

On the
campaign
trail ofBob
DOLE■ See related
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Dole, back home, calls tour a success

By KRISTEN L. HAYS
The Capital-Journal

RUSSELL — The closer Bob Dole gets to home, the more approachable he becomes. The U.S. Senate majority leader and front-runner for the GOP nomination returned to his central Kansas hometown Thursday relaxed and jubilant about what he called a successful candidacy announcement tour that took him to 11 cities in 10 states in four brutal days.

He didn't look any worse for the wear as he stood on the driveway of his sister Norma Jean Steele's home, waving hello to neighbors after greeting family members inside.

Candidate greets family, neighbors in hometown of Russell, the last leg of his presidential announcement tour.

"Hey, how're you doing?" he called to a neighbor across the street.

"Fine," the neighbor replied. "You look good!"

"We raised \$1 million yesterday," Dole, 71, said of the Wednesday stops in Dallas and Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. "Half a million in both places."

That's one-third of the money added to his campaign coffers throughout the tour, he said.

His stop in Russell is the tour's last leg. On Monday, Dole swept Topeka, Exeter, N.H., and New

York City. Tuesday he hit Columbus, Ohio; Des Moines, Iowa; and Denver. Wednesday he ventured into Texas, home turf of one of his strongest GOP nomination contenders, Sen. Phil Gramm, and Florida. And before his motorcade drove him home from the airport in Hays on Thursday, he had visited Columbia, S.C., and Raleigh, N.C.

His time in Russell will give him a chance to regroup.

This morning about 5,000 Kansans are expected to

attend a "Welcome Home" pancake breakfast at Russell's Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall, where Dole will speak at 8:30 a.m. At noon Dole, his wife, Elizabeth, and his daughter, Robin, will attend a private Good Friday church service, and Saturday an audience of 400 is expected to watch him tape "Meet the Press" at Ruppenthal Middle School.

Today holds special significance for Dole. It is the 50th anniversary of his wounding as a 21-year-old U.S. Army lieutenant in Italy during World War II. Enemy bullets shattered his right arm and shoulder, leaving that arm and hand virtually useless.

When he stepped off an airplane at the small air-

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Campaign notebook

■ **Campaigning isn't easy** — While Sen. Bob Dole didn't look any worse for the wear at the tail end of his whirlwind presidential candidacy announcement tour Thursday, members of his campaign staff admitted to suffering at least a twinge of battle fatigue. Sweeping 11 cities in 10 states in four days on a tour that ran like a well-oiled machine wasn't easy.

"It'll be good to stay in the same place for two nights for a change," said Nelson Warfield, Dole's press secretary.

■ **Productive stop in Raleigh** — Dole's stop in Raleigh, N.C., Thursday afternoon yielded his campaign some much-needed support, particularly from conservatives who had been expected to side with conservative GOP nomination contender Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas. As part of Dole's courtship of Gramm's pool of support, Dole secured half of North Carolina's Republican state senators, 48 state representatives and two former state chairmen of the Christian Coalition.

"Not bad for one afternoon in Raleigh," said Bill Lacy, Dole's deputy campaign manager.

■ **A non-supporter in the crowd** — Though plenty of Dole supporters staked out the airport in Hays to greet the Russell native with cheers when he arrived Thursday, at least one non-supporter joined the crowd, hoping for a chance to speak to the senator.

"I would hope that the senator would reconsider his position on reproductive choice," said Marian Shapiro, director of education for Planned Parenthood in Hays. Dole opposes abortion rights.

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Sen. Bob Dole hugged his aunt, Mildred Nye of Harper, in front of his sister Norma Jean Steele's home in Russell before going in for dinner. Dole returned to his hometown Thursday, the last leg of his four-day presidential announcement tour.

Russell ready and waiting for Dole's homecoming

By JAN LONDON
The Capital-Journal

RUSSELL — The most challenging task about Bob Dole coming home to Russell may have been rustling up enough tables and chairs to seat every one.

This morning organizers are planning to feed as many as 5,000 people in the Veterans of Foreign Wars Lodge on the east side of Russell. Thursday afternoon, tables and chairs were being set up on the main floor of the lodge, in back rooms, in the basement and outside.

Sandy Brown, who manages the VFW, showed where the food line would go. She pointed to where "Mr. Pancake," brought in from Iowa just for the breakfast, will serve his flapjacks and sausage.

"We're going to pack them in as tight as we can," she said as she traveled from one room to another, stopping to point out the fuzzy television screen in the bar. Apparently when additional power lines were being strung outside for all the media scheduled to attend, the bar's cable was knocked out.

No big deal, Brown said. Like Brown, most residents of Russell

seemed to be taking the latest Dole hoopla in stride. Oh sure, they're excited, but they calmly went about the task of getting their town ready for its most famous son.

The sounds of sawing and hammering filled the parking lot outside the VFW. City workers were constructing a wooden platform for the media. Risers were in place, and several dozen picnic tables

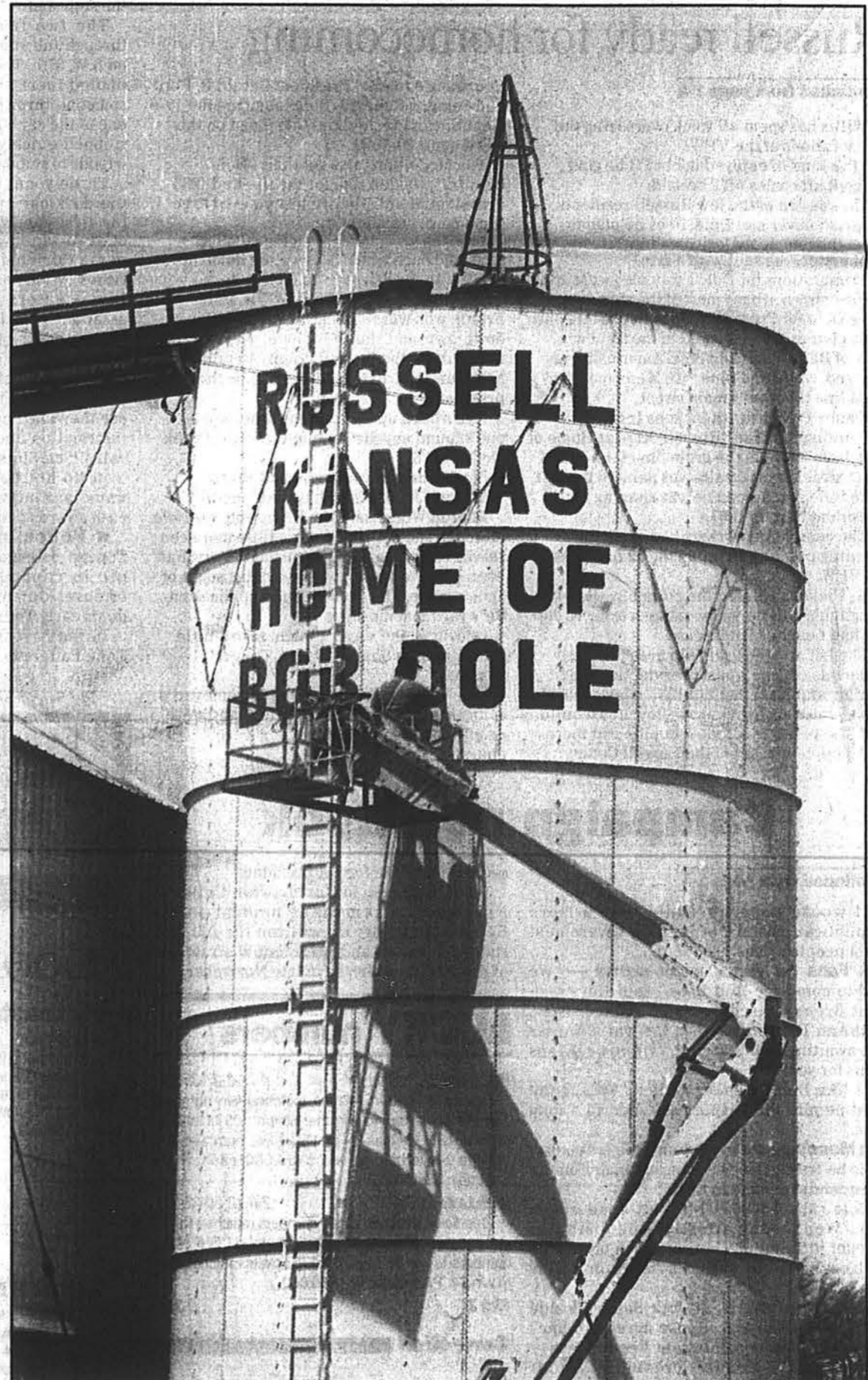
were lined up. The road leading to the VFW had been renamed a few weeks ago. No surprise here. It's now Bob Dole Road.

Dole will speak on another platform outside this morning. He has a surprise waiting for him. A plaque attached to a slab of native limestone, dug out of the ground north of Russell, will be unveiled.

"Bob Dole, Majority Leader, U.S. Senate, Charter Member VFW Post 6240, Russell, Ks. Dedicated on the 50th anniversary of wounds he sustained in WW II, April 14, 1945," the plaque reads.

Jerry Willis, commander of the VFW, said he and some of the other fellows thought the plaque would be a nice gesture.

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Danny Pickens with Pickens Inc. repainted the sign on the grain bin at the end of Russell's main street Thursday. It originally was painted in 1987.

Campaign notebook

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"I would hope he would take a more Republican posture of keeping government out of people's lives," she said.

■ **'Fans for years' await arrival** — "We had to come see Bob Dole," said Hays resident Brenda Fischer as she and her sister, RuthAnn Ranker, stood in the warm Kansas sun awaiting Dole's arrival. "We've been fans of his for years."

"I like Bob," Ranker added. "This is the most people this airport has seen in a long time."

■ **Money pours in** — Fund-raisers continue to be fruitful for the Kansas senator on the presidential campaign trail.

Dole raised \$500,000 in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Wednesday after raising a similar amount in Texas in what campaign press aide Nelson Warfield called a "million dollar day."

More significantly, all four South Florida members of the U.S. House agreed to back Dole. And two key statewide Republicans — former state Senate President Ander Crenshaw and former Secretary of State Jim Smith — will head his state campaign.

"Dole's head and shoulders above the others," said Crenshaw. "He represents the American mainstream."

Crenshaw and Smith both were defeated in

second son of the former president.

Bush, who lost to Gov. Lawton Chiles in November, is remaining neutral on the Republican battle. He will run the fall GOP state convention and presidential straw poll of Florida Republicans in late November.

Russell ready for homecoming

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Willis has spent all week overseeing the preparations at the VFW.

"I've kind of enjoyed it, but I'll be glad when it all comes off," he said.

He was one of the few Russell residents who had never met Dole. Does he plan to meet the Senate majority leader this visit?

"I better," he said with a grin.

Preparations for Dole's visit also were going on downtown, where most of the storefronts have Dole for President signs. Red, white and blue clothes are displayed in the front window of Banker's For Ladies. American flags and red, white and blue "We Welcome You" flags line the town's main street.

Danny Pickens with Pickens Inc. was repainting the blue "Russell, Kansas Home of Bob Dole" sign on the grain bin at the end of main street. It originally was painted the last time Dole announced he was running for president here in 1987.

The company's workers had spent the morning painting silver on the 32 flagpoles at the VFW.

As Pickens painted the grain bin, the wind caught his hat. He was wearing a Dole '88 cap. He had bought a whole case.

The hat and the grain bin aren't the only remnants of Dole's past presidential tries. For his announcement in 1987, a huge mural was painted on the side of a downtown building. The painting is faded, but it's still there. A plaque in front of the Russell County

Courthouse reads, "President Gerald R. Ford and Senator Robert J. Dole launched the 1976 Republican Presidential Campaign on this site August 20, 1976."

The McCollums also got their "Dole Country" wooden sign for the ill-fated 1988 presidential bid. They're just pleased to get some more use out of it.

The sign was made in Michigan and cost \$250, and once when Dole visited home he drove into the driveway to look at it.

The McCollums, Pickens, Willis, Phil Friedl, who was in Buck's Sunflower Bar downtown, and Nancy Balloun, who was volunteering at the Russell County Republican headquarters, all think Dole will be the next president.

"He's been up there a long time, and no one's found any dirt on him yet," said Frank McCollum Sr.

"I wish he was younger," said Frank McCollum Jr., 62. "I wish he had won in '88."

Sharon Weese said she'll also vote for Dole, although she wishes he was a little more conservative. Weese and her husband, Gary, had been hired to clean up the yard just south of Dole's home. They had cleaned up the senator's yard that morning.

Of course, the senator might take a little criticism from Sharon Weese. They're cousins.

"We're second cousins twice removed or something," said Weese. "His grandmother and my great-grandmother were cousins."

Dole calls tour a success

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port in Hays — a much smaller version of his campaign's Boeing 727 — more than 50 Kansans greeted him with cheers. Wearing a dark navy suit and a navy and red print tie, Elizabeth at his side in a yellow suit, he went straight for the crowd.

"Elizabeth asked me, 'What would you do differently?' he said of the tour. 'I said, 'Nothing. We did it right.'"

That was deputy campaign manager Bill Lacy's assessment as well. He was on Dole's

campaign team during Dole's losing 1988 run for the White House, where he lost the nomination to George Bush.

"We learned from our mistakes very well," he said, referring to campaign disorganization. Two years ago — long before Dole decided to make a third bid for the presidency last December — Lacy and other campaign officials sat down with Dole "and said, 'If you choose to run, we have to do things differently this time.'"

Lacy said. "This campaign is highly thought out and structured. It's very different this time."