

Former Mexican president plugs energy 'super-body' Industry needs leader, Fox tells local students

BY JAMIE KOMARNICKI, CALGARY HERALD; CALGARY HERALD JUNE 14, 2009

Former Mexican president Vicente Fox called for an energy "super-body" that goes beyond politics, ideologies and business interests to help create a unified global approach to the industry.

In Calgary on Saturday, Fox said the energy sector is fragmented, yet far-reaching, which means decisions that have worldwide implications are increasingly complex.

"(There are) too many interests, too many diverse positions, too many sources of information," said Fox, who addressed hundreds of students at the International Student Energy Summit at the Telus Convention Centre.

"What I would love to see is a leader . . . somebody should bring in some order into the conducting of the issue of energy in the future," he said in an interview before his speech.

"I don't see that happening in energy."

According to Fox, assembling the talent of leaders, researchers, think-tanks and universities would help create a common purpose: "Getting energy to its optimum in the future so that energy fuels economies of the world, and so that economies of the world, being successful, fuel jobs and fuel opportunities for people."

Fox, who served as Mexico's president from 2000 to 2006, has positioned himself as a strong advocate of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

But the historic trade agreement between the U. S., Canada and Mexico has become "stagnant," according to Fox.

"I think there's a lot of short-sightedness of how powerful NAFTA can be for our three nations," he said.

The NAFTA partners are missing out on opportunities to boost competitiveness and productivity in the current global economy, he said.

The ailing auto industry is an example of how Mexico's "high-quality labour for manufacturing," Canada's energy supply and technology, and the United States' investment capital could work together for better results, Fox said.

"That kind of activity we have to approach by re-energizing NAFTA and by having a new vision of NAFTA of how much it can do for our three economies."

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