

Hutchinson Mayor Joan Schrag straightens Sen. Bob Dole's tie minutes before he was to speak to a roomful of

public officials and civic leaders Wednesday morning at city hall.

Photo by Monty Davis

## Dole remains mum on re-election plans

By Duane Schrag

Sen. Bob Dole still isn't saying whether he will run for re-election, but he said Wednesday he might make an announcement within a couple of weeks.

"I'm not trying to be coy about it," Dole told an audience of civic leaders and public officials that filled the city-commission chambers to overflowing. "It will be fairly soon."

Dole spent about 45 minutes

updating interested city residents on what is happening in Washington. He arrived in Hutchinson shortly after 10 a.m., on his way from Kansas City to Wichita.

He said he was in the area, in part because his brother "isn't feeling well."

The most serious problem facing the nation continues to be the \$3.5 trillion (\$3,500,000,000,000) federal deficit, but Congress once again

seems unwilling to address it honestly.

"It seems to me politics has taken over," Dole said, noting that the Senate finance committee is going to look for ways to cut taxes. "Politics is going to dictate what we do, even if it is wrong."

He said that the economy did need to be rejuvenated but that he suspected the proposed incentives would be too small to do anything other than add to

the deficit.

Mayor Joan Schrag introduced Dole at the meeting and thanked him for helping secure federal financing for a proposed K-96 bypass around the city's west side.

Dole explained that money would come from federal gasoline-tax revenues but that the money would pay for only 80 percent of the project.

During his talk, Dole touched

on a wide variety of issues. Here is a sampling of his comments:

■ On Sen. Nancy Kassebaum — "She's like Ivory soap — 99.9 percent approval rating. I wouldn't want to run against her."

■ On David Duke — "David Duke is a disaster. He's going to bring out the worst in everyone. He's racist ... I wish he were running on the other ticket."

■ On Pat Buchanan — "If the economy picks up, he will be forgotten."

■ On President Bush — "If the economy picks up, he will be strong again."

■ On John Sununu — "I remember what happened to me in New Hampshire because of Sununu. John Sununu called me and asked me if I would call George Bush and try to save him. And I did. I remember what he did to me in New Hampshire."

■ On Mario Cuomo — "He can't make up his mind what day it is."

■ On The Kansas City Times' series detailing problems with the agriculture department — "I don't know if it is all true. Probably not, but we're going to check it out." If it is true, changes will have to be made, he added.

■ On the economy — "The recovery isn't too whippy."

■ On the peace dividend — "I hope Congress doesn't get in such a big rush to disarm America that we get into trouble."

■ On federal programs in Kansas — "We are trying to get our fair share. Or more."

■ On federal mandates — "It's called a mandate. It's the same as a tax on your business."

■ On the effect of federal mandates on business — Congress has found the one group not in bankruptcy and is trying to do something about it.

■ On Congress — "Congress is in recess. To me, that ought to be good news to everyone here."

## Dole shows he's king of the road

Senator's tinkering adds millions to Kansas projects

By Angela Herrin  
Eagle Washington bureau

WASHINGTON — In a last-minute maneuver on the Senate floor, Sen. Bob Dole last month bypassed Kansas transportation officials and decided himself where \$70 million in special highway funds should be spent in Kansas.

After the final passage of the \$151 billion federal transportation bill, Dole announced he had added two Kansas projects just before the Senate vote.

A Dole amendment directed a total of \$48 million be spent to build a new connect-

between U.S. 50 and K-96 in Hutchinson. In addition, Dole added language directing \$56.2 million to be used to widen U.S. 81 to a four-lane highway from Belleville to the Nebraska border.

The announcement caught state officials by surprise. Neither Hutchinson nor Belleville was among the state's priorities in the first stage of the \$2.6 billion highway modernization plan, said Kansas Secretary of Transportation Mike Johnston.

But Johnston was even more surprised



Sen. Dole

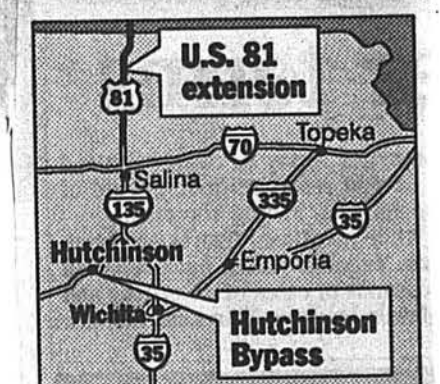
when he learned that the Dole amendment ordered the Kansas Department of Transportation to pay for the Hutchinson and Belleville projects by using all of its money from a special federal program that repays states for building highways that later became part of the interstate system.

Kansas is to receive about \$70 million in reimbursement funds for building the Kansas Turnpike. The reimbursement is a one-time payment to all the states, and other states apparently will be allowed to spend their reimbursement funds without restriction, Johnston said.

"I'm not saying these are not good projects — I'm just saying that I'm not certain we'd make the same decision at the same time that Sen. Dole would about how and where to spend the money," he said.

**"I'm not certain we'd make the same decision at the same time that Sen. Dole would about how and where to spend the money."**

Mike Johnston



The Wichita Eagle

"Clearly Hutchinson and Belleville are priorities for Sen. Dole."

A spokesman for Dole said that he aimed the funds at projects in Kansas that weren't guaranteed money in the first stage of the state highway plan or the federal highway bill.

"Just because KDOT put out a list doesn't mean that is the only project that should get money — everyone has a list, but that doesn't mean we have to agree with it," said Dole press aide Walt Riker.

The state already has a project under way widening U.S. 81 to Concordia. Before Dole added his amendments, the highway bill also included \$7 million to widen U.S. 81 from Concordia to Belleville, as well as \$24 million for the Hutchinson interchange.

Since the Dole amendment directs all the Kansas reimbursement money to the Hutchinson and Belleville projects, the two major urban areas, Wichita and Kansas City, may not get the same share of reimbursement money that other urban areas around the nation receive, Johnston said.

However, under the bill, urban areas of more than 200,000 population are supposed to be guaranteed a percentage of all federal highway money over the next six years. And both areas are slated to receive a windfall over the next six years from the \$1.3 billion total in federal highway funds Kansas is scheduled to receive, Riker said.

Wichita is also singled out in the highway bill for a \$6.6 million grant to improve the interchange at Oliver and Kellogg.

"Areas like Wichita are for the first time guaranteed funding for their projects — that's not guaranteed to other areas of the state," Riker said. "And this bill has much more flexibility so that states have a much wider range of opportunity to move money around where they need it."

Johnston said he was concerned that extending U.S. 81 may take more than the \$56 million the highway bill provides. That could force the state to come up with the rest of the money by delaying other projects, he said.

"I'm grateful for all the work the delegation did. The state is getting more money than ever before and many of the projects in the bill did come from material we submitted," Johnston said. "We're still trying to sort out what the whole bill means. But I think there will be a lot of folks surprised."

Friday, December 13, 1991

## Dole just may call it quits

Minority position makes job less fun

By The New York Times

WASHINGTON — Bob Dole did more with less in the last session of Congress, extricating his party from White House-made difficulties on civil rights and unemployment benefits.

But the Republican leader of the Senate sounds tired of keeping the increasingly fractious, dwindling Republican minority together.

And if his party lost still more seats, the senior senator from Kansas said in a recent interview, "about all you could do is frustrate the majority. You couldn't deal with them. You could frustrate them, drag things along, irritate people, which you'd have to do."

"You wouldn't have much impact on the results, keep a lot of people awake," he said.

The 68-year-old politician is on the eve of deciding whether to run for a fifth term, and he says he is contemplating what once seemed impossible: retiring from politics. His friends say he may seek the tamer pursuits of practicing law and serving on corporate boards.

His Kansas colleague, Sen. Nancy Landon Kassebaum, recently made public a letter urging him to run again. He was nearly irreplaceable, she wrote, both in the "frustrating and difficult" task of conciliation among Senate Republicans and in the role of a leader who "persuaded the White House to listen."

Dole earned such credentials through dedication to President Bush's interests — even when others have suspected that he was not convinced of the political wisdom of a White House position. "There has been no more effective advocate of the president's position nor protector of the president's prerogatives," said Sen. George J. Mitchell of Maine, the majority leader, who credits Dole with the president's string of sustained vetoes.

"My job is to reflect the administration view, get as much of their program as we can," Dole said.

In doing so, he gives the public no hint of the disdain he showed in his own 1988 presidential campaign and his bitter primary battle with Bush in



Dole

## Dole sees job as pushing Bush's goals

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New Hampshire. Republican senators say he gives them no hint either.

Generally Dole the legislative leader has much less of a sharp tongue, on almost any subject, than Dole the candidate. It's more responsible, but it may be less fun.

"I don't think he terribly enjoys being minority leader, and he enjoyed it less in the last year or two," said Sen. Warren B. Rudman of New Hampshire, Dole's diehard ally in the 1988 primary there.

Pushing the administration's view was a more satisfying job for Dole as majority leader in 1985 and 1986. But the 1986 elections put the Republicans in the minority, and their numbers shrank in 1988 and 1990.

After November's election of Harris Wofford in Pennsylvania, the Republicans were stuck on the short end of a 57-43 balance in the Senate.

"I'd like to be majority leader," Dole said. "Obviously you never know around this place, there can be big sweeps, but I don't think that's going to happen in '92, so I wouldn't want to lose any seats."

With still fewer seats, "you'd still have to make the same fights," he said. But the outcome would be obstruction, not influence, and even if this year was frustrating, Dole had a powerful effect.

On civil rights, one of the few important bills passed, he kept pressing for talks between the White House and Sen. John C. Danforth, the Missouri Republican, whose summer-long appeal to his party to abandon the quota issue and work for compromise on the job-discrimination measure kept it within reach of enactment.

**"The strongest position would be to be majority leader when the other guy is in charge downtown, and then you can pretty well bring things to a halt around here."**

— Sen. Bob Dole

But Dole also worked to keep Danforth from taking enough Republicans publicly committed to him to provide strength to override a veto in the Senate.

The Missourian was tantalizingly close. "You have to choose between supporting the president and Jack Danforth," he recalls Dole telling a Republican caucus.

Buying time by dragging things out on the floor, using parliamentary stalling procedures, Dole confronted Bush and his aides with the uncertainties of the situation in the Senate. He assembled a group of uncommitted Republican senators whom the administration can usually count on to visit the White House.

When several of the senators all but threatened to vote to override, Bush sent C. Boyden Gray, the White House counsel, to make a deal.

Afterward, Dole loyally and routinely insisted that the votes to sustain a veto had been there all the time.

But he does not expend much energy trying to convince people of that. Instead, he defines his function on this bill as beginning with being a bit uncomfortable at opposing the measure in 1989 and sustaining Bush's veto.

"From a party standpoint, it was not in our interest to get locked in," he said. "We had to bring everybody along fairly slowly; we had a few in

our party who thought that would be the great issue, we shouldn't drop it."

On civil rights, Dole had no legislative ax to grind, though an inventive aide, Dennis Shea, kept peppering both sides with compromise suggestions.

But on unemployment, he had a counter-proposal as soon as the first of three efforts to provide extra benefits for people out of work at least half a year came to the floor in July. The final versions passed last month.

Dole's commitment was tactical, not principled. Indeed, his was the loudest "aye" when the Senate passed the Democratic bill after rejecting his plan on Aug. 1. But the alternative provided cover for Republicans until the White House finally felt the issue's strong political winds and abandoned its arguments that the benefits were not needed because the recession was ending and that extended benefits would deter the jobless from seeking work.

"My view was 'We don't want to give anybody unemployment benefits' was not a winner," he said.

He conceded "it took a while to get it done," from July until November. What was in the final legislative package owed at least as much to Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, who heads the Senate Finance Committee, and Rep. Dan Rostenkowski, D-Ill., who heads the House Ways and Means Committee, as it did to Dole.

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