

OFFICE OF
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MEMORANDUM

Date: January 17, 2025
To: Deadwood City Commission
From: Kevin Kuchenbecker, Historic Preservation Officer
Re: DOT “Think” Sign Program Opt-out

The “Think” sign at the intersection of Main Street and Pioneer Way was removed on Tuesday, January 7, 2025. This was assumed to be an unauthorized installation as the City's unwritten policy has been to not allow these signs within the city limits. Furthermore, the Department of Transportation did not notify the City of the said sign as outlined in their policy. It was assumed by City staff that Deadwood had opted out of the program like many of the neighboring communities.

The DOT “Think” sign program allows a local government to opt out of the program and request not to participate under DOT-OS-OT-6.1 policy. This action must be formalized by the City Commission with the South Dakota Department of Transportation. Deadwood will join the following Black Hills communities who have opted out of the program: Belle Fourche, Lead, Rapid City, Spearfish, and Sturgis.

The City of Deadwood has received complaints in the past regarding these types of signs. Keeping a vibrant healthy community image along with roadway safety and motorist distractions are some of the reasons the city has chosen not to participate.

Unfortunately, motor vehicle crashes leave a lasting and devastating impact on the families and friends of the victims. However, if every victim was marked with this type of sign and memorials along Deadwood’s roadways it could become a visual clutter and distraction for motorists and could increase safety issues.

City staff has worked with the family to place a memorial bench near the site of the tragedy. City staff are also working on guidelines and policies for the creation of a memorial bench program.