

Kansas Launches Education Initiative

By Edward P. Cross

TOPEKA, KS.—The Kansas oil and gas industry began a new era for better energy education in 2008. By initiating the Kansas Strong campaign, the Kansas oil and gas industry is building on the success of the Kansas Independent Oil & Gas Association's public information efforts.

The Kansas oil and gas industry has come together to develop a meaningful energy education program for all Kansans. Studies indicate investments being made now in alternative energy sources will not alter the Kansas or U.S. energy mix in significant ways for decades. Certainly, alternative energy sources will be part of a long-term solution to our nation's energy needs, but fossil fuels will remain a core component of the U.S. energy mix well into the future.

For Kansas, better energy education means realizing these facts and educating the public on the importance of oil and natural gas to Kansas' history, society and economy for decades to come, and the role of alternative energy sources in the long-term future of our nation. Indeed, an effective energy education program educates the public on all energy sources, but energy education should focus on energy value growth. That is to say, energy education should focus on optimizing a state's energy strengths and minimizing its weaknesses.

An energy education program focused on optimizing a state's energy strengths will result in a better educated public that produces better energy policy, better public policy, and economic growth. Better energy education in Kansas rec-

ognizes the role of oil and natural gas, conservation and efficiency, energy sources other than oil and natural gas, and environmental impact in providing energy value growth for Kansas.

Foundation Roots

KIOGA created an education foundation in 2001 to develop an energy education program. KIOGA's program was augmented in 2006 by an industrywide initiative that resulted in the Kansas Oil and Gas Resources Fund, which is supported by a 0.05 percent voluntary assessment on crude oil and natural gas produced in Kansas.

The Kansas oil and gas industry is represented on the Kansas Oil and Gas Resources Board by KIOGA, the Kansas Petroleum Council and the Eastern Kansas Oil & Gas Association. Realizing the importance of better energy education, these groups have come together to develop an energy education program focusing on energy value growth.

Today the program is moving forward, providing a better public understanding of the energy challenges facing our state and nation. The program is making huge positive differences for the Kansas oil and gas industry.

The mission of the program is to bring the vitality, contributions, and environmental responsibility of the Kansas oil and gas industry to light through positive action and education. The goal of the program is to improve the image and credibility of the Kansas oil and gas industry. This is achieved through two strategies:

- A public information campaign designed to improve the image and credibility

of the Kansas oil and gas industry through innovative marketing strategies; and

- An education campaign designed to increase awareness about the significance and viability of the Kansas oil and gas industry.

A strategic plan optimizes the synergies between the two strategies and provides a road map for developing programs by defining the challenge, and outlining goals, expected outcomes, performance indicators and specific objectives.

A bias found in media against the oil and gas industry fosters an incorrect public perception about the industry. The bias forces us to defend ourselves against ill-advised regulatory schemes, higher taxes, and loss of incentives. All of these ignore a well-managed industry that has evolved into good stewards of the environment while providing an energy source vital to the everyday lives of citizens.

KIOGA's education foundation laid the foundation for an effective public information campaign through classroom education, teacher workshops, radio and television advertising, onsite marketing, civic club and professional presentations, and more. Through feedback from teachers, students, legislators and the general public, we have proven successful in bringing a balanced viewpoint to the negative image the industry endures.

Moving forward, the Kansas oil and gas industry launched a new campaign in November. The Kansas Strong campaign seeks to bring a better understanding of the energy challenges facing our state and nation, and is based on energy value growth, conveying messages about the significance and viability of the Kansas oil and gas industry. The campaign tag line is "Kansas Strong: Energy from the

Heartland; Strength for our Nation.”

Kansas Strong

The Kansas Strong campaign has the dual goal of growing a pride for the oil and natural gas industry, and informing the public about what the Kansas oil and gas industry means to the state’s economy and society, and that it is part of our nation’s energy solution.

Preparations for the campaign began last summer with benchmark research conducted throughout the state to measure attitudes and opinions concerning the oil and gas industry in Kansas. The research was critical for developing messages that address specific targets.

Following the research, a marketing campaign was developed to focus on optimizing target rating points using television, print and Web-based media. The Kansas Strong campaign was launched on Nov. 10. Post-wave research will be conducted as the campaign proceeds to measure its success in changing attitudes and opinions toward the oil and gas industry.

In 2004, KIOGA developed teacher workshops, classroom presentations and curricula to address the energy issues teachers and educators need to meet Kansas State Department of Education

(KSDE) kindergarten through 12th grade learning standards for both science and social science. Kansas Strong continues the education campaign.

The Kansas education program curricula and material emphasize oil and gas energy education for primary and secondary schools through classroom presentations and teacher workshops. The Kansas oil and gas industry is providing energy education leadership by developing new oil and gas energy education programs and curricula, coordinating and enhancing existing curricula, and providing support for a variety of audiences and education providers.

Teacher workshops have been developed to incorporate long-term, standards-based oil and gas energy education into Kansas classrooms. The workshops are designed to assist teachers and educators in providing a model for collaborative learning using crude oil, natural gas, and energy issues. Information on a wide range of oil and gas energy issues is disseminated through in-school programs, training facilities and educational materials.

The oil and gas energy education program teaches students the truth about the oil and gas industry, dispelling misconceptions about important environmental and economic issues, and explaining what

the Kansas oil and gas industry is doing to make the future of Kansas brighter!

The Kansas oil and gas industry was able to build on the work of the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board, the Ohio Oil & Gas Energy Education Program, and the Illinois Petroleum Resources Board to develop energy education curricula and materials aligned with KSDE science and social science learning standards needed for utility in Kansas classrooms, and the KSDE has advocated the energy education programs. Through the 2008 fall term, the Kansas oil and gas energy education efforts have reached more than 7,000 Kansas students and more than 1,100 teachers.

The Kansas oil and gas industry has a rare opportunity to reposition itself from the largely defensive and reactive posture of the past quarter century into a positive, proactive, forward-looking force. Better energy education is of critical importance to the state of Kansas and the Kansas oil and natural gas industry in meeting future energy challenges. The Kansas Strong initiative will make a positive difference by providing a better public understanding of the energy challenges facing our state and nation. □

KANSAS STRONG.
Energy from the heartland. Strength for our nation.

Kansas Oil & Gas Resources Fund
KOGRF
The People of the Heartland

ENERGY SOLUTIONS
FROM THE KANSAS PLAINS.

With the demand for energy at an all-time high, America is searching for solutions. Kansas are finding them right where we stand. More than 60,000 oil and gas wells across our state pump over 38 million barrels of oil each year.

That's all America counts on -- and we'd otherwise have to import from foreign countries. Across the Kansas plains, we're using our abundant natural resources to help make our country less dependent on others this very day.

KANSAS STRONG.
Energy from the heartland. Strength for our nation.

Kansas Strong advertisements emphasize pride in the Kansas oil and gas industry, its contributions to the nation's energy supply and importance to the economy and society, and the high-tech nature of oil and gas exploration, drilling and production.

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Edward P. Cross is president of the Kansas Independent Oil & Gas Association. He is a member of the Workforce and Public Education Committee of the Independent Petroleum Association of America, and serves as secretary-treasurer of the Liaison Committee of Cooperating Oil & Gas Associations. In addition, Cross is past chairman of the Interstate Oil & Gas Compact Commission Public Outreach Committee. Cross has published peer-reviewed papers on economic, environmental and energy education issues facing the independent oil and gas industry. He is a licensed professional geologist and certified school business official, holding a B.S. in geology and an M.B.A. from Southern Illinois University.