

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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SENATE ADOPTS DOLE AMENDMENT ON WICHITA TRADE CENTER

Washington, DC -- An amendment sponsored by Kansas Senator Bob Dole and adopted tonight by the Senate during debate on the trade bill could mean major new funding over the next five years for Wichita's Mid-America World Trade Center.

The amendment would establish a new Department of Agriculture grant-making program to assist trade development centers in promoting U.S. farm exports.

"It's my hope that such funding would help Mid-America's mission of raising the visibility of rural states like Kansas, and the goods and services that are produced in our rural states, in the international marketplace," said Sen. Dole.

"We live in a global economy, and rural America must be competitive beyond our own borders if our country is to grow and prosper. The funding my amendment could eventually provide helps get us moving in that direction," Sen. Dole said.

According to the Dole amendment, the USDA would provide grants to accredited world trade centers which have been organized on a "multi-state regional basis that focus on trade promotion in inland states without major deep water ports."

Dole said the USDA grants would be made on a matching basis over the next five years. He said the amendment does not dictate how much funding the USDA would provide overall, but does specify the federal share of grants average 50-percent. None of the funds could be used for capital or property purchases, Dole noted.

Mid-America World Trade Center was established last January as a non-profit initiative to develop international business opportunities for goods and services from Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Colorado, South Dakota and Wyoming.