

Transcription of interview with Rapid City Mayor DON BARNETT on 9-11-72 on the subject of the role of broadcasting in the June 9th flood disaster. Interviewed by ROBB DeWALL

DeWALL: Where were you during the evening of June 9th early, and how were you first notified of the developing situation?

BARNETT: Okay. From 4 pm until 7 pm I was golfing at Valley Hi, Elks Club.

DEWALL: Nice weather?

BARNETT: No, bad weather. I got rained on twice. Got wet. I had to run for the shelter twice. For the first time in the year, I'd taken an hour off to play golf. Played with the recreation director, Wes Storm, We teed off in the sunshine, by the time we were into the golf game there were just all sorts of clouds. We got wet twice. We went in the shack one, and it stopped. We looked out over the whole golf course, over the Rapid Valley area really, more clouds were coming. We finally finished. I shot a 48. I remember that. And then after that we were going to go swimming, but by that time it was dark...wind...cold... We went to the Y to go swimming instead. Joanne met us, my wife, and two little girls, and went to the Y and swam. Came out of the YMCA at 8 o'clock. My first notification was this: a clerk there said he just heard over the radio that they're anticipating a lot of rain...some flooding on Rapid Creek. Eight o'clock. I found out later the police department was looking for me. They started calling the reserved. I said goodbye to Joanne, she had her car and I had my car, and I went to the police station. So, at eight o'clock, I was informed by a person who had heard it on the radio. He was a young person, he was listening to one of the rock stations. They were still on then.

DEWALL: And you did what after 8 o'clock?

BARNETT: We directly to the police station.

DEWALL: you stayed there all evening?

BARNETT: No. I went to the police station and saw what was going on. Called the city engineer, met him, and went out and inspected Canyon Lake dam. Got ungodly wet because it was raining terribly hard. Dispatched a police car up Bark Canyon to watch the water. Meanwhile the Park Superintendent came back, he had just driven up Highway 40, Bill Nordemeer, went up Highway 40, and he said it didn't look too bad. He didn't think it was going to be too bad.

DEWALL: Were there any official warnings to the community then after 8 o'clock?

BARNETT: By 8 o'clock on the ~~xxxx~~ radio stations there were warnings that had been issued by the weather bureau.

DEWALL: Now were there sirens in the community?

BARNETT: No.

DEWALL: Never at any time sirens?

BARNETT: No, there was no official warning given by the city government.