

Turning Up the Heat in the D.C. Summer



# Two Days in the Life of a Legislative Summit Attendee

by Aaron Lowe



The independent aftermarket will have a chance to turn up the heat in Washington, D.C. during the upcoming 2007 Aftermarket Legislative Summit, scheduled for June 12-13, and headquartered at the Washington Court Hotel. The summit provides an opportunity for aftermarket professionals to come to Capitol Hill to meet with key congressional leaders and discuss issues that affect and impact their businesses.

Not only is the summit a great chance to visit Washington, D.C. and see some world-famous landmarks and memorials, but is an unprecedented opportunity for attendees to meet members of congress face-to-face and discuss hot-button aftermarket issues. Read on to experience an up-close and personal two days in the life of a summit attendee as he is caught up in the fast-paced world of our nation's capital, getting the real "D.C. Experience."

## *Day 1, Tuesday, June 12*

### **12:15 p.m.**

My plane lands at Reagan National Airport right on time. The view of the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial and the Pentagon on the approach was spectacular. In the distance I see my ultimate destination, the U.S. Capitol Building.

### **12:40 p.m.**

Retrieve bag and secure cab for 15-minute cab ride to the Washington Court Hotel. We cross the National Mall, viewing many of the Smithsonian buildings. Make note to find time to check out sights before leaving tomorrow.

### **12:45 p.m.**

Realize cab driver is lost when I see the National Archives pass by three times.

### **1 p.m.**

Arrive at hotel. At check-in, I run into colleague from a brake manufacturer. We decide to take advantage of an unexpected networking opportunity and have lunch together.

### **1:15 p.m.**

Lunchtime scene at Union Station is a mix of people arriving via train from all over the east coast, and lobbyists "doing lunch."

### **2:30 p.m.**

Head back to hotel and find the Legislative Summit registration table near a meeting room in the lower level. Provide AAIA staffer with my name and state and receive registration packet, including issue papers and schedule of legislator meetings to take place the next day. Also included are maps of the capital area including the location of the office buildings where tonight's reception and tomorrow's meetings will occur. Simple!



**2:40 p.m.**

Take my seat in the meeting room and begin studying the material. Luckily the issue paper had been sent to me in advance of meeting so I have a head start.

**2:47 p.m.**

Answer phone call from son who can't find his baseball glove. Crisis averted.



**3 p.m.**

Issue briefing begins. Legislators highlight the main focus of Congress right now. AAIA staff follows with talking points on the Motor Vehicle Owners' Right to Repair Act that will be the subject of the meetings tomorrow. I am feeling comfortable with the material and confident about my upcoming one-on-one discussion with my member of Congress.

**5:15 p.m.**

Session ends a little early which gives me a chance to join the rest of attendees from my state. As it turns out, I know many of the people in the delegation including a few of my customers. I am pleased to note that many of the major companies in the industry have sent representatives, which I think will help us in our meetings tomorrow.

**5:30 p.m.**

Begin to make our way to the Rayburn House Office Building for the legislative reception. Some people take cabs, but I decide to enjoy the warm weather and the 15-minute walk to the reception, crossing in front of the scenic U.S. Capitol Building.

**5:50 p.m.**

Arrive at the Rayburn House Office Building and get in security line.

**6 p.m.**

Lobbyist in front of me sets off metal detectors when he forgets to take off his stylish gold-plated cuff links.

**6:05 p.m.**

Finally through security and head toward the reception. NASCAR team owner Ray Evernham is already there talking to people and signing autographs. Run into a few members of Congress that I recognize from television, and have the opportunity to talk to a few Hill staffers as well.

**7:30 p.m.**

Reception over, I head to dinner with the rest of my state delegation. We enjoy a great meal at one of D.C.'s many fine dining establishments.

## Day 2, Wednesday, June 13

**8 a.m.**

Head downstairs for breakfast, meeting up with my delegation. Our schedules have assigned our first meeting at 9:30 a.m. in the Dirksen Office Building.

**9:20 a.m.**

Arrive at the senator's office. One of my colleagues from the state agrees to be the spokesperson for the group. We meet with the senator's legislative assistant, who takes us into the senator's office for the meeting. After spending some time talking about the industry, we discuss need for Right to Repair legislation. Staffer asks some good questions regarding the impact of the bill and whether it infringes on the intellectual property of the car companies. I explain that the bill provides strict protections for car company trade secrets and reiterate the impact on consumers if the bill does not pass. She agrees to take the issue back to the senator and encourage him to become a co-sponsor.



**9:45 a.m.**

Write a quick summary on the meeting evaluation form in my registration packet.

**9:50 a.m.**

Next meeting is not until 10:30 a.m. so we walk across the Capitol grounds to the House side and to the Capitol Hill Club, where we enjoy a complimentary cup of coffee and talk with AAIA staff about our meeting.

**10:20 a.m.**

Meet with my Congressman. Discuss some of our hangouts back home, as well as local politics, and of course, Right to Repair. He had definitely been lobbied hard by his dealer friends.

**10:45 a.m.**

Decide to vote for his opponent in next election.

**11 a.m.**

Off to another meeting with representative from our state. When we get there, receptionist tells us that the legislator has been called to a subcommittee meeting. Spend valuable time meeting with the staffer who gives us some interesting insights into the politics on the Hill and our Right to Repair bill.

**11:30 a.m.**

Have lunch in a cafeteria downstairs in the House office building. We see the Hill staffers coming and going, as well as some representatives grabbing lunch between meetings. Being on the Hill is a fast-paced life — not always just big lunches and extravagant cocktail parties.

**12:30 p.m.**

Next meeting on the House side goes well.

**1 p.m.**

Off to the Senate side for a meeting with our other senator.

**1:30 p.m.**

Meeting was scheduled with a staffer, but fortunately the senator walks in during the meeting. She sits down for a few minutes to hear our issue and we quickly summarize our arguments for her. She says she needs to do some checking, but thinks this is a good issue and should be a sponsor.

**2 p.m.**

Back to the House side for one last meeting. We realize that we have become pretty good at our presentation and debate whether to open up our



own lobbyist business. We could get used to this D.C. scene.

**2:05 p.m.**

Conclude that selling auto parts is a lot more logical and decide to keep our current jobs.

**2:30 p.m.**

Meet with a Congressman who had never heard of our issue or much about our industry. Spend time educating him on our industry and before we leave he thanks us and hopes that we will come by in the district some time to visit with him. We invite him to come by a shop to see how cars are repaired today.

**3 p.m.**

Back to the Capitol Hill Club. Brief the AAIA staffers on our meetings, and the need for follow-up with certain offices. Grab a cab outside the club for the airport.

**3:30 p.m.**

Arrive at the airport. What a wonderful, whirlwind day. I feel confident that we got a lot accomplished and educated some members of Congress on the importance of our industry and our issues.

**5:30 p.m.**

Plane takes off. Look out window and realize that I never did get to those museums. Decide to bring my family back soon and maybe toss around a baseball with my son on the National Mall. If he can keep up with his glove.

Online registration for the summit is now available at [www.aftermarket.org](http://www.aftermarket.org). To ensure appointments with appropriate members of Congress and to reserve a room at the hotel, please register by May 1, 2007. For more information, call 301-654-6664.

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