

Government Relations Update

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1995 Legislative Conference Was a Success at All Levels

This year's Legislative Conference, held September 18–19 in Washington, DC, was a success. More than 80 industry members—representing the American Electroplaters and Surface Finishers Society (AESF), the National Association of Metal Finishers (NAMF) and the Metal Finishing Suppliers Association (MFSA) converged to take on Capitol Hill. Ten members of the AESF Milwaukee Branch even chartered a plane to attend the conference.

On Monday, September 18, conference participants were briefed on the latest legislation affecting the industry, including the Clean Water Act reauthorization, Superfund reform, and regulatory reform. The program was expanded to address other current issues, including estate taxes and product liability. Speakers from such notable organizations as the National Federation of Independent Business, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the U.S. Senate provided insight on the politics surrounding these important bills. Congressman John Mica of Florida, a leader in the regulatory reform and Clean Water Act debates in the House of Representatives, gave the keynote address at the Congressional Reception on Monday evening.

On Tuesday, industry representatives visited more than 200 Congressional offices, meeting with senators, representatives and key staff. They discussed the industry's support for the House Clean Water Act reauthorization bill, HR 961, and urged members of the Senate to take up the issue. On Superfund reform, industry representatives recommended repealing retroactive liability and establishing reasonable cleanup standards. They also discussed the need to

complete action this year on regulatory reform legislation to incorporate risk assessment and cost-benefit analysis in environmental regulation. Many jobshop owners expressed support for proposed changes to estate taxes for family-owned businesses. The conference closed with a debriefing session in which participants "compared notes" and reported on their visits.

Conference participants had the opportunity to meet with the government relations team. Our firm is the new home to the Joint Government Relations Program. Many of the conversations during the conference centered on the growth and advancement of this important program in the coming year. We came away from the conference with new ideas and suggestions to serve the industry better.

The importance of the Legislative Conference cannot be overstated. In addition to delivering the industry's legislative positions, the conference participants help make Capitol Hill aware of the strength and significance of the surface finishing industry. These visits significantly enhance the value and credibility of the Government Relations Program as it represents the industry day to day in Washington.

There is more you can do, however, to be a force for your industry throughout the year. You are encouraged to visit and call your representatives and senators in their local offices. The government relations staff will provide addresses and telephone numbers. Simply use the phone or FAX numbers at the top of this page. We will work with individuals in the industry to provide any other information needed.

If you didn't attend this year's Legislative Conference in Washington and don't want to miss it next year, mark your calendars now. The dates of September 16–17 have already been set. Registration information will be distributed next spring. Everyone is encouraged to attend. □

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