

You are dedicated -- you are dedicated

HONORABLE BOB DOLE
DEDICATION WEEK
INDEPENDENCE PARK AND CUT-AND-COVER CONDUIT
ATCHISON, KANSAS
FRIDAY, AUGUST 13, 1971

I THINK IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT THE FINAL DAY OF DEDICATION WEEK FALLS ON FRIDAY THE THIRTEENTH, FOR IT WAS THIRTEEN YEARS AGO THAT ATCHISON BEGAN THE JOB OF BECOMING ONE OF KANSAS' MOST MODERN, ATTRACTIVE AND PROGRESSIVE COMMUNITIES.

THE BEGINNING, OF COURSE, WAS PAINFUL AND HARD TO APPRECIATE, BUT ON A STORM-SWEPT EVENING IN 1958 ATCHISON ACCEPTED A CHALLENGE AND -- THIRTEEN YEARS LATER -- WE SEE THE SUCCESS WITH WHICH THAT CHALLENGE HAS BEEN MET. AND IT IS TRULY A SUCCESS STORY THAT WE CELEBRATE TODAY.

FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

ACCORDING TO MARK TWAIN, SUCCESS IN AMERICA HAS MANY FORMULAS AND MANY PATTERNS, AND ANYHOW, ALL YOU NEED FOR IT IN THIS LIFE IS IGNORANCE AND CONFIDENCE. THAT MAY BE A RATHER HARSH PRESCRIPTION, BUT THE DICTIONARY SAYS THAT IGNORANCE INVOLVES BEING UNINFORMED, UNAWARE, AND INNOCENT, SO ON THAT BASIS, WHAT MARK TWAIN SAID MIGHT WELL BE TRUE OF ATCHISON.

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IGNORANCE

THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN SOME IGNORANCE IN TOWN THIRTEEN YEARS AGO. YOU HAD NO WAY OF BEING INFORMED OF HOW MUCH WORK WOULD BE REQUIRED TO REBUILD YOUR CITY AND PROTECT IT FROM BEING FLOODED OUT AGAIN. YOU WERE PROBABLY UNAWARE OF HOW -- OR IF -- LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL OFFICIALS COULD WORK TOGETHER, SHARING IDEAS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TALENTS. AND YOU PROBABLY WERE INNOCENT OF THE IDEA THAT URBAN RENEWAL, FLOOD CONTROL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, WHEN COMBINED, WOULD RESULT IN A CITY WITH MORE VIGOR, AND PRIDE, AND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE THAN THE ONE THAT STOOD FOR MORE THAN 100 YEARS BEFORE 1958.

ON THE MORNING OF JULY 11, 1958, WHEN THE FIRST LIGHT OF DAY REVEALED AN UNBELIEVABLE TOLL OF DEVASTATION IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA NO ONE HERE PROBABLY HAD MUCH OF AN IDEA WHAT THE FEDERAL URBAN RENEWAL ACT SAID; NONE OF YOU VERY LIKELY, KNEW TOO MUCH ABOUT URBAN FLOOD CONTROL OR WATERSHED PROJECTS. IN FACT, NO ONE PROBABLY KNEW MUCH MORE THAN THE FACT THAT THIS TOWN AND ITS PEOPLE HAD BEEN DEALT A HEAVY BLOW AND WERE DESPERATELY IN NEED OF HELP.

YES, COME TO THINK OF IT THERE WAS PROBABLY A GOOD DEAL OF THAT KIND OF IGNORANCE HERE.

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AND MAYBE IT WAS A GOOD THING. BECAUSE IF YOU HAD KNOWN THEN HOW MUCH TIME AND EFFORT AND MONEY WOULD BE NEEDED TO REACH THIS DAY 13 YEARS LATER, YOU MIGHT HAVE FELT IT WAS TOO MUCH AND TOO COSTLY AND TOO LONG TO TRY.

CONFIDENCE

BUT THERE WAS MORE THAN IGNORANCE IN ATCHISON; THERE WAS CONFIDENCE. IT WAS A CONFIDENCE AS DEEP AND FUNDAMENTAL AS THAT WHICH LEAD LEWIS AND CLARK UP THE GREAT RIVER TO CAMP NEAR THIS PARKSITE NEARLY 170 YEARS AGO. IT WAS CONFIDENCE AS UNSHAKABLE AND VISIONARY AS THAT WHICH BROUGHT THE FIRST SETTLERS TO THIS SPOT ON THE FRONTIER. IT WAS A BASIC CONFIDENCE IN THE ABILITY TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES AND IN THE CAPACITY OF INDIVIDUALS TO WORK TOGETHER FOR THE COMMON GOOD.

CONFIDENT LEADERSHIP

THIS CONFIDENCE WAS SHOWN BY THE COMMUNITY'S LEADERS WHO GAVE VOICE AND DIRECTION TO THE CITY'S CONFIDENCE IN ITSELF AND IN ITS PEOPLE. THEY STIMULATED FORMATION OF LOCAL AGENCIES, SOUGHT OUT STATE AND FEDERAL SUPPORT AND HELPED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLANS AND PROPOSALS.

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IT IS IMPOSSIBLE AT A TIME LIKE THIS TO SINGLE OUT EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THESE EFFORTS, BUT MEN LIKE THE FORMER MAYOR AL MANGLESDORF, FRED STEIN, FRANK TODD, GENERAL WARNOCK, JOHN MIZE AND MANY OTHERS WHO SERVED ON BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS PLAYED SIGNIFICANT ROLES IN THE URBAN RENEWAL AND WATERSHED PROJECTS WHICH WERE LARGELY COMPLETED SEVERAL YEARS AGO.

THE PROJECTS BEING DEDICATED THIS WEEK WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE EFFORTS OF THE WATERSHED BOARD UNDER WENDELL LEHMAN, THE URBAN RENEWAL BOARD UNDER LOWELL GORDON, THE HOUSING AUTHORITY UNDER DR. FRANK DONOVAN, THE CITY WATER BOARD UNDER ED WHITE, ROD DIERKING ON BEHALF OF THE WATER COMPANY, JOHN ADAIR AND THE FLOOD CONTROL AND WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION, AND DICK ELLIS AND GUS WOOD ON BEHALF OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. ALSO FORMER CONGRESSMEN BILL AVERY AND CHET MIZE BOTH WERE DEEPLY INVOLVED IN ASSISTING THE EFFORTS OF ATCHISON'S LEADERS.

ALL OF THESE MEN AND THOSE WHO SERVED WITH THEM DISPLAYED THE FULLEST MEASURE OF CONFIDENCE IN THEIR GOALS.

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CONFIDENT CITIZENS

BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE OF THAT VITAL CONFIDENCE WAS NOT IN THE LEADERS AND BOARD MEMBERS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS; RATHER, IT WAS -- AND STILL IS -- IN ALL THE CITIZENS OF ATCHISON WHO WENT TO THE POLLS AND EXPRESSED THEIR CONFIDENCE BY VOTING PROGRAMS, BOND ISSUES, AND TAX LEVIES IN SUPPORT OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE OVER THE PAST DECADE AND ONE-THIRD.

OF COURSE, NOT ALL THE CHANGES AND IMPROVEMENTS WHICH HAVE COME TO PASS IN ATCHISON IN THESE YEARS ARE DIRECT OUTGROWTHS OF THE '58 FLOODS. THIS INDEPENDENCE PARK WITH ITS FINE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES MIGHT WELL HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED WITHOUT THE HELP OF WHITE CLAY CREEK. THE NEW FIRE STATION MIGHT HAVE BEEN BUILT, AND IMPROVED HOUSING FOR LOW INCOME FAMILIES AND THE ELDERLY MIGHT HAVE BECOME A REALITY, TOO. BUT MUCH OF WHAT ATCHISON HAS BECOME -- THE MALL AREA, THE NEW CUT-AND-COVER CONDUIT, THE IMPROVED INTAKE FACILITY FOR THE CITY'S WATER SUPPLY -- TRACES BACK TO THAT DARK SUMMER NIGHT 13 YEARS AGO. AND FROM IT SEEMS TO HAVE GROWN A NEW SPIRIT OF GROWTH AND PROGRESS FOR ATCHISON IN ITS SECOND CENTURY.

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FORTUNATE CITY

ATCHISON IS, INDEED, A FORTUNATE CITY. IT IS IGNORANT OF OBSTACLES WHICH SOME MIGHT SAY ARE TOO BIG TO OVERCOME. IT HAS LEADERS WITH THE CONFIDENCE TO TAKE ON BIG JOBS CONTAINING BIG PROBLEMS BUT GREATER REWARDS FOR EVERYONE. BUT ABOVE ALL, IT HAS CITIZENS WITH THE CONFIDENCE TO SUPPORT THEIR LEADERS AND MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE COMMUNITY TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS. SO I WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY IN CLOSING THAT IT IS A PLEASURE TO JOIN IN DEDICATING INDEPENDENCE PARK AND THIS CONDUIT FACILITY.

AND IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE HERE IN A TOWN THAT HAS CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED MARK TWAIN'S RULE FOR COMBINING IGNORANCE AND CONFIDENCE TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS.