



nerej

IFMA Advocacy Day and Public Policy Forum

October 03, 2013 - Owners Developers & Managers

IFMA Chapter members from around the U.S., including the Boston Chapter, gathered in D.C. in late September for IFMA's annual Advocacy Day and Public Policy Forum. The fundamental goal was to build government relations and deepen Congress's understanding of the facilities management profession.

The forum kicked off with a tour of the Capitol Building where we saw first-hand the large strides that the facilities team took in overhauling a 200 year old building and retrofitting it with modern building systems. The Capitol facilities teams put a tremendous amount of effort in reducing energy consumption while preserving the historic nature of the building.

The next day, we met with House Representatives and Senators to introduce them to the field and enhance their existing knowledge of the broad spectrum of hats that the general facilities professional is responsible for. Locally notable was the time and commitment that congressman Langevin (RI) took in addressing the group as well as the time and hospitality senator Warren (MA) and congressman Welch (VT) staff took in hearing our interest and recommendations.

We also engaged our Congress in using gains from the disposition of excess federal property to fund the Federal Buildings Personnel Training Act (FBPTA). FBTA was passed in 2010 and was intended to train facilities professionals so that, in time, they can have the tools and knowledge to increase efficiencies in federal buildings, thus cutting cost.

Our interest in disposing excess federal buildings is not only intended as a revenue stream to fund FBPTA, but it also helps to reduce federal cost and let Congress know that there are experienced industry professionals able to provide knowledge of realigning property portfolios, creating evaluative metrics, and executing property consolidations and dispositions.

Although there were a few other points involved in the dialogue, we were focused on highlighting our profession both in terms of visibility and credibility. It is important for us as a profession to take an interest in the matters of our field so that we can shape issues of importance and further the reputation of the FM profession.

Thomas Bourgeois, Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, is IFMA Boston Education Committee chair, Boston, MA.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540