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Med center dedication heals twister wound

By Suzanne Perez Tobias
The Wichita Eagle

Around supertime on April 26, 1991, a tornado tore through McConnell Air Force Base, injuring 16 people, destroying an elementary school, community center, credit union and 102 family housing units, and leaving the base hospital a pile of rubble.

On Thursday, the rubble was long gone, replaced by a \$17 million, state-of-the-art "super clinic" — a symbol of McConnell's recovery.

"Three years ago, a much different medical facility stood on this very same site," said Brig. Gen. Charles Coolidge Jr., commander of McConnell's 22nd Air Refueling Wing, during a dedication ceremony Thursday. "Many people aided in the rebuilding of McConnell Air Force Base, and today ... McConnell is well on the road to being whole again."

The 90,000-square-foot medical center marks the end of a tenuous era for doctors, nurses and patients.

Shortly after the tornado destroyed the old hospital, medical services for the base were spread out to seven locations, including the Kansas Air National Guard, 89th Army Reserve Command and the VA Medical Center. About two years ago, the base fashioned a 31,000-square-foot interim clinic out of 34 prefab trailers.

Some hospital officials in the audience Thursday wore buttons that pictured an ambulance swirling inside a tornado. The caption: "384th Strategic Hospital — No Matter Where We Are."

"The interim facility served us well," said Col. George Seignious, commander of the 22nd Medical Group, who will oversee the new clinic. "However, I don't think any of us will be sorry to see it go."

Sen. Bob Dole and Rep. Dan Glickman, who toured McConnell the day after the 1991 tornado, attended the dedication ceremony and congratulated the people of McConnell for their hard work in rebuilding the base.

"You look back on it, and you stand here today, and you see the young men and women in uniform, and you see McConnell Air Force Base, and you think maybe it's all worth it," Dole said. "I hope McConnell is going to be here for a long time."

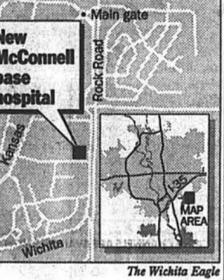
The center — categorized by the Air Force as a "super clinic" because it does not offer inpatient services — incorporates outpatient services, laboratory facilities, pharmacy, same-day surgery and dental services under one roof. It boasts 40 examining rooms (twice as many as the old building), six treatment rooms, two operating rooms, 10 recovery beds and 16 dental treatment rooms, and it has the new smell of disinfectant and fresh-laid carpet.

"What do I think of it?" said Charlotte Risinger, a clinic secretary who attended the dedication. "Well, after three years, this is so exciting. We just love it."

And this hospital has one more thing that the old one didn't: a tornado shelter.



Sen. Bob Dole praised the work done at McConnell to rebuild from the 1991 tornado. "I hope McConnell is going to be here for a long time."



The Wichita Eagle

Donation no big deal, Dole says

By Suzanne Perez Tobias
The Wichita Eagle

Sen. Bob Dole said Thursday that he "didn't see anything that big" about donating \$10,000 to a legal defense fund for Oregon Sen. Bob Packwood, and that he probably should have done so sooner.

"Here's a man who hasn't been found guilty by anybody, and he's got to go out and hire a bunch of lawyers, and that takes money," said Dole, who responded to a question about the donation during a news conference at McConnell Air Force Base.

"He has not had a hearing. He's entitled to a hearing, like any American," Dole said. "And when he gets that hearing, he can't represent himself."

Packwood, 61, is accused of sexually harassing 28 female employees, lobbyists and campaign workers. Among the allegations are accusations that he made unwanted sexual advances including groping, deep kissing and trying to undress women.

Packwood's supporters have contributed more than \$300,000 to his legal fund. Dole's \$10,000 contribution — among the largest Packwood has received — was made Feb. 22 by Campaign America, Dole's personal political action committee, which he uses to support Republicans around the country.

"All I did was what I should have been doing as a Republican leader," Dole said Thursday. "I want to keep Republicans in the Senate."

"What is somebody in public office supposed to do?" Dole added. "You can't accept free representation because that wouldn't be ethical, so you have to pay for it somehow."

As for his personal contribution, Dole said: "Personally, I didn't see anything that big about it. But I'm happy it was noted."

Clinton moved by Dole's talk

Senator praised for speech on disabled

By The Associated Press
WASHINGTON — President Clinton paid a surprise visit Thursday to a Republican nemesis, Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole, to praise the senator for his "personal courage" in fighting for disabled people.



The president's visit followed Dole's Senate floor speech on the status of the disabled in America, delivered on the 49th anniversary of the senator's severe wounding.

in the waning days of World War II. It marked the 25th anniversary of Dole's first floor speech, also on people with disabilities.

"It was one of those magic moments in the history of the Congress, which reminds us all, for all our differences, there is a common core that unites us when we are all at our best," said Clinton, noting he had read the original speech.

The president spoke briefly at a luncheon in Dole's office to mark the occasion and note Dole's role in the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which promotes equal opportunity for the disabled.

Among the 45 people in attendance were Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell and several other senators, Dole's wife, Red Cross chief Elizabeth Dole, and Tony Coelho, the former Democratic congressman from California who now heads the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. Coelho arranged the president's visit.

"Today was a great day not just for Bob Dole but for the United States," Clinton said.

As an Army lieutenant in Italy, Dole's shoulder was shattered by machine-gun fire on April 14, 1945. He spent three years in and out of hospitals and now has little use of his right arm.

Dole, R-Kan., told the president that improving opportunities for the disabled "is one area where there's been no politics, no partisanship."

Clinton said he hoped the two parties would come together similarly on health care reform.

Dole has been one of Clinton's foremost critics on the Whitewater affair and opposes many key provisions of the president's health care reform plan. But there was no hint of discord Thursday as the two chatted amiably after the luncheon.

In his floor speech Thursday, Dole said the greatest success has been the change in attitudes toward disabled people.

"Indeed, 50 years ago, we had a president, Franklin Roosevelt, who could not walk and believed it necessary to disguise that fact from the American people," Dole said. "Today, I trust that Americans would have no problem in electing as president a man or woman with a disability."

Dole continues to attack health-care plan

By Ray Hemman
The Hutchinson News

While President Clinton's health-care reform plan cannot get a "majority of Democrats" to support it, there are several issues on which agreement will be made, said Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan., during a telephone press conference Friday with Kansas journalists.



Congress will begin legislative work on the nation's health care within the next two months and won't pass Clinton's package as proposed. "I think President Clinton has a

bad product, and he's doing the best job he can to sell it," the Senate minority leader said. "It's not going to work. Congress can maybe not fix it, but they can fix up another plan that will let small businesses go together and get better rates from insurance companies, take care of affordability issues — you don't lose it if you (go) to another job — take care of pre-existing conditions, take care of malpractice reform that's driving a lot of doctors out of business, provide vouchers for low-income Americans so they can buy insurance."

"These are basic things that everybody agrees upon — Democrats, Republicans, liberals, conservatives. We think we ought to do these things, then wait three or four years and see where we are. If we haven't done some-

thing, we ought to go back (and take a look at it again)."

Dole sees a "new consensus package" being developed in Congress.

Portions of the president's plan that will not be included in the consensus package, in Dole's estimation, are employer mandates, price controls and big health-care alliances for states.

The public does not believe "100 percent change" is broken when "only 15 percent is broken."

Also during the press conference, Dole said America must face up to the problems being created by extremely low crude oil prices. Even though consumers welcome \$1 a gallon or cheaper gasoline at the pumps, the long-term implications of relying on imported oil are serious.

Earlier this week, Sen. Nancy

Kassebaum, R-Kan., said she does not believe the Clinton administration understands the urgency of a situation in which \$12-a-barrel crude oil is causing producers to abandon lower-producing wells. Kassebaum and 114 other members of Congress have written to Clinton about finding ways to prop up crude prices, but have not received any response.

Dole said he wasn't exactly sure what the president could do to bolster crude prices. Numerous proposals are floating around, including some that would create subsidy programs for oil that are not unlike those for farm commodities.

"We've had a lot of our Kansas people back here, looking at production and the price, and we are

told by these experts that world prices are going to be low for a long time," Dole said. "It's very difficult to produce or even retrieve what you've already discovered at \$12 or \$11 a barrel. It's put a real crimp in our own independent oil areas across the state of Kansas."

"Now they can come up with some programs that I don't think are probably going to pass. It's almost like a farm program. You get a certain price, and then you get a subsidy. I'm not certain that's particularly good policy, and I don't think it's going to pass in any event, because nobody's going to know how to pay for it. But sooner or later, we are going to have to face up to the fact that we are becoming a net importer of oil, of energy."

Dole honored on anniversary of first Senate speech

By Tom Webb
Eagle Washington bureau

WASHINGTON — If you're under 30, you won't remember a time when Bob Dole wasn't a senator from Kansas, fighting for his beliefs, needling Democrats and making provocative speeches.

On Thursday, Dole marked the 25th anniversary of his first Senate speech by giving proud and poignant views about Americans with disabilities. In return, he received a surprise tribute from someone who likes public speaking as much as he does — President Bill Clinton.

Clinton visited a special Dole luncheon Thursday, lauding the Kansas Republican's "personal courage" on behalf of Americans with disabilities. That was the topic of Dole's first Senate speech on April 14, 1969, when the young Kansas senator challenged the country to improve access, job opportunities, health care and education for 42 million disabled Americans.

"Too many handicapped persons lead lives of loneliness and despair," Dole said in 1969. "Too many feel, and too many are cut off from our



President Clinton praises Sen. Bob Dole's work on behalf of Americans with disabilities Thursday at a Washington luncheon for the Kansas Republican, at right with his wife, Elizabeth.

work-oriented society; too many cannot fill empty hours in a satisfying, constructive manner."

At Thursday's luncheon, Clinton said, "I went back and read Senator Dole's speech from 25 years ago. It reads as well today as it did then. Perhaps to those who weren't as

best."

The April 14 date carries a double meaning for Dole. It's also the day he became disabled himself, when he was seriously wounded and permanently disabled during World War II.

On Thursday, Dole marked the 25th anniversary of his Senate speech with warm tributes from both Republicans and Democrats — some of whom have been savaged on occasion by Dole's caustic tongue, and some of whom have lashed back.

"But once he started, he was hard to shut up," wrote biographer Richard Ben Cramer.

On Thursday, Dole updated his 1969 remarks about disabled Americans by highlighting both progress and obstacles. Major strides include the Americans with Disabilities Act, which opened access, and better health care through Medicare and Medicaid. But perhaps attitudes have changed the most, Dole suggested.

"Fifty years ago, we had a president, Franklin Roosevelt, who could not walk and believed it necessary to disguise that fact from the American people," he said. "Today I trust that Americans would have no problem in electing as president a man or woman with a disability."

Senate refuses to give up airport parking privilege

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Congress has eliminated its free health care and gym privileges, but the Senate on Wednesday drew the line in the parking lot. It defeated a resolution to wipe out lawmakers' free, reserved parking at Washington's National and Dulles airports.

Kansas Sens. Bob Dole and Nancy Kassebaum voted to keep the parking privilege.

Before his resolution lost by a 53-44 vote, Sen. John McCain said that declaring World War III "would probably evoke less emotion" from his colleagues. He was right.

Sen. John Danforth, R-Mo., passionately attacked the pro-

posal, declaring it promoted the false impression that lawmakers — with some work weeks reaching 100 hours — were "ripping off the country by perks and by pay."

"When is this Congress-bashing going to stop?" asked Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun, D-Ill.

Both spoke of the many nights when they furiously dashed from the Senate floor to one of the two airports in suburban Virginia, to catch the last plane home.

McCain, R-Ariz., had a different view of the 124 close-in spaces at National, and 51 at Dulles, that are reserved for the 540 members of Congress, nine Supreme Court justices and scores of diplomats.

The parking privilege, he said, "is a perfect example of how out-



Dole Kassebaum

of-touch the Congress often is with the overwhelming majority of Americans."

McCain said the parking should go the way of other eliminated congressional perks: free health care, free gym privileges and cut-rate haircuts.

Twenty-two Democrats and 21 fellow Republicans supported McCain, who was the only senator speaking for his proposal. Thirty-one Democrats and 22 Republicans were opposed. Several senators switched during the vote.