



As We See It: It's Time to Educate



By Danny Dructor

On April 4-6, 2019, members and guests of the American Loggers Council (ALC) will once again travel to Washington, DC in hopes of making a difference for the timber and log trucking industry. Our issues remain basically the same as they have for the past several years, but one thing has changed since November that should give us all a little encouragement as we visit the Hill.

In November, the United States replaced 100 U.S. House of Representative members as well as 10 U.S. Senators. To our knowledge, not any of them has the first minute of experience in the logging business and it is highly doubtful that any of the incoming members have ever hauled a load of logs.

While we do not anticipate seeing a lot of significant legislation being passed in the next several months due to the highly partisan politics that are still in play in Washington, we do see this as an opportunity to be the first organization to address the new members on what the issues and concerns are for the logging community, as well as work with the administration to effect change in the industry. It is up to us to educate them on what professional timber harvesting is, and the how and why of the process. If we don't continue to do it, somebody else will, and that is not something that any of us would like to see happen.

ALC President Chris Potts has already stated that we will continue to work on truck weight and Commercial Safety Administration (CSA) issues. He has also indicated a desire to continue to pursue the Future Logging Careers Act that would give the 16 and seventeen year old sons and daughters the opportunity to legally work in their parent's logging business.

With a new Chief of the US Forest Service, and the authorities that have managed to pass through Congress over the past couple of years, we hope to further engage that agency to assist in their modernization efforts to both expedite and implement all of the authorities now given to them by Congress to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration efforts that include timber harvesting.

By the time this editorial goes to press, there should also be a new Secretary of Interior who we should also seek out and familiarize with our issues.

Energy will still be a priority in order to help develop new markets that we all need for our smaller diameter wood, as will deregulation and lessening of the tax burdens that all of our businesses face.

We asked and you responded favorably in looking at logging as a part of agriculture, and we intend to continue to follow up on that as well.

Even with the change in leadership in the House, there is still hope that those who are elected will once again follow the wishes of their constituents and lay partisan politics aside. The “Swamp,” as President Trump has called it, has been draining, but there are still those that hold on to the idea that party politics should take priority over policy issues.

November 2020 is not that far away, and you should be paying close attention to what your representatives in Washington are doing to deserve your vote again. Meanwhile, let’s continue to educate those that have been elected to serve, so that the excuse of “I don’t know” cannot be used when questioning them about a vote.

The American Loggers Council is an 501(c)(6) not for profit trade association representing professional timber harvesters throughout the United States. For more information please contact the American Loggers Council at 409-625-0206, or americanlogger@aol.com, or visit our website at www.amloggers.com