

The Dole announcement

Supporters give Dole's image a lift

By Tim Hoyt
The Hutchinson News
Central Kansas Bureau, Great Bend

RUSSELL — The importance of creating an image for a politician is an important part of any campaign.

For Sen. Robert Dole's speech Monday, even the cars and trucks parked near the podium were part of the game plan.

Leo J. Ross, a Russell County farmer who has known the Dole family for years, said Russell County Republican Chairman Larry Ehrlich asked him to bring his pickup to the speech and park it near the podium. He said he was told organizers needed to create a "farm image" for Dole's speech.

But Ross, who remembers contributing \$25 to the fund created in 1945 to send Dole to a Chicago doctor for an operation on his shoulder after he was wounded, said he was not asked to wear the overalls he had on Monday.

He wore them, he said, because he wanted to stay warm.

A sidelight on image: While Dole was making his announcement in Russell, a group in New York said the senator was well-suited for the presidency.

The Tailors Council of America named Dole the best-dressed male in government.

Others honored for the quality of their wardrobes included Chrysler Corp. Chairman Lee Iacocca, singer Andy Williams, comedian Don Rickles, Earvin "Magic" Johnson of basketball's Los Angeles Lakers, and Ted Koppel, the host of ABC-TV's "Nightline."

Although eight people were taken to Russell City Hospital after they became ill during the Dole's announcement, only one man was

admitted and a spokesman at the hospital said he was in good condition.

Clarence Mai, 66, passed out immediately before Dole was to make his speech Monday morning at about 9 a.m. The hospital spokesman said Mai would probably be released this morning.

The 10,000 blue and yellow balloons released from behind the podium at the conclusion of Dole's announcement speech required quite a volunteer effort by Russell residents.

Because the balloons would have lost too much helium if they had been blown up the night before, 30 people arrived at a feed store north of the podium at 4 a.m. Monday to fill the balloons, said Henrietta Wenthe, one of the volunteers.

Is it possible to get lost in Russell, a town that with a population of about 5,600 is far from a metropolis?

It's possible, especially with an influx of 6,000 to 8,000 people, together with all the automobiles and buses used to bring them in.

Almost an hour after Dole made his speech, two elderly women from Iowa were sitting in the Russell Police Station waiting for officers to help them locate their car.

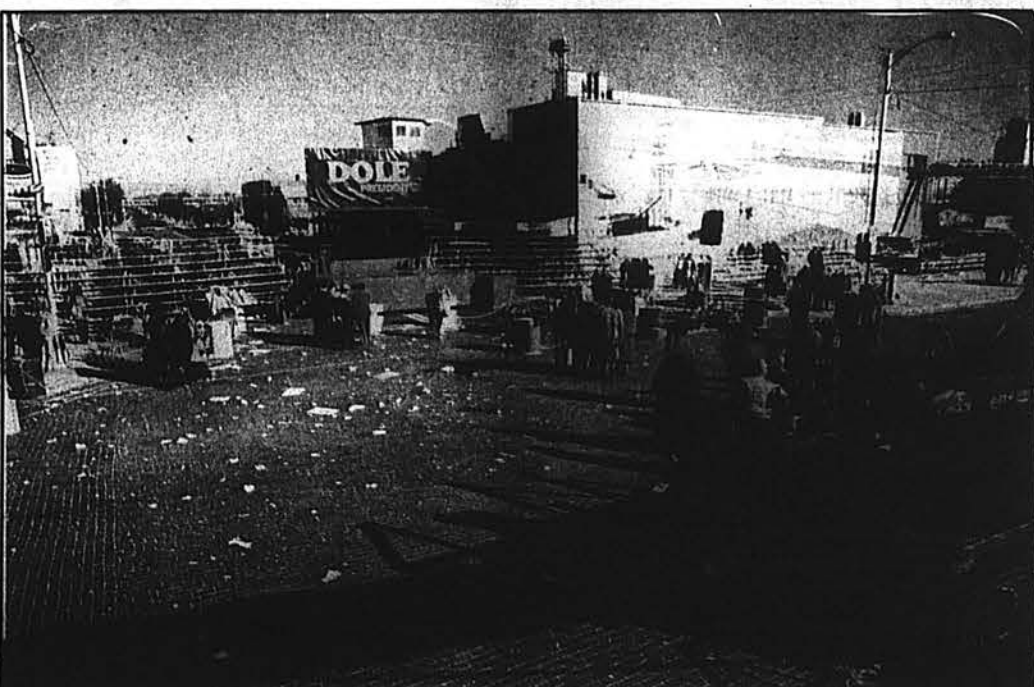
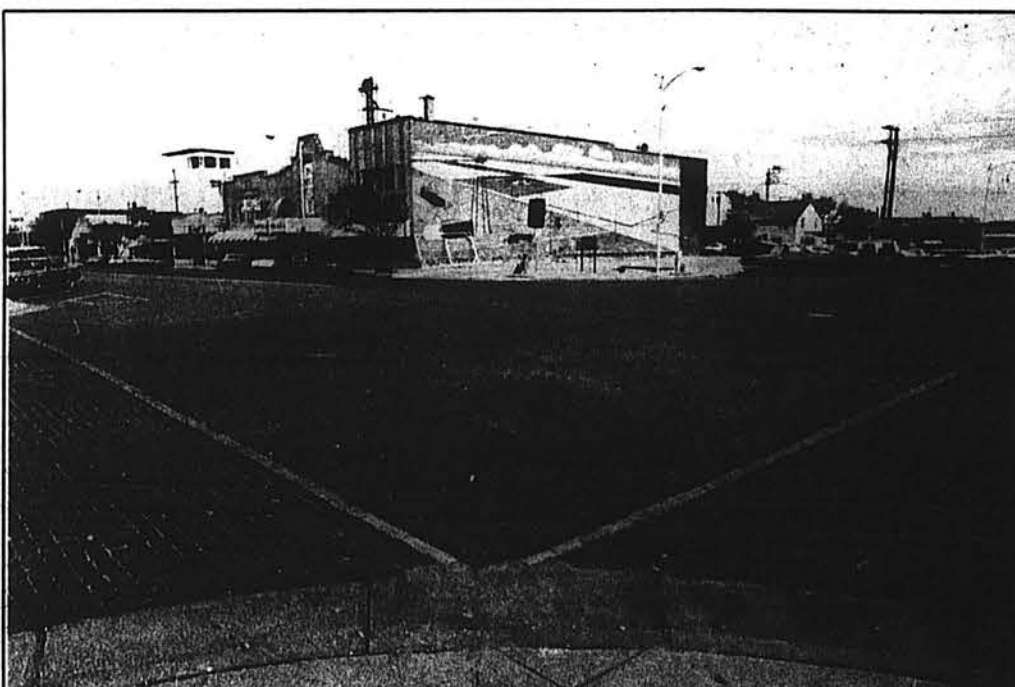
Explaining their dilemma, one of the women said, "We're from a long ways from here. We're from Iowa."

Russell County Police Chief Bob Tyler located the missing car right in front of the Russell County Courthouse, then one of his officers gave the women a ride.

Considering they were from Iowa, the site of an all-important primary for Dole, Dole should hope they appreciated the hospitality.



Elizabeth and Bob Dole acknowledge the cheers from the crowd that gathered in Russell Monday. Photo by Larry Caldwell



The above photos show the streets of Russell Nov. 3 and again Monday, after most of the crowd had dispersed following Dole's presidential announcement. Photos by Chris Ochsner

Dole supporters come from near and far

By Tim Hoyt
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RUSSELL — Unlike most of the thousands of people on hand Monday for Bob Dole's big day in his hometown, Kris Nelson just took advantage of what she thought was a chance to view history in the making as she made her way across the country.

Ms. Nelson, from California, was traveling to a new job as a teacher in Virginia when she stopped at a motel in Hays Sunday night.

"I was just traveling through when I turned on network TV last night," she said. "I thought, 'Wow, I can't pass this up.'"

While the previously unscheduled stop for the young teacher may have cost her a few hours as she made her way from the West Coast to the East Coast, others in the crowd for Bob Dole's big announce-

ment had planned for weeks to be on hand. That included a 71-year-old Ohio woman and her 85-year-old sister, who traveled 1,000 miles in their 1972 Chevrolet for the big day.

Emma Omev of Mansfield, Ohio, said she and her older sister Dorcas Swope left Ohio last Friday at noon. She was interviewed in a spot she and her sister had staked out right in front of the podium at about 7:20 a.m., long before any speakers mounted the stage.

Not surprisingly, Mrs. Omev said she and Mrs. Swope had been Bob Dole fans for a long time.

"We've been supporters. I think he'll cut the deficit down," she said.

Mrs. Omev said their trip to Russell had been planned for months, but because of sickness in the family, they almost had to cancel.

"We thought we were going to get to

go, then that changed, then we finally started at Friday noon," she said.

Another pair of long-distance travelers at the Dole announcement were John Healy of Livermore, Calif., and Glenn Hawley of Maple Heights, Ohio. The two had met while serving in the army during the Vietnam War and kept in contact. Hawley, who now is in the U.S. Navy, said he and Healy talked by telephone recently and decided to combine rekindling an old friendship and supporting their favorite presidential candidate.

"I said, 'Let's get together and work for Dole,'" Hawley said. Healy added that "we think Dole is the best thing that's happened since the Vietnam War. Every veteran in California is for Dole."

Signs in the crowd jampacked in front of the podium where Dole made his announcement indicated that other states were represented. Among them were

"Missourians for Dole" and "Arkansas is for Bob Dole."

But closer to home, Kansans made their support of a home-grown candidate known. Don Casey of Great Bend said he had been a fan of the senator from Russell ever since he worked with the Veterans of Foreign Wars during the Vietnam War.

"If you call him, you'd have results," he said. "It wasn't his secretary who called you back, it was him."

Casey said that he once called the senator's office in Washington to try to find out some information about a soldier who had written to his mother in handwriting other than his own. She became worried that her son had been seriously injured, Casey said.

"Dole called me back at 2 a.m.," he said. "That's one reason I'm up here ... Bob would call you back."

Casey added that the soldier in question

had been injured, but in a motorcycle accident and not in combat.

Kansas University student John Nottensmeyer spent the chilly Monday morning passing out programs. He said that as a political science major, he became interested in working at the event, and he and 10 other students rented motel rooms in Hays and came to Russell early.

Nottensmeyer said he attended a meeting of students willing to work for Dole, and they divided up tasks. Others have gone to Iowa to campaign for the senator in preparation for the early Iowa primary, while others were involved in a letter-writing campaign aimed at voters in that state.

Blowing on his hands to keep them warm in the 28-degree temperature early Monday, Nottensmeyer said, "If I didn't support Dole, I definitely wouldn't be out here."



Signs among the 6,000 to 8,000 people who gathered in Russell Monday ranged from the fruity to the hopeful to the succinct. Photos by Larry Caldwell and Chris Ochsner