

Railroad Day On Capitol Hill Results In 375 Meetings

On March 8, hundreds of railroaders, suppliers, customers and others supportive of the railroad industry converged on Washington, D.C., for Railroad Day on Capitol Hill, organized by the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA) and the Association of American Railroads (AAR).

The foundation of the event is a series of hundreds of congressional meetings designed to help build the momentum needed to secure Congressional action on the issues that are most important to the health and prosperity of the industry.

The day began with an early morning briefing at the Renaissance Hotel in Downtown Washington. Adam Nordstrom of Chambers, Conlon & Hartwell and Laurie Knight, senior vice president for government affairs for AAR, provided insight into rail legislative issues and suggested how best to explain these to congressmen and their staffs.

Once the briefing was adjourned, Railroad Day participants began their long day of meetings, which totaled 375 congressional visits.

Returning to the hotel following their meetings, participants shared the results of their congressional visits on “intelligence” forms and e-mails.

They and others then assembled for a reception preceding the annual legislative dinner.

An address by U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood capped off the event with an address that noted the importance of railroads to America’s economy. Other special guests included Joe Szabo, administrator of the Federal Railroad Ad-

ministration; Dan Elliott, chair of the Surface Transportation Board; members of Congress and their personal staff; and principals of rail labor unions.

ASLRRA President Rich Timmons and Board Vice Chair Ed McKechnie presided over the dinner along with AAR Vice President Patty Reilly.

The Railway Tie Association served as one of several association sponsors, and members came out in force to meet with congressional representatives. “The ASLRRA team, starting with Rich Timmons and Kathy Cassidy, its leadership headed by Chairman Mike Ogborn of Omnitrax, and others

so ably represented on the lobbying front by the incredible force we know as the firm of Chambers, Conlon & Hartwell, continues to impress,” said RTA Executive Director Jim Gauntt. “You know you have made an impact in D.C. when congressional staff members greet you with their very own train whistle. Along with the ever-stellar work of Ed Hamberger’s team at AAR, this was the largest and most productive Day on the Hill ever. Our hats are off to everyone involved in the thousands of hours invested in preparing for this event throughout the year!” ■



Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) speaks at a short line railroad reception for him during Railroad Day on the Hill.



RTA CLEAR Committee Chairman Tom Niederberger and Gary Ambrose of Koppers flank RTA President Jeff Broadfoot of National Salvage and Service Corporation. (Not shown from Stella-Jones but also in attendance were Tim Brown and Gene Wilcutt.)



(L-R) Gary Asche, manager, Milnor Grain Company; Congressman Rick Berg (R-ND); and Dan Zink and Andy Thompson of Red River Valley and Western Railroad.



RTA Executive Director Jim Gauntt and RTA Executive Committee member Andy Thompson of the Red River Valley & Western Railroad at the Rockefeller Reception.