



A large contingency is escorted to meet with Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR), pictured at center, in the U.S. Capitol building to ask for support for the 45G Short Line Tax Credit.

RTA Members Play Key Role In Railroad Day On Capitol Hill

Railway Tie Association members came out in force in Washington, D.C., for Railroad Day on Capitol Hill. It was the 15th installment of the event, which has proven to be an incredibly effective way to get the pro-rail message to Congress.

The size of the event, the geographical diversity of the participants, and the unified railroad industry message have been successful in focusing Congress on issues affecting the railroad industry.

Railroad Day on Capitol Hill is open to all Class I, II, and III railroad personnel, suppliers, contractors, labor, shippers, as well as state and local government representatives with an interest in furthering the political goals of the railroad industry.

“When we turn out in force we demonstrate that those issues affect a large group of individuals who employ an even larger group of people from across the country. And you can’t rely on the other guy to carry your message,” said officials from the American Short Line and Regional Railroad

Association (ASLRRA). “You need to come to Washington and join with your fellow rail industry workers to help drive home to Congress the important role that this indus-

try plays in restoring America’s economy, improving America’s environment, and connecting America in the global marketplace.”

ASLRRA points out that Railroad Day on



Some of the many RTA members on the Hill for Railroad Day included, from left, George Caric of Stella-Jones, Gary Ambrose of Koppers, Mike Pourney of Gross and Janes, and Jeff Parrett of Wheeler Lumber Company.

Capitol Hill is not an easy day. Participants receive their list of appointments during an early morning briefing on the issues, and then move through a full day of meetings with representatives, senators and their staffs. “Some meetings are very successful, some are not. But together they create an impression and help build the momentum our professional representatives need to secure Congressional action on the issues that are most important to the health and prosperity of our businesses. A successful Railroad Day on Capitol Hill will build the foundation we need to extend the 45G railroad tax credit, preserve balanced regulation, and bring about a more balanced transportation infrastructure spending policy.”

RTA members played a key role in the event, calling on legislators from throughout the United States.

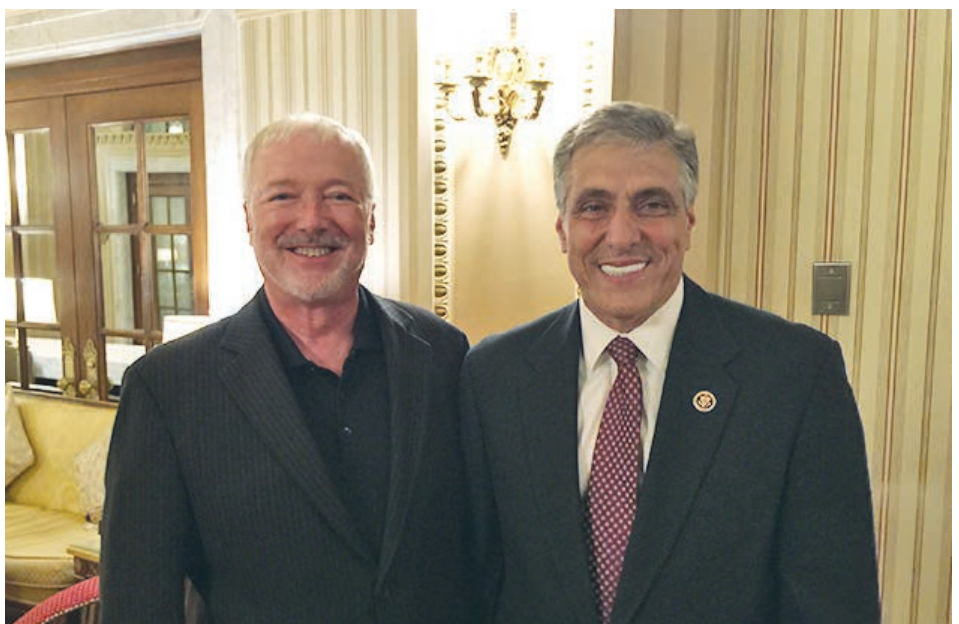
Numerous issues were discussed during the daylong event, including the industry’s opposition to raising truck sizes and weights. “Bigger and heavier trucks are not only a danger to America’s crumbling highway infrastructure and a danger to motorist safety,” said RTA Executive Director Jim Gauntt. “They also threaten to undermine the economic viability of short line freight rail service. Raising truck size and weight limits shifts costs from large trucking companies to the driving public at a time when trucking companies already pay far less than their fair share of pavement damage.”

RTA members also urged legislators to preserve short line track investments created through 45G, also known as the Short Line Tax Credit, by co-sponsoring H.R. 721 and S. 637. “Representatives and senators should support these bills because they provide better infrastructure and increased employment through lower taxes,” Gauntt said, adding that a one-year extension of Section 45G was signed into law on Dec. 19, 2014, only to expire on Dec. 31, 2014.

The Short Line Tax Credit leverages private sector investment in rail infrastructure by providing a tax credit of 50 cents for every dollar spent on track improvements. Another initiative discussed was keeping America’s freight railroads competitive by opposing any legislative effort that would adversely impact the economic and antitrust regulatory balance currently established under existing federal law. ■



Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR) speaks on railroad issues during the Railroad Day on Capitol Hill event



RTA Executive Director Jim Gauntt meets with Rep. Lou Barletta (R-PA - 11th) who has championed efforts to use facts to limit larger trucks sizes and weights.