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RUSSELLITES ROLL FOR DOLE — During the pre-dawn freezing, sleeting drizzle, two busloads of well-wishers left from Russell's Memorial Park at 5 a.m. today to be in Topeka for fellow-Russellite

Sen. Bob Dole's formal announcement as a presidential candidate. Russell also is building toward a frenzy of activity when Sen. and Mrs. Dole visit here this coming Friday and Saturday. (Staff Photo)

Bob Dole!

By PETER HANCOCK
TOPEKA, Kan. (UPI) — Senate Republican leader Bob Dole announced his presidential candidacy Monday by promising to bring to the White House the sensitivity of the nation's heartland and the hard experience of a war veteran.

Dole, 71, showed in polls to be his party's front-running candidate, also promised he could both lower taxes and balance the federal budget, would push hard the Republican drive to return power to the states, and would reassert U.S. foreign policy worldwide.

"I have been tested and tested and tested, in many, many ways," said Dole, seeking to turn his age from a potential liability to an asset.

Addressing some 3,000 banner-waving supporters at the first stop in a planned weeklong, multi-state announcement tour, he declared, "I am not afraid to lead, and I know the way."

"My mandate as president would be to rein in the federal government in order to set free the spirit of the American people," Dole told the rally on the steps of the Kansas Statehouse.

The World War II veteran timed his announcement to the 50th anniversary of the near-fatal injury that broke his neck, destroyed a kidney and crippled his right arm.

He made repeated references to his war duty, and said his election as president would bring back to the White House a first-hand knowledge of "what has been sacrificed to keep us free."

Dole opened his speech by describing himself as a son of the nation's heartland imbued with the "common sense and uncommon sensitivity" of Kansas, but "tempered by adversity and seasoned by experience."

He promised to wage a tougher fight against crime, treating juvenile offenders as adults, limiting legal appeals, and emphasizing the rights of victims over the "privileges of criminals;" to reform federal welfare programs largely by turning them over to the states; to reform a federal affirmative action program that has grown "out of control;" to replace federal housing programs with vouchers for the needy; and to eliminate the Education Department, sharply trim the Commerce Department, and consolidate the Energy Department within the Pentagon.

He further appealed to conservatives, whose support is seen as critical in the primary phase of the presidential competition, by reiterating his support for a balanced-budget amendment, pledging a renewal of the "war on drugs," and

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change at all costs." Dole insisted he would be "more than a clever apologist for the status quo."

He said Americans feel their government has become "too large, too remote and too undemocratic to be responsive," and said government leaders "seem to have lost the idea that we are and must remain one nation under God."

The country, Dole said, needs "leaders who believe in our people and are proud of our values."

Promising a more assertive foreign policy, he insisted he would defend U.S. interests "whenever and wherever they are challenged around the world."

Polls over the past several weeks have consistently showed Dole holding a commanding lead over Gramm and a host of other GOP contenders, and running close with Clinton.

The most recent nationwide survey of likely Republican voters by USA Today and CNN had Dole leading Gramm by a margin of 46 percent to 13 percent. Television commentator Pat Buchanan had 8 percent and California Gov. Pete Wilson had 6 percent.

Other leading GOP contenders include former Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander and Sens. Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania and Richard Lugar of Indiana.

Dole headed from the announcement in Kansas to New Hampshire, site of the nation's first presidential primary every four years, and then to New York City for a fund-raiser Monday night expected to net him \$1 million.

Kansas Gov. Bill Graves and Sen. Nancy Kassebaum, R-Kan., introduced Dole at the Topeka rally. Also seated on the podium were Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad, whose state holds the first presidential caucus, and Rep. Bill Zeff, R-N.H.

Dole made his first bid for the presidency in 1980, losing to Ronald Reagan. He lost in 1988 to George Bush. Dole was running mate to President Ford in their unsuccessful campaign against Jimmy Carter for the Oval Office in 1976.

Dole has spent most of his adult life in politics. After World War II he was elected to the Kansas Legislature while still in college. Later, after earning a law degree, he was elected county attorney in his hometown of Russell.

Bob Dole!

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suggesting the termination of funding for the National Endowment of the Arts and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

"The view of many Americans is a sobering one," Dole pronounced. "We are troubled about the direction our country is taking."

"With rare clarity," he said of the voters in last November's election, "they reaffirmed their faith in themselves and a healthy amount of skepticism in government."

"We can cut taxes and balance the budget," said Dole, touching on an issue that highlights both the advantages and liabilities he faces in running a presidential campaign while serving as Senate majority leader.

The Senate faces contentious debate over a House GOP proposal for a \$38 billion-a-year tax cut, and one of Dole's leading challengers in the presidential race, Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, called last week for its prompt passage.

Dole, however, has been less enthusiastic about the size of the proposed cut, which some opponents have attacked as irresponsible given the nation's \$4.8-trillion public debt.

Dole portrayed himself Monday, nevertheless, as the 1986 standard-bearer of the Republican "revolution" his party has declared since its sweeping victory in November's congressional elections.

Dole said Clinton campaigned in 1992 as the candidate of change and instead has "pledged to prevent

Great Bend Tribune, Monday, April 10, 1995

Dole makes third White House bid — this time as front-runner

TOPEKA (AP) — Offering himself as "tempered by adversity, seasoned by experience," Sen. Bob Dole launches his third presidential campaign today vowing to cut taxes, balance the budget and "lead America back to her place in the sun."

Dole, the Senate majority leader and early GOP front-runner, was formally declaring his candidacy today in Topeka, the Kansas capital, as a symbol of his pledge to shift authority over schools, welfare and a host of other issues back to the states.

Only three times in history have sitting senators won the White House, and Dole, now 71, will be 73 by the time the 1996 election rolls around, an age at which only Ronald Reagan has been elected president. But Dole, one of the most enduring, familiar and adaptable figures in recent American political history, opened his campaign with an optimistic spirit.

"My friends, I have the experience,"

Dole said in his prepared remarks. "I've been tested, tested in many ways. I am not afraid to lead and I know the way. Let us rein in our government and set the spirit of the American people free. Let us renew our moral convictions and strengthen our families by returning to fundamental values. Together, let us reassert our rightful place as a great nation."

Dole eagerly embraced the agenda that helped Republicans to their stunning success in last year's elections: a balanced budget amendment, a line-item veto and welfare reform, all under the umbrella of dramatically shrinking Washington's power and restoring more authority to states and communities.

"My mandate as president would be to rein in the federal government in order to set free the spirit of the American people; to reconnect our government in Washington with the common sense values of our citizens; and to reassert America's interest wherever and

whenever they are challenged around the world," he said.

Dole's morning began with a pre-announcement prayer breakfast attended by more than 1,000, where he was given a solemn send-off by his wife, Elizabeth Dole, the former labor secretary who now heads the American Red Cross.

He offered nothing but scorn for President Clinton. He said that after being elected on a promise of bold change in 1992, Clinton was now fighting at every turn to block the bolder change voters demanded last year when they gave Republicans control of Congress for the first time in four decades.

But to get a shot at Clinton, Dole will first have to navigate through the GOP nominating process that has thwarted him twice before. In 1980 and again in 1988, he got off to a promising start in Iowa but then sputtered in New Hampshire and the South. In 1976, Dole was President Ford's running mate in a losing campaign.

THE TOPEKA CAPITAL JOURNAL Monday, April 10, 1995

This time, Dole camp plans to sail straight

Today Kansas will get a real taste of Bob Dole's power.

The U.S. Senate majority leader and front-runner for the GOP nomination is primed and ready for his third bid for the presidency, and constituents from throughout the state can share the excitement at 8:45 a.m. today at the Statehouse, where Dole kicks off his candidacy announcement tour.

Whether his front-runner status comes from favorable poll ratings or the national media, Dole isn't taking any chances. Behind the supportive crowds and entertainment expected to garnish his Topeka announcement is a plan to sweep 11 cities in 10 states in the next four days in a well-crafted plan to build preliminary support in crucial areas. Dole's campaign staff didn't pull these

places out of a hat. They will be sites next year of critical caucuses and primaries that make and break presidential candidates.

It shows Dole learned valuable lessons from his unsuccessful runs for the White House in 1980 and 1988.

In 1980 Dole finished dead last in Iowa and attracted a paltry vote in New Hampshire. In 1988 he beat George Bush in the Iowa caucus, but the vice president under Ronald Reagan skewered Dole in New Hampshire. By the time Dole turned to the Southern states — particularly South Carolina — for a comeback, Bush was too far ahead to catch.

This time Dole's camp is methodically building support in all those areas, so if he stumbles in Iowa or New Hampshire, the Southern states could revive him.

After this morning's rally at the Statehouse, Dole will head northeast for a second rally in Exeter, N.H., the site of the first presidential primary. From there, he'll end the day with a fund-raiser at the New York Sheraton in Manhattan.

Having gained endorsements from New York Gov. George Pataki and Sen. Alfonse

D'Amato of New York, Dole will be sending a message to other candidates — particularly GOP contender California Gov. Pete Wilson — that the nation's second-most populous state is in Dole's camp.

Tuesday, Dole will head back to the Midwest to Columbus, Ohio, and the site of the first caucus, Des Moines, Iowa. He'll end Tuesday at another fund-raiser in Denver, hoping to capture support from the home of Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, who recently switched from Democrat to Republican.

The schedule eases a bit after that, but not the pace. Wednesday, Dole will invade Texas, home to ultra-conservative GOP contender Sen. Phil Gramm, for a stop in Dallas, Fla. From there he'll fly east to Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Thursday, he'll finish his East Coast leg of the tour with stops in Columbia, S.C., and Charlotte, N.C., and end the day in his hometown of Russell, where Dole's friends and family will celebrate the third presidential bid of the town's most famous son.

But strategy isn't the whole ball game for Dole. In addition to pressure to unify the split among GOP conservatives and moderates, the

political power broker needs a message.

Mary Matalin, one of the forces behind Bush's unsuccessful re-election bid in 1992, said in the book "All's Fair" that staying on message is each day's goal for any presidential candidate.

Disorganization and infighting can bring a campaign down as quick as any scandal because voters want candidates to chart a course for a vision for the country — not dealmaking. And dealmaking has been one of Dole's biggest strengths during his 35 years in Washington.

No one seems to see that more clearly than Dole.

"I'm not an intellectual," he told the Wall Street Journal last week. "I think I am pragmatic. But I do think I've got a pretty good mind when it comes to making decisions, deciding how far you're going to go... bringing people together. Is that compromise? I don't know. That's policy."

Kansans this morning can evaluate for themselves if Dole has a vision or if he's too practical to offer something other than common sense. And they can decide if common sense is a refreshing change.



Kristen L. Hays

DoleWatch