

## Busy in the field, busy in D.C.



For those of us north of the Mason-Dixon line, our prime work season is quickly approaching. Our customers have been putting out RFPs and the bidding season is in full swing. We've used the short winter season to rework equipment and hold training sessions for our employees; and now we're ready to go. Information passed on to us by the speakers back at the NRC conference in January indicates another very busy year ahead. Class 1 railroads, shortlines, rail transit agencies and intercity passenger rail systems are all beginning to put robust capital spending plans into action and NRC member contractors and suppliers are ready to help.

In the meantime, an intense battle is raging in Washington, D.C., over surface transportation reauthorization legislation. The House and the Senate are both moving reauthorization proposals, which are full of provisions that will affect rail transit investment, the future of passenger rail and freight railroads.

The NRC's staff in Washington is keeping our membership informed on the key issues and providing ways for us to get involved and get in contact with our representatives and senators. The two proposals are very different from each other.

On the Senate side, the NRC has been supporting flexibility for state DOTs to invest trust fund revenue in freight and passenger rail when rail is the best solution for local transportation problems, supporting multi-modal merit-based discretionary grant programs, such as Projects of National and Regional Significance, opposing the plan to eliminate dedicated funding for the Section 130 grade crossing program and opposing provisions that would over-regulate freight railroads by creating duplicative anti-trust reviews.

On the House side, the NRC has been supporting the plan to maintain dedicated Section 130 funding, but opposing a radical proposal to eliminate dedicated gas

tax funding of the mass transit program. The mass transit proposal would undo 30 years of a stable agreement that has laid the foundation for the growth of rail transit and commuter rail in this country.

In addition, there are a few provisions which are similar in both bills and which the NRC has been supporting, such as improvements to the TIFIA and RRIF loan programs, reforms to expedite project delivery and plans to maintain the existing caps on the size and weight of heavy trucks on the highways.

For the NRC's latest calls to legislative action, go to <http://capwiz.com/nrcma/home/>. A big thank you goes to all of the NRC members who have been calling and e-mailing your Congressional offices, your actions make a difference.

The NRC's next major event is Railroad Day on Capitol Hill, which is March 8 in Washington, D.C.

After that, the NRC Railroad Construction and Maintenance Equipment Auction will take place Thursday, April 26 at the RailWorks/E&L Paving Facility in LaPorte, Ind. Equipment inspection will be available the day before the auction on April 25. If you have equipment you would like to consign or donate to the auction, contact Buck Giese of RailWorks Corporation at (917) 692-7825 or [EGiese@railworks.com](mailto:EGiese@railworks.com). A small portion of proceeds from the sale of the consigned equipment, or 100 percent of the sale of donated equipment, will go the NRC Safety, Training and Education Fund. This safety fund helps pay for the production of NRC Safety DVDs among other valuable NRC safety efforts. Your company will receive the tax deduction benefits of any contribution. Information on the NRC auction is online at <http://www.nrcma.org/go/auction>.

Work safe and keep those around you working safe.

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