

Rep. Sloan Attends Natural Gas Academy

Rep. Tom Sloan (R, Lawrence) participated in the Council of State Governments' (CSG) Natural Gas Academy and the CNG17 International Convention. CNG 17 is a week-long series of presentations on compressed natural gas technologies and policies and industry information booths. Information on new ship building techniques to reduce transportation costs while increasing safety, marketing natural gas in the global marketplaces, and technologies to increase production from existing fields were among the topics covered.

The CSG Natural Gas Academy provided 20 state legislators from across the nation an opportunity to engage industry and academic experts in discussions about natural gas supplies, production, economics, safety, and uses. One of the topics of particular interest was an analysis of whether the exportation of shale gas from the U.S. would increase domestic natural gas prices to residential and commercial customers. An internationally renowned University of Texas professor demonstrated that any price rise would be minimal and the economic benefits to the nation of increasing supplies would be far greater.

"In addition to learning about natural gas production technologies, economics, safety, and more, I was able to contribute during discussions about the relationship between low cost natural gas and electricity production," said Sloan. "My involvement in U.S. Dept. of Energy Advisory Committees enabled me to discuss electricity storage as an alternative to using natural gas powered jet engines to stabilize wind and solar production and to introduce other speakers and participants to the emerging transactive energy debate. Transactive energy involves customers trading between themselves to change electricity consumption patterns in response to signals from utilities. This is a very new technologically feasible opportunity and I will be speaking next month at a conference where I will outline regulatory and policy-maker questions about the activity."

CSG Academy participants visited a company that makes directional drilling, hydraulic fracturing, and operational monitoring equipment. Special emphasis was placed on demonstrating the multiple safety steps incorporated into the software and operator training. Also addressed were opportunities to increase the use of compressed natural gas as a vehicle fuel and the economic benefits and costs. Natural gas is 20 percent the cost of gasoline, but the investment necessary to construct the refueling stations is significant. California has made the greatest effort as a state to build the infrastructure and Chesapeake Gas in Oklahoma has made the greatest investment as a company in developing a fueling system. It is anticipated that most people and fleet owners will have refueling stations in their garages and company yards, with a larger infrastructure only necessary to support long trips.

Rep. Sloan is Chairman of the House of Representatives' Vision 2020 Committee and a member of the Transportation and Agriculture & Natural Resources Committees. He is Co-Chairman of the Council of State Governments' Interstate Electric Transmission Siting Compact Task Force and a member of the Department of Energy's Electricity Advisory Committee and the GridWise Architecture Council.

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