

# What Can One Road Agent Do?

*Editor's note--Recently several Road Agents spoke before the house subcommittee on the issue of posting local roads. Their input was invaluable for the committee. The following article was reprinted from NACE News. This article speaks to what a county engineer can do but any municipal official can do the same.*

*By Royce J. Fichtner, PE Marshall County Engineer, NACE South Central Region VP*

Do you lobby you Congressional Delegation? Have you tried? I'm afraid that many members of our association would answer "No" to both of the previous questions. Until eight years ago, my answer would have been "No." I believe that the very reasons why I failed to lobby Washington are the same excuses that you give today for not voicing your concerns: Who am I? Why would they listen to me? I'm not involved in politics. I work with politicians every day and the system stinks. They will vote the way the "PACs" tell them. They would pay no attention to me.

The truth is that you are an expert in your field. Most of the Senators and Representatives initially know little about the legislative issues that effect our jobs. They must rely on others to have an understanding of the legislation. They are eager to hear from someone "back home" with knowledge. How many constituents do you think contacted their Congressman about the "Storm Water Regulations", the "Feasibility of Metrification" or the intricacies of the "Highway Funding Bill"? You can be assured they heard from the various national special interest groups. Just think, you may become their expert on the subject. Contrary to the popular belief, the "Elected" wants to represent their constituents. Their problem is understanding what their constituents want. Speak up and be heard. You may be pleasantly surprised at the results.

How can I get involved? It's simple. Each Senator and Representative has local offices and hold "listening sessions" in their districts. Stop in and visit about the issues and your concerns. Contact them in Washington directly by mail, phone or e-mail. Each appoints a member of their staff to handle transportation issues. Get to know this individual by name. Earn their respect of your knowledge. Someday you may just get a call from them seeking your opinion; I have.

For more information and helpful hints, see the legislation & regulations section of the NACE website at [www.naco.org/affils/nace](http://www.naco.org/affils/nace).

Source:

NACE News, November 1999, Volume 99 Number 10

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