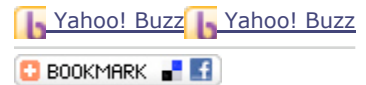




EXCLUSIVE: T. Boone Pickens pledges \$10 million to Dallas' Museum of Nature & Science



He wants \$10 million for Nature & Science facility to help kids

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By **MICHAEL GRANBERRY / The Dallas Morning News**
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T. Boone Pickens, whose career as a businessman and entrepreneur has taken him from oil and gas exploration to investing heavily in wind power, has announced he is donating \$10 million to the Museum of Nature & Science for a new, 150,000-square-foot facility in Victory Park.

Designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Thom Mayne, the new building will occupy 4.7 acres at the northwest corner of Woodall Rodgers Freeway and Field Street. It will supplement the museum's existing Fair Park facilities.

Mr. Pickens, 79, said he loves the idea of putting the museum in Victory Park and hopes it can match and later surpass the Houston Museum of Natural Science, which he called "very impressive." More than anything, he said, he hopes it inspires a new generation to "imagine solutions" to what he calls a crowded frontier of critical problems.

"I'm doing this for the kids," he said in the offices of BP Capital, the private equity firm he runs near Preston Center. "I never was a Nobel candidate, but they all say they went to museums that tweaked their imaginations, and from there, they moved on to greater things. I think that goes for most all kids. A museum is a starting point for them, or it's a confirmation of something they've thought about a little bit and now it's elevating them to something beyond.

"Let's face it," he said, "young people are the future of the country. Every time you can give them a better chance to get to where they need to be, why not? I said at one time a dollar saved at my age is a dollar lost. So, go ahead and get it in action."

But he was also quick to note the added benefit of helping Dallas compete with a certain large neighbor to the south.

"Let me go to a point that really did get my attention," he said with a smile. "I think we can do a museum here better than the Houston museum. The Houston museum *is* very impressive. It will take us a long time to first catch up ... and then get ahead."

In recent years, Mr. Pickens has established his own foundation, which in 2005 alone extended gifts of \$220 million. He gave \$165 million to the sports program of his alma mater, Oklahoma State University, where he graduated in 1951 with a degree in geology. His \$7 million gift to the Red Cross in 2005 was said to be the largest individual donation in its 150-year history. His foundation also has given \$50 million each to UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas and the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

His gift puts the Museum of Nature & Science closer to its goal of \$155 million – it's short \$100 million or more. Officials for the Museum of Nature & Science say \$155 million is required for site acquisition, exhibition planning and design, construction costs, education

programs and an endowment.

Mr. Pickens joins Hunt Petroleum, the Rees-Jones Foundation and the Hoglund Foundation and Family, each of which has given \$10 million. The Corrigan Family has given \$2.5 million, and Kim Hiatt Jordan, the Harry W. Bass Jr. Foundation and the Rosewood Foundation have each given \$1 million. Other anonymous donations and receipts from the "Body Worlds" exhibition make up the rest.

Known for corporate takeovers and his conservative politics – he offered to pay \$1 million to anyone who could disprove any aspect of the Swift Boat ads against Sen. John Kerry – Mr. Pickens is a fitness buff and businessman who has garnered attention in recent years for turning increasingly to environmental solutions. He has advocated using natural gas as vehicular fuel and proposed allocating surplus and stranded groundwater in the Texas Panhandle to urban areas of Texas facing water shortages.

Last year, a coalition backed by Mr. Pickens filed documents with a state agency detailing plans for the state's largest wind farm, which is scheduled for completion in 2011. He says the project will add 4,000 megawatts of wind-generated electricity to the state's power grid.

He calls wind power "an absolute must for this country. We've got to have the renewable and green aspect of it, and there's plenty of it. We've got to do something different than what we're doing, and wind is part of the equation ... so is solar. You've also got to use natural gas for transportation fuel instead of burning it up in a power generator. Somebody said I was one of the people who said that ethanol is stupid. Well, I don't say that anymore."

Mr. Pickens said he hopes the younger generation can provide solutions to a world frighteningly dependent on oil.

"We have 85 million barrels of supply every day, in the entire world, and that isn't going to go up," he said. "It's going to go down at some point. Consequently, the price is going up, and demand is going up, so how do we do it? How do we handle it?"

He contends that, while the price of oil may drop to \$85 or \$90 a barrel between now and the middle of this year, it could – and probably will – rise to \$125 a barrel in the latter part of the year. He was one of the early predictors of oil reaching \$100 a barrel.

"I'm amused at politicians saying that we have to get the price of oil down," he said. "That's *not* what you want to do. You get the price of oil down, it sends a signal to use more, and the problem only gets worse."

He considers decreasing car sizes a necessity, with hybrids and more fuel-efficient vehicles coming into play, along with "fewer trips. We're going to have to live closer to work. All of these things will happen over time. They won't happen overnight, but as the price of oil goes higher and higher, they'll have to come into play."

"Seventy-five percent of our use of oil goes for transportation," he said, "which means it's burned up and you have nothing to show for it. We're importing 62 percent of the oil we use, so when you take that to dollars, that's \$1.4 billion a day times 365 days ... that's half a trillion dollars a year we're paying for oil! It's money out the door. It's gone."

So, he said, it falls to the younger generation to come up with solutions.

"They have to," he said. "And they will."

READ past articles about the Museum of Nature & Science.

