

Engineers in Washington: Thriving in a Strange Environment

For most technical professionals (and other Americans, for that matter), Washington, D.C. is a foreign place. It is full of politicians, lobbyists and other unpleasant creatures that do unnatural things, like engaging in filibusters and caucusing. Fortunately, Washington is also 1,200 miles from Lincoln, so none of us has to worry about it.

Except that we do. What happens in Washington has a profound effect on engineers and engineering here in Nebraska, good and bad. No matter what your field, no matter what your industry, laws and regulations will play a major role in determining what you can, and cannot do. Politicians decide what solutions are possible, which are legal, and even what questions may be asked. You cannot escape them.

So what do we do about it? To answer this question, IEEE-USA is bringing in a tour guide from IEEE-USA. Russell Harrison has been navigating the wilds of Washington for over 20 years, 14 on behalf of IEEE members. Russ will give us the lay of the land to help us better understand what our elected leaders are doing, and why.

But we'll do more than just look at the map. Russ will discuss the role we can play shaping what happens in Washington. As Director of IEEE-USA's Government Relations Department, he knows how to influence Congress. More importantly, he knows how we can influence Congress and the White House.

It turns out that there is a real need for people with technical backgrounds to talk to politicians, and that doing so is not necessary hard or time-consuming, or even scary for that matter. Some IEEE members actually enjoy it.