

OKLAHOMA CITY - Tulsa oilman, banker and billionaire George Kaiser made a rare public speaking appearance Tuesday to promote greater national use of natural gas and push for federal government support of that effort. Kaiser joined T. Boone Pickens in a Creativity World Forum panel that almost resembled a Mount Rushmore of state energy leaders. The other panelists were Devon Energy Corp. CEO John Richels and SandRidge Energy Co. CEO Tom Ward, with Forbes Media Managing Editor Bruce Upbin acting as moderator. Kaiser and Pickens both touted natural gas as a crucial "bridge fuel" that can power fleet vehicles and help get the nation off oil imported from hostile nations in the OPEC cartel. Kaiser, who owns Tulsa-based Kaiser-Francis Oil Co. and is chairman of BOK Corp., believes that growing natural gas infrastructure is a bipartisan no-brainer. "There's one place where Nancy Pelosi and John Boehner agree," he told the packed crowd at the Cox Convention Center, referring to the outgoing Democrat Speaker of the House and the incoming Republican speaker. "I think we have almost universal acceptance of natural gas" as cleaner, more abundant and domestically available than oil, Kaiser added. Other panelists agreed with Kaiser that the natural gas producers' success in pushing reserves to historic highs also has shot the industry in the foot economically. Hydraulic fracturing and other drilling technologies have produced so much gas that prices are only one-third of what they were in summer 2008. "There's been an awful lot of drilling," Richels said. Part of that is due to lease exploration deadlines and a vast uptick in rig counts, the panel concurred. Those factors, however, should decrease by mid-2011 as low natural gas prices make exploration "sub economic." "2011 is going to be a crucial year for natural gas," Ward said. Another key answer will be a national push to put more compressed natural gas vehicles on the road and improve fueling infrastructure for trucks. Pickens estimated that taking 18 million diesel trucks off the road could cut OPEC imports by half. The Pickens Plan to push a shift toward CNG vehicles has gathered 1.7 million signatures, the effort's namesake noted. He believes that the upcoming Congress

will pass natural gas-themed legislation to provide manufacturing and use incentives for fleets. "They all hate OPEC oil," he said of those supporting the Pickens Plan. Pickens also noted that the price of natural gas is equivalent to \$20 per barrel of oil equivalent, although oil now costs four times more. Kaiser admitted that he is wary of government picking "winners and losers" among energy forms. However, he believes government can help promising technologies and provide them a chance to reach profitable economies of scale. One example is providing tax incentives to those domestic energy industries, Kaiser added. Another federal gesture would be to purchase and put electric vehicles on the road for its fleet. "There is a government role for stimulation," he said. Moderator Upbin pointed out the forum's coup in getting the publicity-shy Kaiser on stage. "He's a hard man to get to, but one of the most independent thinkers in the energy industry," the Forbes editor said. Kaiser, through his family foundation, spent \$8 million to seed the Tulsa-based National Energy Policy Institute two years ago. The think tank since has released a national study hoping to influence lawmakers into supporting greater natural gas use, alternative energy solutions, efficiency standards and environmental improvements. The Creativity World Forum is a nationwide convention to promote innovation in industries including agriculture, science, education and energy. More than 1,000 people are attending the three-day event, which ends Wednesday. Rod Walton 581-8457 rod.walton@tulsaworld.com SUBHEAD: He makes a rare public appearance with other energy leaders

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