

OFF AND RUNNING



Kelly Presnell/Salina Journal
Dole gives a thumbs-up sign during his speech.

WHAT HE SAID:

Taxes and budget

"Middle class families are forced to send too much of their hard-earned tax money to Washington. We should provide a tax credit for children and remove the marriage penalty. We should cut the capital gains tax."

Tax system

"We need a president committed to making our tax system lower, fairer, flatter, simpler — so that ordinary people like you and me could fill out our tax form without a lawyer or an accountant or both."

Culture and TV

"We spend hundreds of millions of dollars on the Endowments for the Arts and Humanities. Why is the federal government in the culture business? In this explosion of the information age, why do we have a Corporation for Public Broadcasting?"

Welfare

"The federal system has failed. Why are liberals in Washington so afraid to turn welfare decision-making over to our governors and state legislatures? There is already considerable evidence that they can do much better."

Affirmative action

"Discrimination is wrong, immoral. This is America. We should have a color blind society. But fighting discrimination should never be used to divide Americans by race, ethnic background or gender."

Crime

"We should put an end to parole for violent offenders. Put limits on the endless and often frivolous appeals clogging our courts. Remove teen-agers who commit serious, violent crimes from juvenile courts and try them as adults. We should be more concerned with the rights of victims than the privileges of criminals."



Bob Dole shakes hands from the stage with a friend immediately after his announcement as his daughter, Robin, watches.

Kelly Presnell/Salina Journal



Hundreds of well-wishers, campaign officials and photographers mob Dole as he makes his way out of the Expo Centre arena after his announcing his candidacy Monday.

Kelly Presnell/Salina Journal

Dole is 'a good man,' 'someone we can respect'

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"He's a good man, a very good man. His family is just a good Kansas family. He's probably going to be our next president — a real good possibility anyway."

At the Expo Centre, Danny Belcher, a Vietnam veteran who is active in issues involving prisoners of war and those missing in action, came to Topeka from his home in Preston, Ky.

He and another Vietnam veteran held a large Dole sign.

Belcher said he would support Dole be-

"Morally, Bob Dole is someone we can respect by his past and present actions."

— Danny Belcher, Vietnam veteran from Kentucky

cause of his interest in the Americans still unaccounted for in Vietnam and also his record in World War II. The veteran said he is a registered Democrat. But he can't forgive President Clinton for his lack of military service.

"Clinton hasn't had the backbone to do

what is right," Belcher said. "The veterans have been treated like second-class citizens by the present administration. Morally, Bob Dole is someone we can respect by his past and present actions."

Nearby, Monna and Philip Frakes searched for a place to stand during the

ceremony. They drove more than seven hours from their home in Salem, Ill., to hear Dole. Philip Frakes, who served in Korea, said he also had concerns about Clinton's lack of military experience.

"He doesn't have any idea what the military is about," Frakes said.

He predicted Bob Dole could pass that test and more when it comes time for the votes to be counted in Illinois. Frakes said he planned to work for the Republican candidate.

"I think he's going to take Illinois," he predicted.

Declaration turns into Republican rally

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national campaign tour that ends Friday in his hometown of Russell, was surrounded by friends, family and other supporters in the Kansas Expo Centre.

The ceremony resembled a Kansas version of the Republican National Convention as well-wishers crowded to the speaker's podium and waved dozens and dozens of hand-held signs. There was the "NRA for Dole," "Ellis County for Dole" and "Bob Dole: A leader from America's heartland."

A huge blue and yellow Dole '96 banner hung from the ceiling behind the stage. Nearby sat a who's who of Kansas Republicans: Sen. Nancy Landon Kassebaum, Gov. Bill Graves, Lt. Gov. Sheila Frahm, U.S. Rep. Pat Roberts, state house and senate leaders and former Govs. Mike Hayden and Bill Avery.

Out-of-state supporters included Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad and Oklahoma Rep. J.C. Watts.

Bands from Russell and Topeka played before and after the announcement.

Scattered through the crowd were a handful of pickets, including a trio that carried signs critical of Dole and his support for the North American Free Trade Agreement and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

However, their presence was hardly noticed by the pro-Dole group. The atmosphere was festive, despite the cold, rainy day outside.

Dole was introduced by Graves, who called the senior senator from Kansas a leader whose "values are reflected in his deeds, not merely his words."

"Kansas has a tradition of sending its



Supporters wave signs before Dole gives his announcement speech at the Kansas Expo Centre in Topeka Monday morning.

Louise Zipl/Salina Journal

sons and daughters to serve the nation," Graves said. "Today we're here to celebrate another Kansan who continues that tradition."

Dole recognized his home state as the place he has never forgotten as he traveled to Washington and beyond.

"You see many things from atop the hill in Washington where I work — but you can see America from here," he said.

"Common sense and uncommon sensitivity. That's the Kansas way. It's what made

Dwight Eisenhower a great general and a great president. And it's what prompted Alf Landon with his unique wisdom to say, 'there are some intelligent people in Washington, but there are more of them in Kansas.'"

Then, with a flash of the Dole wit, he said, "I hasten to add the same thing applies to the other 49 states, Iowa and New Hampshire in particular." The two states are important to Dole because they will be the first test of his party strength.

He also offered a tribute to his hometown of Russell, where residents supported him emotionally and financially following a devastating war wound that left him without the use of his right hand.

"When I went off to war it was to defend a community of values unique in all the world. I came back sustained by the love and generosity of friends and neighbors who renewed my sense of life's possibilities. Over the years they have given me opportunities for service which I can never hope to repay. "Because they restored my spirit in a time of trial I have dedicated myself to restoring the spirit of America."

Dole's speech was interrupted more than 20 times by applause.

Like Lincoln farmer Art Howell, people said they liked what they heard.

G.B. "Bub" Dawson of Russell, former owner of the drug store where Bob Dole worked as a soda jerk, had a smile on his face as he left the Expo Centre.

"I thought it was a great speech," he said. "I liked the part about the flat tax and I liked the part about getting government out of our lives. I liked everything about the speech."

Gilbert Hammond of Junction City, a representative of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, clutched a piece of paper on which he had written a question for Dole about the candidate's views on civil rights.

He never had the chance to ask it.

Hammond wasn't disappointed. "Minorities have been isolated," he said. "We don't want to take over the process. We just want to be included. Dole is a leader. He's not divisive. I think we can work with him."