



—Staff/John Bock

Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan., shown at center, visited the construction site of a \$6 million statewide satellite educational system on the Kansas State University campus Wednesday. The project is known as the Kansas

Regents Educational Communications Center. Dole played a key role in obtaining federal funds for the state Board of Regents project, according to KSU President Jon Wefald, shown at right.

Dole visits satellite education site

By DANA NEAL
Capital-Journal state staff writer

MANHATTAN — A \$6 million, statewide, satellite educational system was the focus of a brief visit from Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan., Wednesday at Kansas State University.

Dole held a key role in helping secure federal funding for the satellite communications program, known as the Kansas Regents Educational Communications Center, according to KSU President Jon Wefald.

The U.S. Department of Education provided KSU with a \$6 million grant during fiscal years 1987 and 1988 to support the construction and initial purchase of equipment for the communications center.

"Without Dole's leadership, none of this would be a reality," stated Mel Chastain, director of the ECC.

The "reality" is a multi-million-dollar, high-tech setup. The technology is satellite television, through which lessons or teacher in-service programs will be sent from KSU and picked up by satellite dishes at schools across the state. The system will be interactive, so teachers and students can communicate over vast distances.

"This (the ECC) will help schools that may not have the funding to hire the staff to teach high level courses in subjects such as chemistry, physics, and Spanish," Wefald said.

Dole began his tour at the entrance to the site where the \$4 million ECC building is being constructed, on the north side of the KSU campus. Construction began in May. It should be completed next year, according to university officials.

As Dole accepted a souvenir hard hat from Chastain, he joked, "I need that for some of those legislative battles."

Later, in a more serious tone, the senator pointed out the need for continued educational opportunities, not only in Kansas, but for the entire

nation.

"By the year 2000, we'll have jobs begging for people, and the people need to be ready and qualified," Dole said. "This (ECC) is the new technology and the wave of the future."

Dole's stop in Manhattan was the first of several visits on his itinerary Wednesday. During the press conference, he noted, "It's nice to come to Kansas when you're not suspect for running for anything."

The highlight of the ECC tour was the recently-acquired mobile television production unit that looks like a national television network's semi-trailer van. The nearly \$1 million unit is a television control room on wheels that allows the production of state-of-the-art programming from any location in Kansas.

Although the \$4 million ECC building being constructed will include studios, laboratories and classrooms for producing, distributing and evaluating distance education programs, not all of the subject content can be brought to a studio.

Resources at other regents' institutions may be difficult or impossible to move from their campus locations. The mobile unit will allow ECC workers to take the production facilities to the resource.

The ECC also has a transportable uplink vehicle that can accompany the mobile unit to any location and provide live programming from that spot.

Fifty-five locations in the state, primarily rural, will be receiving sites of the ECC programming, Wefald said.

The school districts will pay for the service, in addition to the cost of setting up the necessary equipment to interface with satellite system. However, that cost is minimal compared to providing the necessary teaching staff required to offer the same type of courses, said one ECC lab technician.

"We believe that this (the ECC) will help some of the smaller, rural Kansas schools stay alive for many, many years to come," Wefald said.

Dole does honors at ribbon cutting

By DALE HOGG
Tribune Area Reporter
RUSSELL — In his last public visit to his native Russell, Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., announced his ill-fated bid for the presidency. Wednesday night, he returned to announce the opening of a new telemarketing firm here.

Dole also addressed the recently passed drought relief bill.

Flanked by Kansas Secretary of Commerce Harland Priddle and other state and local officials, Dole attended the ribbon cutting and grand opening of S&S Telemarketing. The business has been open for a week.

The firm, owned by two former Dole staff members Keith Schraad and Tom Synhorst, does mostly political fund raising.

"Small towns out here are all out there trying to stay alive," Dole said in an impromptu press conference.

However, "we haven't given up," he said in his remarks. Although refusing to go into more detail, he added that a number of

other possibilities are being examined. "They could create some more jobs."

A large crowd of Russell residents packed the former department store building, which houses the new business, to see their native son.

The senator praised both Synhorst and Schraad for their entrepreneurial spirit.

"He's the reason we clobbered them in Iowa," the senator said of Synhorst, who headed the Dole campaign in the state. "I just needed a few more like him in New Hampshire" where Dole was defeated.

"I'm not running for anything. I can't find anything open," Dole joked. "It's good to be home."

"Most of our clients are political," Schraad said. "We do basically fund raising and volunteer recruitment." The firm handles clients on local, state and national levels. Among them is the Kansas Republican Party.

With today's emphasis on heavy campaigning, "there is all

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HOME AGAIN — Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan., delivers remarks at the opening of S&S Telemarketing in Russell. The new firm, started by two

former Dole staff members, does mostly political fund raising. Dole was joined by Kansas Secretary of Commerce Harland Priddle. — (photo by Dale Hogg)

Dole has mixed emotions about drought relief bill

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ways someone running for something," Schraad commented.

"We really tried to find our niche in a market flooded with telemarketing companies that sell siding for homes. We decided to concentrate on one area."

Schraad and Synhorst are not newcomers to the political arena. "This is our fourth site," Schraad noted. The firm also has two operations in Nebraska and one in Iowa.

The two like the small town atmosphere for their business. "They have a very high work ethic. It's our trade secret."

Although the building appears barren now, banks of telephones line the walls. According to Schraad, the firm now employs 14 at Russell and has 25 phone lines in operation.

The firm has also done work for the Small Business Administration and hopes to expand into college fund raising, Schraad said.

In addition to expanding the scope of their business, Schraad said they hope to increase the size of their staff as well, but he hesitated to say when and by how much.

Even though Schraad attended law school, "this is what I'd rather do. You get to work with a lot of people."

S&S is not alone in locating telemarketing operations in Kansas, Secretary Priddle said. "Telemarketing is becoming an interesting attraction in Kansas," he noted, citing ASI in Great Bend and others.

"They're finding Kansas, because of its central location," he added. Other advantages include being in the central time zone, a good phone system and an excellent work force. "They get a day's work for a day's pay."

"Rural development is going to be real big," Priddle said, discussing the planned Center for Rural Development at Kansas State University. "It think it's moving up because the economy is better. We're looking at long-term development."

In his remarks, Priddle said he had talked to some of the new employees, all of whom were unemployed before the new business opened. "That's what it is all about. Thanks Russell, you're putting people to work."

"This is the first new industry Russell has had for a long while," Russell Chamber of Commerce Executive Vice President Glenda Finke said of why the dignitaries were invited. According to Finke, Dole did most of the recruiting to bring S&S to Russell.

As for the drought bill, Dole said he has mixed emotions. "I wish it had been a little more tilted to those who were hurt by the drought." He feels that some of the non-program crops should have been excluded. However, he added, at least there is a bill. "It's alright."

The senator also foresees changes in the Federal Crop Insurance system. "They'll probably take it up in connection with the 1990 farm bill," he said of his fellow lawmakers.