



On-Site Advertising at Rapid City Regional Airport

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RAPID CITY, S.D. (11/18/2018) – Last week, display advertising for PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) began appearing in the Rapid City Regional Airport terminal. Almost immediately, airport officials began receiving negative public feedback to that advertising.

Rapid City Regional Airport accepts roughly \$2.1 million in federal funding annually. In order to receive that essential funding, Grant Assurances are signed which requires the Airport not discriminate in a number of different categories. It is our obligation to create a level playing field for business. These Grant Assurances are the same for airports nationwide.

Rapid City Regional Airport officials would like to explain its advertising policies, which were approved by the Airport Board last December. That criteria prohibits promoting unlawful goods, services or activities; tobacco or smoke-related products; violent or inappropriate messages to minors; nudity or indecent behavior or political messaging, among other guidelines. Upon concurrence with the City Attorney's Office, Airport officials determined the PETA messaging satisfied the criteria in its policies and entered into a 30-day contract.

"We do reserve the right to deny or remove advertising, however, the decision may become a challenge to the First Amendment," said Patrick Dame, Airport Executive Director. "When applying the First Amendment's protection of free speech, such advertising may be protected.

"Businesses are encouraged to advertise at the Rapid City Regional Airport and we apply the same criteria established in our policies. We have ads that currently contain a roulette wheel, reptiles, business development and other local business ads. All of which are approved from our advertising policy.

"We recognize that Western South Dakota is an area where cattle and agriculture is the top industry, where hunting and fishing are ways of life among residents and visitors alike. As such, consideration of providing an advertising outlet to certain organizations may seem offensive to some people. On behalf of the Rapid City Regional Airport, we do not intend to offend or alienate any industry that is important to South Dakota. We ask that our customers do not judge us by these ads but support the Airport's position. The First Amendment is a wonderful thing, but it is difficult when it may not agree with a local or regional opinion," commented Dame.



RAPID CITY REGIONAL AIRPORT

www.rapairport.org

Rapid City Regional Airport (RAP) is the only full-service commercial airport for the Black Hills, serving several major cities throughout the United States. Our mission is to provide a safe, environmentally responsible and fiscally self-sustainable operation ensuring high quality services and facilities. Our vision is to provide world class transportation service enhancing economic growth.

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For more information:

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