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Kansas Briefs

From staff and wire reports



David Lambertson, left, who has been nominated to be U.S. ambassador to Thailand, speaks with Sens. Nancy Kassebaum, right, and Bob Dole, middle, on Capitol Hill. Lambertson, a native Kansan, was questioned by a Senate subcommittee Tuesday.



Bob Dole

Work on Obee cleanup praised

By Ray Henman
The Hutchinson News

Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan., praised the efforts of Hutchinson city officials in reducing the potential liability of cities faced with the cost of cleaning polluted areas.

Earlier this spring, Dole met with Hutchinson Mayor Ron Leslie, City Commissioner Jim Fee and Environmental Protection Agency officials. The Hutchinson delegation had gone to Washington, D.C., in an effort to reduce the city's portion of the cost in cleaning up pollution in the Obee area on the east side of the city.

While the exact cost of the cleanup is unknown, Hutchinson city officials have proposed limiting the cost of the cleanup to the city to 5 percent of the city's assessed valuation, or about \$5 million.

"We had a very good meeting in my office with the EPA and the mayor," Dole said during his weekly telephone press conference with Kansas media. "We discovered a lot of other municipalities are in the same fix. So I'd commend the city officials of Hutch for taking the lead and trying to find some way to reduce the potential obligations and responsibilities. I must say I was encouraged just sitting in on the meeting from what I heard from representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency."

"I think we just have to wait awhile and see what develops to see what the study reveals. But certainly the city and city officials have to do everything they can to protect the city from increased liability."

Dole said he had not seen the Hutchinson proposal but would be taking a close look at the concept when he receives it.

The Senate minority leader also was not particularly receptive to Rep. Dan Glickman's proposal to bring the Z-Bar Ranch into the National Park Service system.

Thursday, Glickman, D-Kan., said he would be introducing legislation this spring to make the 17-square-mile Z-Bar ranch near Strong City a national monument.

"So far, we've said no," Dole said. "Maybe Dan has a new idea here. He says it's not going to cause any opposition, but a lot of the opponents say we've got tall grass and we don't need government to spend \$5 million."

Dole said the study is expected to predict that the park would bring an additional 19,000 visitors to the area each year.

The state's senior senator complimented the process through which Glickman was working.

Dole backs Bush's plan for refugees

By Alan Montgomery
The Hutchinson News

WASHINGTON — Sen. Bob Dole said he will appoint a contingent of U.S. senators to travel to Turkey, "probably next weekend," to assess the status of starving refugees from war-ravaged Iraq.



Dole

"I think we have to do all we can," Dole said, in a telephone interview from Washington. "If that is not enough, do more. I don't want to be involved militarily, but we should be involved in this (relief effort). The American people want to be involved. They want action."

Dole's statement came as the Bush administration was taking criticism for its slow response to the needs of the Kurdish refugees, as thousands of them are reported to be dying of disease, exposure and malnutrition in mountainous terrain in Turkey.

Bush announced Thursday that the U.S. would expand its efforts to help the refugees, with plans calling for setting up relief facilities capable of sheltering and feeding up to 700,000 people who have fled Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's forces.

Dole said he supported the idea of a "safe haven" zone in Iraq, above the 36th parallel, so the Kurdish and Shiite people could return to their homes.

"We'll have to tell Saddam, in very clear language, 'You leave these people alone, or we may be back. If you start any sort of genocidal action, the world community will not tolerate it,'" the senator said.

Dole said he was happy to report that there were no Kansas military bases included on Friday's Pentagon list of installations to be closed.

"That means it will be business as usual for Fort Riley, McConnell Air Force Base and Fort Leavenworth — and that adds up to great news for Kansas."

Dole said the news is a reflection of the critical importance of these top-grade installations to the nation's defense.

Dole urges cable company "to be generous"

By DAN HESS
Staff Writer

Sen. Bob Dole said Friday that if efforts to amend the Cable Act of 1984 are begun, he has changes to in mind.

His comment was in reference to the difficulties Salina has had in negotiating a cable television franchise renewal with Salina Cable Television.

"If we get into changing (the act) by law, I'm going to have an amendment giving the city more power during renewal," said the Kansas Republican in his weekly telephone news conference.

"I'd like to shorten the franchise term. Fifteen years is too long, and I'd like to allow for competition for some of these monopolies."

Over the past two years, the city and cable company have been through sometimes-heated public hearings and negotiations in the cable company's attempt to gain renewal of its



"We told them (TCI) to get out there and work it out. Salina is a good-sized city and we told them they ought to try take care of it."

— Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan.

franchise agreement, which expires in 1992. Dole said his office has been pressuring Telecommunications Inc., the parent company of Salina Cable Television, to negotiate in good faith with the city.

"We've pressured — or strongly urged — TCI that it is in their best interest to be as generous as possible," Dole said.

"We told them (TCI) to get out there and work it out," Dole said. "Salina is a good-sized city and we told them they ought to try take care of it."

Dole met informally with Salina city commissioners in Washington, D.C., during a National League of Municipalities meetings. The city has corresponded with Dole and other members of the Kansas congressional delegation.

Over the past two weeks, the commission has been discussing an ordinance that sets out regulations the cable company must follow when submitting a proposal to the city.

Earlier this week, Salina Cable Television — in a strongly worded letter to City Manager

Dennis Kissinger — said the city was interpreting the Cable Act incorrectly in several areas.

"I cannot express to you how dismayed we (TCI) are to see such a flagrant violation of standards and procedures spelled out in federal law," wrote Terry Jensen, area manager for TCI of Kansas.

The Salina City Commission has twice given preliminary approval to the ordinance that will allow the city to put out a request for proposals. In the request for proposals, the city has outlined what it deems necessary to meet the future cable needs of the community over the life of the next franchise.

Peter Brown, the city's public information officer, said some of the changes in the ordinance Jensen suggested might be made before Monday's commission meeting. But the ordinance should be given final approval Monday as scheduled.

Dole scheduled to visit Hutch at 11 a.m. today

Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan., will make a series of appearances across the state today and Saturday. The appearances will begin at 11 a.m. today at the Hutchinson Airport.

Dole said he was asked by Hutchinson city officials to meet with them and with officials from the Environmental Protection Agency about ground water pollution on the city's east side, known as the Obee area. The area, near the airport, once was the city's landfill.

After making the tour of the Obee area, Dole will return to the airport for lunch with local businessmen at the facility.

"The old landfill is one of the primary topics, but we will discuss any other topics that might come up," he said.

The senator also declined to comment on statements made by Dave Owen Wednesday. Owen blamed his legal problems on the late Lee Atwater, former Republican National Committee chairman who directed George Bush's campaign for president against Dole.

Owen charged that Atwater drummed up the charges against him to smear Dole's campaign for president. Owen worked on Dole's presidential campaign in 1988 and has been charged with campaign finance irregularities relating to Mike Hayden's 1986 campaign for governor.

"My reaction is limited," Dole said. "I will not comment on Dave Owen or Lee Atwater."

Dole Tours Obee Contamination Site

HUTCHINSON — Sen. Bob Dole got a firsthand look at Hutchinson's ground-water contamination site Friday and said Congress might seek to limit municipal liability in such cases if enough cities share the problem.

He spent a little more than an hour in Hutchinson, touring the Obee site with city and federal officials and then eating lunch at the airport with about 50 community leaders.

In July 1987, the Obee site, which is on the southeast corner of the municipal airport property, was put into the Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund program because of contamination from a variety of volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

Some of the contamination appears to be coming from an abandoned landfill that the city owned and operated from the mid-1950s through the mid-1960s. Most of the rest of the contamination is in

the vicinity of 4th and Airport Road.

The city and five private businesses have formed a group to take initial responsibility for the cleanup. Nobody knows how much a cleanup plan might cost, but EPA estimates that such plans average \$25 million.

City officials and Morris Kay, who heads EPA's regional office in Kansas City, picked up Dole at the airport and gave him a 30-minute tour of the site.

"The liability could well go beyond the ability of the city of Hutchinson to pay for it," said Ron Leslie, city commissioner and former mayor.

Leslie and City Manager Joe Palacios visited Dole in Washington several weeks ago and, with the help of Dole's office, met with EPA officials there to discuss ways to limit municipal liability in such cases.

Force may subdue, but love wins. — William Penn

Dole makes a tour of contamination site

By Duane Schrag
The Hutchinson News

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