

Dear Automation Federation Members:

As the Automation Federation Chairman for this year I have had the opportunity to experience first-hand the tremendous amount of growth for the Federation as it continues on the path to establishing itself as the “Voice of Automation.” A significant step forward along this path was the Automation Federation’s first Congressional Fly-In visit to Capitol Hill on 20-23 May. This event exceeded all expectations. The 25 Automation Federation members that visited with the Members of Congress and White House staff unanimously agreed that the Congressional work by the Federation was vital for the future of the automation profession and key to several important issues currently facing government.

The Automation Federation members participating in the Fly-In consisted of five teams, each dedicated to one of three important themes matching with related committee assignments of the Members of Congress: workforce development, cyber security, and the establishment of an automation engineering curriculum. As team leader for one of the two workforce development teams, our team had the honor of meeting with Congressman Todd Akin’s (R-MO) Legislative Assistant Linwood Bragan. Later in the day we met with Chief of Staff Paul Protic who informed us that Congressman Akin was pleased to see the Automation Federation return to Capitol Hill. They pledged to work with us as a technical resource in the Congressman’s committee work, acknowledge our activities, and emphasized the importance of keeping the Automation Federation engaged with Congress to bring them the issues of importance regarding the automation profession.

During our visit, we had 30 successful meetings including special meetings with White House staff regarding cyber security and the US Department of Labor to build on our partnership which was established last year. We departed Capitol Hill and Washington DC full of enthusiasm and realizing we had made significant strides to establishing the Federation as the “Voice of Automation” with Members of Congress, federal agencies, and the Executive Branch.

At the request of Congressional staff, a team of Automation Federation members will be returning to Washington in July to meet with Senate and House Committee staff to expand on the points regarding cyber security which were presented in May. These points will then be discussed by the Senators and Representatives in their committees for action. In addition to these follow up meetings, plans are underway for the 2009 Automation Federation Congressional Fly-In which will be a much larger event reflecting a new Congress and President.

These are important times for those that are in the field of automation and as Chairman of the Automation Federation I am pleased to be part of helping to plant the flag for our profession with Congress.

Steve Huffman



Automation Federation Chairman, 2008