

Civic leaders began hurriedly developing plans to seek a review in Washington on the ordered closing of Schilling. The details of the Washington meetings were being closely coordinated with the Kansas legislators in Washington and Gov. William Avery agreed to head the local delegation.

In a letter dated November 29, the community was introduced to the OEA (Office of Economic Adjustment) and to Donald F. Bradford, its Director. In his letter, Cyrus Vance offered the services of OEA to the city and pledged the support of all agencies of the Federal Government that might be of assistance.

On December 2, it was confirmed that Washington officials would meet with a Salina delegation on the 14th of December. Arrangements for the conference were completed by the Kansas delegation and Gov. William Avery and the men to represent Salina were selected. The seven-man group, led by Mayor Carl Rundquist, included: Carl Ramsey, chairman of the county Commission; Walter Ostenberg, superintendent of schools; Tom Lillard, local attorney and industrial development committee chairman of the chamber of commerce; Whitley Austin, editor of the Salina Journal; Norris Olson, city manager; and Jim Preston, chamber of commerce manager. Prior to the trip to Washington, a townhall meeting was held at the senior high school. Neighboring communities of Abilene, Beloit, Ellsworth, Lincoln, Lindsborg, Lyons, Marion, McPherson, Minneapolis, and Wilson had been invited to attend the meeting and did. At this meeting the delegation members listened for advice and expressions from the 250 or more citizens in attendance and everyone was given full opportunity to voice his or her opinions. It was decided that two principal questions would be asked of the Department of Defense.

Was the decision to close Schilling made objectively?

Will the closing impair our national security?

If the delegation was satisfied with the answers they were then prepared to talk of alternate uses of the base. Members of the delegation were confident that they had obtained a good cross section of community opinion for their Washington visit.

Dear SAL: Schilling presented today their check for \$15,635.16 to the Salina Community Chest.

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In a press announcement prior to Salina's visit to Washington, Eugene Zuckert, Secretary of the Air Force, pointed out that he had never heard of so much concern in the Air Force about a base closing and that Air Force officials realized the impact to the community.

Journal Editor Austin reported the results of the Washington visit in a lengthy article headlined "Only a Civilian Future Is Seen for Schilling—But That Future Could Be Exciting." Quite obviously, the Salina troops had lost the battle to rescind the closing action. In part Mr. Austin said:

Salina now has only one job to do for Schilling Air Force Base. That is to develop its civic, commercial, and industrial potential by civilian enterprise. Chances of the base being used for any major military purposes are remote. War might bring that chance but who wants war? The Government already has plans to help to convert Schilling for peaceful profit. They are exciting plans. We will ask the Government to deliver, to make this a show place, a pathfinder, but Salina also must do its part with brains, money and without jealousy, envy or greed.