic Country KRKI-FM booster	Badlands Broadcasting	Rapid City	Rapid City
100.3 FM	KFXS	100.3 The Fox	Classic Rock	New Rushmore Radio, Inc.	Rapid City	Rapid City
101.1 FM	KDDX	X-Rock	Active Rock	Duhamel Broadcasting Enterprises	Rapid City	Spearfish
101.9 FM	KFMH-	Kool 101.9	Oldies KFMH-FM	Badlands Broadcasting	Rapid City	Rapid City

	FM1		booster			
102.7 FM	KXMZ	Hits 102.7	Hot AC	Connoisseur Media	Rapid City	Box Elder
103.5 FM	K278AN	X-Rock	Active Rock KDDX-FM translator	Duhamel Broadcasting Enterprises	Rapid City	Rapid City
104.1 FM	KIQK	Kick 104	Country	Haugo Broadcasting, Inc.	Rapid City	Rapid City
104.7 FM	K284BA	Smash Hits	Classic Hits KKLS-AM Translator	HomeSlice Media Group, LLC	Rapid City	Rapid City
105.1 FM	KAWK	The Hawk 105.1	Adult Contemporary	Mt. Rushmore Broadcasting, Inc.	Rapid City	Custer
105.7 FM	K289AI	ESPN Rapid City	Sports	Haugo Broadcasting, Inc.	Rapid City	Rapid City
106.3 FM	KZLK	She 106.3	Hot AC	Steven E. Duffy	Rapid City	Custer
106.7 FM	K294BT	Kim Radio	News/Talk KIMM-AM translator	Gunslinger Radio, Inc.	Rapid City	Rapid City
107.1 FM	KSLT	Power 107.1	Christian Contemporary	Bethesda Christian Broadcasting	Rapid City	Spearfish
107.9 FM	KXZT		TBD	JER Licences, LLC	Rapid City	Newell

Television

- KOTA-TV 3 ABC (ATSC 2)
- KEVN-TV 7 Fox (ATSC 18)
- KBHE-TV 9 PBS (ATSC 26)
- KCLO 15 CBS (ATSC 16)
- KNBN 21 NBC
- KKRA-LP 24 MyNetworkTV/ION
- KWBH-LP 27 The CW

Print

- *Rapid City Journal*
- *Rapid City Weekly Report*
- *Patriot* (Ellsworth AFB Bulletin)

Places of interest

- Dinosaur Park
- Hart Ranch
- Reptile Gardens
- Bear Country USA
- Storybook Island

- South Dakota School of Mines and Technology
- The Journey Museum and Gardens
- Rapid City Public Library
- Rushmore Mall

Notable people

- Catherine Bach – Born in Cleveland, Ohio, actress, best known as Daisy Duke in *The Dukes of Hazzard*
- Shane Van Boening – Professional billiards player
- Dave Collins – Professional baseball player
- Sean Doolittle – Professional baseball player
- Mark Ellis – Professional baseball player
- Jack van der Geest – Born in The Hague, Netherlands, Holocaust survivor, author of *Was God on Vacation?*
- Emily Graslie – Correspondent for Chicago Field Museum and YouTube program host
- Dick Green – Born in Sioux City, Iowa, professional baseball player
- Bill Groethe – Photographer who took picture of last eight survivors of 1876's Battle of the Little Bighorn
- David Hallberg – Principal dancer with American Ballet Theater and the Bolshoi Ballet
- Becky Hammon – San Antonio Spurs coach
- John Sherrill Houser – Painter and sculptor
- Carrie Ingalls – Born in Montgomery County, Kansas, younger sister of author Laura Ingalls Wilder
- Lawrence Lessig – Lawyer, Stanford professor, founder of the Creative Commons, moved to Eastern United States as a child
- Eric Piatkowski – Born in Steubenville, Ohio, NBA player and former Nebraska Cornhusker
- Kelvin Torve – Major League Baseball player for the Minnesota Twins and New York Mets
- Adam Vinatieri – Born in Yankton, NFL kicker for the Indianapolis Colts
- Chauncey Yellow Robe ("Kills in the Woods") (Canowicakte) (1867–1930) – educator, lecturer and activist
- Rosebud Yellow Robe – folklorist, educator and author



Thomas P. Stafford

Notes

- Official temperature and precipitation records for Rapid City kept at the old municipal airport from August 1942 to 11 October 1950 and at Rapid City Regional since 12 October 1950.^[22] Snowfall and snow depth records date to 1 September 1942 and the move to Rapid City Regional, respectively.^[17]

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External links

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- Rapid City Visitors Bureau (<http://www.visitrapidcity.com/>)



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