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A Tale of Two Responses to Houselessness

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CO-RESPONDER CONTRACT CONSIDERATIONS

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Rapid City, SD

1) Where in the USA are we?

2) Who are we?

3) How are we trying to assist our houseless neighbors?

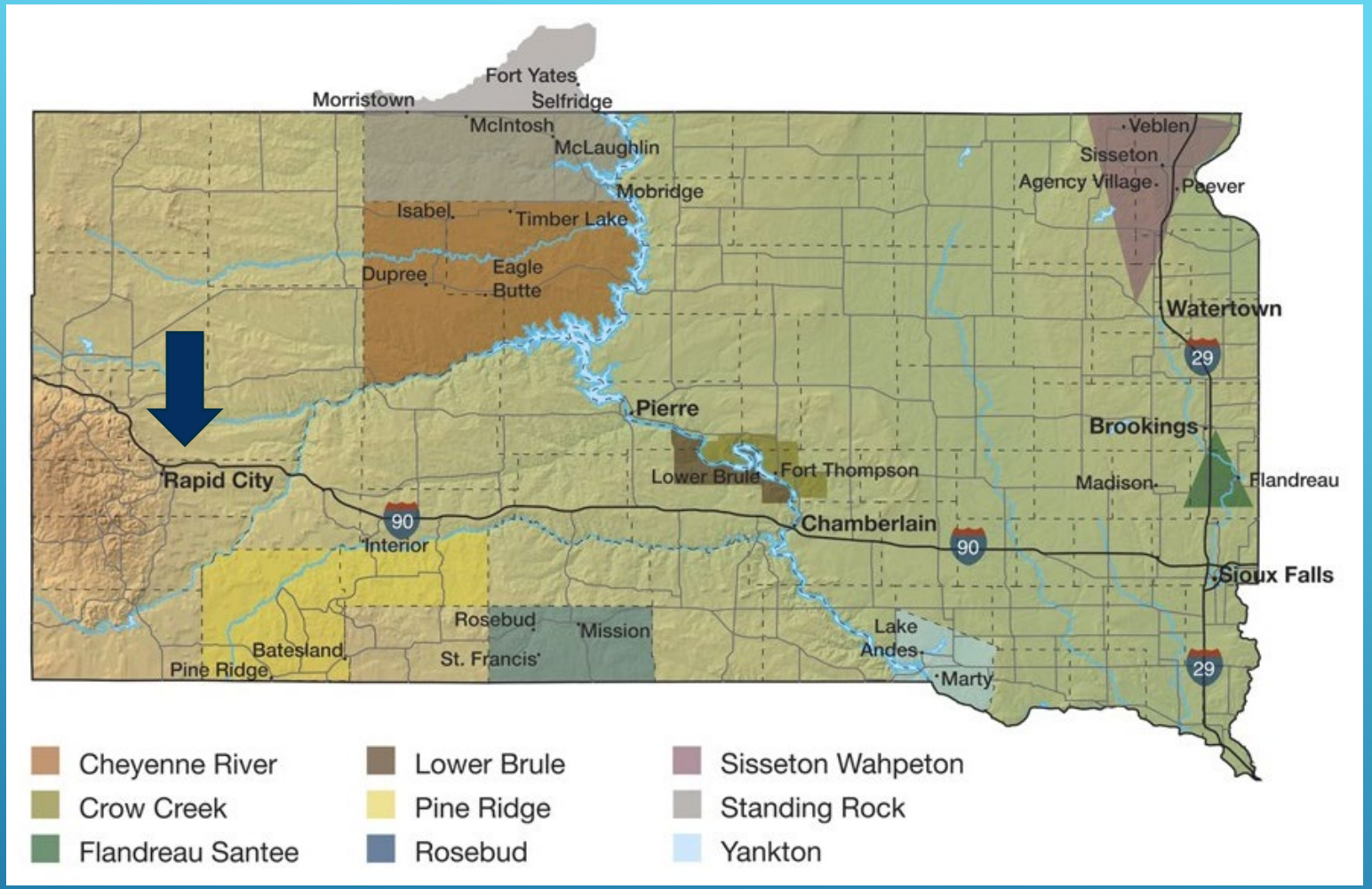
THREE QUESTIONS



SOUTH DAKOTA GEOGRAPHICAL CENTER OF THE CONTINENT!

FUN FACTS RAPID CITY, SD

- 2nd largest city in SD
- Population: 74, 703 (MSA: 148,933)
- Average commute: 13.8 minutes!
- Geographical Center of North America about 1 hour north
- Sturgis, SD famous for….Ft. Meade, where the Star Spangled Banner was first played on a military base in 1892
- Fastest growing metro area in the Midwest (+1.9%FY20-21)
- Ellsworth Air Force Base
- Mt. Rushmore (1 hour south)



RAPID CITY IN RELATION TO SD RESERVATIONS

PINE RIDGE RESERVATION - 1 HOUR SOUTHEAST

- Pine Ridge Reservation - 3.1 million acres
  - Crime (since January 2022): 285 missing persons; 308 gun related calls; 20 questionable deaths, population approx. 19,000
    - LEO's serve approx. 40,000 people, federal standards = 140 LEO's, currently 33
    - (130,000 calls per year)
  - Poverty/Alcoholism/Gangs

RAPID CITY: HOUSELESSNESS FACTORS

- Shootings increasing
- Latest Point in Time Houseless count: approx. 1800 (2.4%)
  - Transient lifestyles b/w Pine Ridge reservation and Rapid City
  - Affects students – RC has approx. 720 houseless students
  - Affects services such as rescue mission, school system, other volunteer organizations
  - Affects police/fire/medical response costs
    - Most vulnerable in our community

INFRASTRUCTURE TO MEET SPECIFIC NEEDS

- Grant programs specific to community needs
  - Chief of Police/Sheriff
    - Cooperative personnel agreements
  - RCPD – Research and Development/Grant writers and program development personnel

- CARE Campus-detox and voluntary treatment
- OneHeart transitional living support
- Volunteers of America

HIGHEST AND BEST USE OF CITY RESOURCES

- Police and Fire/Medical not appropriate for social service emergency calls
  - Infrastructure establishes a "funnel" to direct those who are willing to accept a hand up to improve their circumstances
    - Care Campus/OneHeart
- Identify local groups already serving in the city
  - Journey On!
  - Volunteers of America
  - Oyate Health Center

Capacity Building with grants from PD

Met our City's specific need for the houseless demographic

RCPD Assets

- Vans-separate agreements
- Training
- Dispatch

Coordinator position at the FD

Regular meetings

Indemnification of City

CO-RESPONDER AGREEMENT – JOURNEY ON!

JO!: CULTURALLY RELEVANT SERVICES

- Independent contractor status
  - Distinctive and recognizable shirts
  - NOT RCPD!
- Serves all citizens without regard to race/ethnicity
- HOWEVER…
  - JO! staff have moved through this houseless stage themselves, now seeking to serve vulnerable "relatives"
  - Encouraging message/culturally appropriate delivery (sage smudging)

JO! CONTRACT OBLIGATIONS

- JO! takes dispatch and independent calls
- Library
- Downtown (Toolkit)
- Proactive on bike path
- Continuous feedback loop with RCPD and RCFD

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

- Commitment to respond with requests for housing and chemical dependency services
- Warm hand-off from Journey On! to a case manager at VOA
- Services referral
- Immediate housing
- Capacity building with grants from PD
  - Case managers
  - VOA separate agreements with tribes themselves

OYATE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

- Mental Health Related Services
- Ride along or respond at request of Journey On!/RCPD/RCFD
- Contracting with a group of sovereign nations:
  - 18 consolidated tribes-Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board
  - Capacity building with grants from PD



RESERVATIONS IN THE USA

CONTRACT HIGHLIGHTS

- Journey On! Local SD Non-profit corporation, 501c3 status
  - Routine Indemnification/Insurance provisions
  - "Independent Contractor" status
  - Specific van agreement for RCPD assets
  - Information sharing – HIPPA
- VOA
  - Out of state agency/choice of law provisions

- Sovereign Nation Contracts
- Reservations: "dependent sovereign nations"
- General rule regarding contracting with a sovereign nation – they must specifically waive sovereign immunity and agree to lawsuit in breach of contract cases
  - Our contract did not involve waiver
  - DID agree to insurance coverage-not a guarantee!

OYATE HEALTH – GREAT PLAINS TRIBAL LEADERS HEALTH BOARD

- FY2022: Journey On! responded to 4,325 calls for service from January 1 to June 30:
  - Saving the **RCPD** $592,525 in personnel and other resources.
- Journey On! provided transportation and other services:
  - Effectively averting 1,092 ambulance calls/transports
  - Saving the **RCFD** $504,500 in personnel and other resources

- Total savings to taxpayers: $1,097,029

  (FY2022 Budget Approx. 74.5 million)
  - RC Council recently approved FY2023 Budget $510,000 for JO! and VOA

RESULTS!

TARGET CO-RESPONDER AGREEMENTS TO DEMOGRAPHIC NEEDS

- Previous "police action" efforts marginally successful
- Serve needs with accepted service providers
- Journey On! an independent group, dressed differently, staffed by caring "relatives"
- Library example: "we do library things here" "you're here, but you're not doing library things, so you need to leave with us" "we can give you a ride…."
- Voluntary cooperation

RELATIVES AND NEIGHBORS

- Journey On! uses the term "our houseless relatives"

  Another term: " our neighbors"
- A neighbor should be respected as a person, treated kindly with emergency care, taken to a place of safety if they are willing to go, given opportunity to heal, and live their lives.
- Local government attorneys have a significant role in developing and advocating for contracts and agreements that serve all citizens and residents

CONTACT INFORMATION

Thank you!

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RESOURCES AND REFERENCES