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A FRIENDLY SALUTE from President Gerald R. Ford and Sen. Robert Dole is directed to a large crowd lining Main Street in Russell while en route to the Russell County Courthouse grounds on Aug. 20, 1976. This was the

first step in Ford and Dole's campaign as presidential and vice-presidential running mates. The official announcement was made in Russell and was the first step in their campaign. (Staff Photo)



LAUNCHING THEIR CAMPAIGN for president and vice-president on Aug. 20, 1976, then-president Gerald R. Ford, right, and Sen. Robert J. Dole made their announcement in Russell in the front yard of the Russell County Courthouse. When picked by Ford to be his vice-presidential running mate, Dole made Ford promise he would come to Russell to launch the campaign. With the exception of his second campaign for office, when he announced at Bunker Hill for his first term as county attorney, Dole has announced all his campaigns in Russell. On the stage, behind Dole, is Kansas' governor, Robert F. Bennett. (Staff Photo)

Ford Picks Bob Dole

Aug. 19, 1976
KANSAS CITY, Mo. (UPI) — President Ford today chose Sen. Robert Dole of Kansas, a tough political fighter who served as Republican national chairman, to be his running mate.

Ford, introducing Dole at a nationally broadcast news conference, said he had known the World War II hero from Kansas "a great many years . . . Bob Dole has been a team player. Bob Dole's philosophy and mine coincide almost identically."

Dole, smiling as he stood beside the President, said "I'm realistic. I know there's a lot of work to be done between now and November. I'm not sure what I can add to the ticket . . . but I'll work hard."

"I did not expect to receive a phone call this morning, but I'm very glad we were in," Dole said. "I've known President Ford from the time I could call him Jerry."

The selection of Dole, 53, a tough political fighter who can take it as well as dish it out, ended days of speculation in which as many as two dozen names were rumored. Dole served as temporary chairman of the 1976 Republican National Convention.

Dole served in World War II and was highly decorated. He suffered severe wounds and was hospitalized for 39 months. His right arm

was left crippled. Dole, in his second Senate term after having served four terms in the House, was Republican national chairman under Richard Nixon from 1971-73.

Dole was divorced and in December married Mary Elizabeth Hanford, a member of the Federal Trade Commission. Dole has a daughter, Robin.

Earlier, Ronald Reagan, the vanquished presidential candidate with whom Ford had conferred early today about the vice presidency, again had said he absolutely was not interested in the second slot.

The choice of Dole was surprising because he comes from a Midwest state that traditionally has been Republican.

But in Washington, a congressional farm aide said that polls showed Ford in trouble in the traditional Farm Belt GOP bastions — possibly because of lingering resentment over farm export embargoes in recent years.

From that standpoint, the aide said, Dole "is probably the best guy he could have picked."

Dole's close identification with Richard Nixon and the fact he headed the national party at the time of the Watergate break-in are considered major reasons he nearly lost his Senate seat in 1974.

One Capitol Hill observer joked, "If you like Dick Nixon, you'll love Bob Dole." — and Dole barely defeated former Rep. William Roy, D-Kan., by 13,533 votes of 794,437 votes cast.

Before he publicly made the announcement, Ford telephoned the others who had been seriously considered and told them he had decided on Dole.

Ford's Staff Impressed With Russell

Aug. 21, 1976
Andy Stern, member of President Ford's staff, in charge of the local arrangements of the visit of President Gerald Ford and U.S. Sen. Bob Dole to Russell Friday, (Aug. 20) has a different idea about the vice-presidential candidate's home town than he has about other presidential stops.

Talking with City Manager Jim Boyd Friday, Stern complimented the community on its arrangements for Dole's homecoming. He said that he has never seen such combined effort and such effective cooperation.

"We usually spent from four to six days, or even longer, to set up a visit such as the one in Russell," Stern said. "You people did it in about 12 hours."

It wasn't until after 8 p.m. Thursday that the site, security, and facilities were approved. Until that time, everything was provisional.

By 10 p.m., committees had been formed, work assigned, and people contacted. While store owners were being contacted about provisions, local organizations were being contacted for volunteer workers, calls being made to assure transportation, and the wheels began slowly to turn.

Pieces Fit
By Friday morning, pieces began to interlock. About 30 Kansas Highway Patrolmen were assigned to Russell. City police in many area towns volunteered and received assignments at a briefing in the National Guard Armory.

Routes, driving times, intersections, and traffic problems studied. During the night, telephone crews of the United Telephone Company of Russell were unloading supplies and installing special circuits. Lines were being installed for a battery of press people. Details of the work are not available.

Some of the work is presumed to be "secret." At least the company would say nothing about it and referred questions to officials in Junction City. A member of the office staff said she was "not authorized to say anything."

Del Klema, working with Republican women and other volunteers, obtained about 1,500 hot dogs and a large number of buns. While not enough to match the number attending, the snacks were served as long as supplies lasted which, as it turned out, was after the speeches were completed.

Aroma Has Magic
Meanwhile, the aroma of hot dogs grilling over charcoal, wafted by a south wind, had the desired effect of providing a picnic atmosphere for those attending.

Downtown streets were blocked to traffic with barricades set up overnight. Lanes were staked in the courthouse lawn providing routes through which dignitaries would travel. Included was a route into the courthouse to be used in case of emergency. Areas for the press, a sizeable contingent traveling with the official party to Vail, Colo., were staked out and a bleacher moved to the lawn.

Street signs and banners were prepared in many stores. A number of the downtown stores closed from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Party members and others inter-

ested began calling leading Republicans, state officers, and party workers Friday night. Those called were urged to attend and to notify others.

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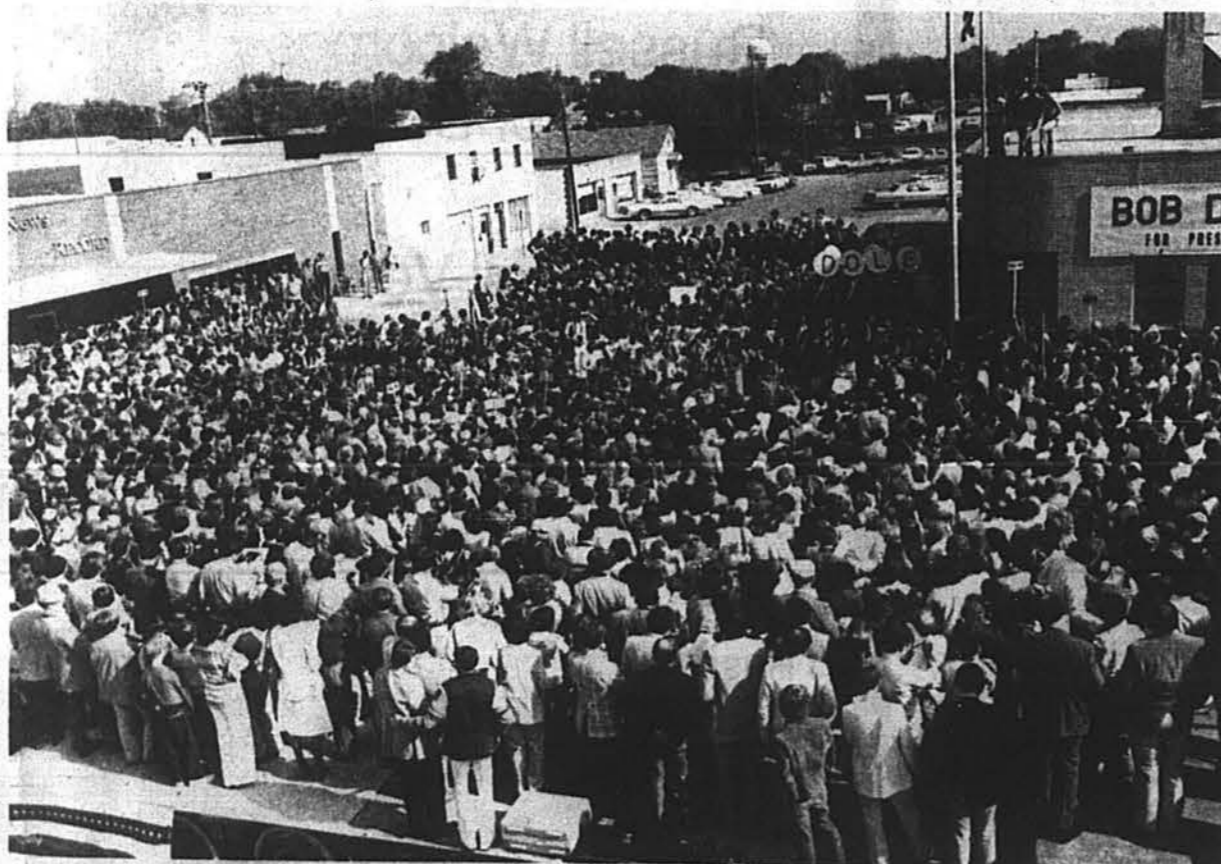
Talking Politics Relaxation for Dole

Bob Dole's idea of relaxation, said his old friend and campaign manager, Robert Ellsworth, "is to sit around and talk political strategy."

"My father," said Robin Dole, a Washington, D.C., realtor, "actually loves being on the road, campaigning 12 hours a day."

His close friends across the years have been political junkies — people such as Robert Strauss, former Democratic Party chairman, political lobbyist William Timmons and Tom Korologos, and pollster and political strategist Tully Plesser.

The best friend he ever had, Kansas newspaperman and long-time GOP National Committeeman McDill "Huck" Boyd, died in 1968.



1979 ANNOUNCEMENT SITE — When Bob Dole made his announcement on May 14, 1979, to seek the Republican nomination for president, the speaker's platform was set up on Maple Street, immediately east of The Russell Daily News/Russell Record building at the corner of 8th and Maple streets. An esti-

mated 6,000 people heard Dole's remarks. Dole later dropped out of the race, due to lack of funds. The News/Record plant is on the left of this picture and the City Building is on the right. The platform from which Dole made his announcement is in the street between the two buildings. (Staff Photo)



ELECTION DAY RALLY at the Dole residence on North Maple Street here, Nov. 2, 1976.

(Staff Photo)