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2004: The Year in Review

By Chuck Miró, Director of Government Affairs

The year is nearing its end, and now is a good time to take a moment and reflect on some of the highlights of the year in Washington.

Again, as in 2003, issues concerning homeland security are in the forefront. Much of the credit is due to the ASHRAE Presidential Ad Hoc Committee on Homeland Security—a blue-ribbon group reappointed by President Vallort in June. For new updates in this area, be sure to visit ASHRAE's Homeland Security Resources online at www.ashrae.org/homelandsecurity, where ASHRAE members can join an electronic mailing list for announcements on homeland security.

The Society's leadership in homeland security is not the only story about ASHRAE's activities in Washington. ASHRAE has become a more visible presence in Washington over the past months, and some of the highlights here reflect this. For additional updates, be sure to visit ASHRAE's Government Updates at www.ashrae.org/governmentupdates.

March 1, DHS Reaches Out to ASHRAE, Other Associations. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reached out to the community of engineering and science associations in Washington as a way of bringing input from the groups into the DHS decision-making process.

March 8–9, ASHRAE Cosponsors Engineering R&D Symposium on Capitol Hill. Leaders from key engineering, science, and technical societies attended the Second Annual Engineering R&D Symposium, held March 8–9, 2004 on Capitol Hill. Symposium speakers closely examined the President's 2005 budget request to determine federal R&D priorities in the coming year and its impact on the economy, technology jobs, national security, and more.

April 2, Bill Passes, Offers Protection to Standards-Writing Organizations. The U.S. House of Representatives approved the *Standards Developing Organizations Advancement Act of 2003 (H.R. 1086)*. The legislation provides a new degree of limited relief to standards development organizations under existing antitrust laws.

April 14, Satellite Broadcast on Homeland Security. More than 20,000 people in nearly 1,000 downlink locations in North America viewed the ASHRAE satellite broadcast on Homeland Security for Buildings. Most of the viewers were government employees involved in facilities management, but many others were ASHRAE members and people employed with local and county health departments, or with buildings management or security firms.

July 15, ASHRAE Cofosts Capitol Hill Briefing on R&D. ASHRAE, in conjunction with the Congressional R&D Caucus and other engineering societies, hosted a briefing on July 15 to discuss the supply and demand of scientists and engineers in the U.S. workforce. The National Science Foundation and the National Science Board warned of a decline in U.S. citizens training to become scientists and engineers. Others argued that no shortage or crisis exists.

August 23, Meeting with the DHS Homeland Security Institute. Representatives from the ASHRAE Presidential Ad Hoc Committee on Homeland Security met with the acting director of the Homeland Security Institute (HSI), as well as several HSI division chiefs, to discuss potential partnerships between HSI and ASHRAE.

Sept. 9, Meeting at the Federal Aviation Administration. ASHRAE representatives discussed the new FAA Center of Excellence for Airliner Cabin Environment, and opportunities for collaboration between ASHRAE and the FAA in this area. ASHRAE is the logical choice to be a key player in the new center sponsored by the FAA.

Sept. 23–24, Health-care Energy Summit at EPA Headquarters. Designers and engineers from the health-care field met to discuss whole-building energy tools for acute care hospital design. Major organizations invited to attend: ASHRAE, U.S. Green Building Council and ASHE. ASHRAE representatives discussed issues related to ASHRAE standards, the EPA's Energy Star program and LEED.

Oct. 6, ASHRAE Supports Scientific and Technical Assessment Center. Along with several other engineering societies, ASHRAE cosigned a letter to Congress supporting the establishment of a Center of Scientific and Technical Assessment within the U.S. General Accountability Office. Hearings may be scheduled early next year.

Oct. 18, Hosting Department of Commerce Meeting with Iraqi Ministry. ASHRAE hosted a one-day meeting between a government delegation from the Republic of Iraq's Ministry of Construction and Housing, the U.S. Department of Commerce and nearly a dozen major standards-writing organizations. The Ministry representatives were interested in learning about the U.S. standards process.

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