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NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE DOWNTOWN LAWRENCE IMPROVEMENT DEDICATION ELDRIDGE HOTEL LAWRENCE, KANSAS SATURDAY, JUNE 9, 1973

I am glad to have this occasion to be here in Lawrence for your dedication of the Lawrence Downtown Renewal Project. It is my understanding that today we are marking the completion of only the first part -- Phase One -- of your effort. So I both congratulate you on a job well done and encourage you to continue.

I haven't yet had a chance to view personally all that has been done in the Downtown Renewal effort. That will come later at the ribbon cutting.

But one thing is evident -- and possibly this is the most important single aspect of what has been done.

JOINT EFFORT PRAISED

For what you have done, you have done in cooperation with others. This project has been a joint effort, in which Federal, local and private money, personnel and talent have been merged in a partnership to get the job done.

This is precisely the kind of approach that is contemplated in the President's revenue sharing initiatives -- such as his proposed better communities act, for example, which would enhance still further the potential for cooperation in urban renewal activities.

In this sense, then, you in Lawrence have seen the future. And you know, from personal experience, that it works.

And as a result, you can point with some justifiable pride to a modernized, newly landscaped and lighted downtown area, uncluttered by tangles of overhead power lines.

COMMUNITY TAKES LEAD

The fact that local business leaders teamed with local officials of the City Government and area professional people to really take the lead in the planning and implementation of the renewal project, is most important. Half of the money, most of the manpower, and probably all of the skill and imagination, came from here in the Lawrence area. And you deserve the lion's share of the credit for the restoration that has been accomplished.

And that is as it should be. The community of Lawrence not only faced up to this problem of downtown deterioration, but it took steps to solve it. Many communities like Lawrence -- and many much bigger -- seem to have a practice of ignoring these kinds of problems in the apparent hope they will just go away.

The problems of Lawrence's downtown area are going away -- but not because anyone is ignoring them. Far from it.

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HARD WORK ON DETAILS PAYS OFF

Community pride may be one of those old-fashioned traits that is supposed to be going out of style. But here, it is still very much in vogue and you can be grateful for it. I am proud of it.

There may not be a lot of glamour in the hard work that goes into the repairs that have been made -- to streets and utility lines. I am sure a lot of rigorous detail work had to be done before the landscape and new lighting could be put in place.

But now that it has been done -- with more still to come in Phase Two of your efforts -- the revitalized downtown area is sure to be a source of pride to all of you. And more than that, its future as the economic heart of this area is secure.

In the Congress this year, we will be considering again the President's Better Communities proposal. It is designed to make it even easier for communities like Lawrence to take their future in their own hands and proceed at their own initiative in urban renewal efforts. Last year, the Senate passed the bill, but the House of Representatives did not.

There is nonetheless, considerable support in the Congress for the concept of increasing local control over urban renewal and related efforts. I agree with that sentiment. I think the experience of Lawrence is proof that the principle works.

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