ABA Staff Reports

2018 Winter Board Meeting

Executive Summaries

Government Affairs and Policy (GAP)

Finance and Budget

Communications

Meetings, Education and Members Services (MEMS)
ABA Government Affairs and Policy (GAP)

Since the Fall 2017 Government Affairs Policy Board report, the Government Affairs and Policy Division (GAP) staff have continued to aggressively engage on both legislative and regulatory matters, as the Trump administration and Congress struggled to achieve policy goals. Upon returning from August recess, the President promptly dismissed several outstanding controversial issues pending before Congress by agreeing with Democrat leadership to a short term continuing resolution (CR) to fund the Government beyond the fiscal deadline of September 30, extend the debt limit on short term basis, and pass a disaster relief funding package. Although surprising (and disappointing) to Republican leadership, his agreement did clear the fall Congressional schedule to enable Republicans, working with the White House, to develop and pass a tax reform bill on December 22. The tax reform law is viewed as a much needed victory for both Congress and the White House with the impending mid-term elections in 2018, as Republicans have little else to show for their accomplishments while controlling both branches of the Government. However, entering into 2018, there is still no agreement on a final funding package for 2018, as Congress again passed another CR on December 22, leaving the threat of a Government shutdown looming with the next fiscal deadline of January 19, 2018. Finally, with tax reform complete and expectations that a funding deal will be achieved at some point, there is a belief that an infrastructure proposal will become a legislative focus for 2018.

In terms of ABA legislative interests, with Congressional activity primarily focused on tax reform, GAP worked closely with Capitol Tax partners to monitor the tax reform developments and primarily concentrated on the appropriations process. The successful effort last spring to obtain report language in both the House and Senate transportation appropriations bills regarding the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration lease and interchange rule, enables ABA to maintain pressure on the Agency to act. As to funding for the Intercity Bus Security Grant program, ABA faced a more significant challenge, particularly because the House bill failed to include funding for the program. However, following an aggressive advocacy effort this past fall, $2 million was included in the complementary Senate appropriations bill, putting ABA in a stronger position to fight to retain funding in the final appropriations package and keep the program alive in 2018. Also, as to ABA’s airport access objective, although progress was made by continuing to build support for some action, Congress put off reauthorizing the Federal Aviation Administration to 2018. Additionally, as to other federal legislative activities, GAP invested time in seeking reauthorization of the IBSGP, engaging in data access advocacy efforts related to autonomous vehicle legislation, monitoring discussions and developments concerning infrastructure, and tracking progress on various other legislative proposals of interest to ABA.

As to federal regulatory activity, GAP continued to engage in agency rulemakings and regulatory reform efforts, undertaking a significant, comprehensive filing in response to the U.S. Department of Transportation’s regulatory reform initiative in December. As well, GAP initiated a strong campaign against National Park Service proposals concerning fee increases and changes to fee structures for park entrants. As well, particularly through the fall, GAP assisted ABA members with a number of local/regional issues, including engaging with local authorities, providing guidance, and traveling to local events as appropriate. Additionally, GAP activities continued to include monitoring issuance and implementation of Executive Orders/actions, reviewing agency rulemaking activities and preparing and filing comments where appropriate, and assisting ABA members with regulatory matters through the issuance of alerts, briefings and conference calls. The GAP team also supported a number of council meetings that took place in the fall, as well as undertook preparations for ABA’s 2018 Annual Meeting and Marketplace.

In terms of BusPAC, contributions picked up in the fall and towards the end of the year. By the close of December, the BusPAC account balance was at $211,749, with 2017 BusPAC contributions totaling $78,783. This was a decrease of $10,358 from the record contribution year of 2016 ($89,141) and $21,217 short of the 2017 BusPAC goal of $100,000 goal. However, as it was not an election year we did expect to see lower overall numbers for this year. Alternatively, due to diligent efforts by GAP staff, there were a number of new contributors to the fund as
well as an overall increase in the level of individual contributions for many who did contribute. As well, there was a total of $55,025 in disbursements in 2017. Additionally, GAP established an Administrative Fund to support BusPAC administrative costs, as presented at the last Board meeting; and is continuing to develop innovative and creative ways to attract new contributors and promote BusPAC to ABA membership.
Finance and Budget

Revenue, excluding investment income, totaled $6,007,000 through 11 months ending November 30, 2017, up $48,000 from $5,959,000 through the same period in 2016.

Expenses through the 11 months of 2017 were $5,743,000, an increase of $66,000 compared to $5,677,000 in 2016. The year to year increase in expenses is due to higher costs at Marketplace in Cleveland for food, decorating and audio visual. In addition, Board of Directors’ expenses are higher than in the previous year due to a strategic planning meeting that was held in June. Finally, Membership Services expenses are higher than the prior year due to the investment and ongoing subscription costs related to the new Association Management System. Net income before investment income, or excess of revenues over expenses, through the 11 months of 2017, is $264,000, or 6.5%, lower than the same period in 2016.

Current assets at November 30, 2017, consisting of cash, accounts receivable, prepaid expenses and investments total $7,311,000 compared to $6,852,000 last year at this time. In April 2017, prior to the Spring Board Meeting, ABA transferred $100,000 from its operating account to the reserve account at BNY Mellon per the decision to build up the investment reserves. This is the 6th consecutive year ABA has contributed $100,000 to the reserve fund in its effort to replenish the funds used to purchase its office condominium. ABA currently plans on contributing an additional $100,000 in April 2018, prior to the 2018 spring meeting.
Communications

Promoting ABA

It has been a successful and busy fall for ABA Communications. We released a number of statements on Congressional and Administration actions such as tax reform, travel bans, etc. We also launched a brand new publication for our travel and tourism members. We continue to work with FMCSA and other transportation-related associations on the Our Roads, Our Safety Partnership and began partnering with TourOperatorLand.com to promote ABA member destinations in both the Insider and the e-newsletter INBOUND.

Our Roads, Our Safety Partnership

ABA joined a coalition with FMCSA, ATA and AAA to promote as a surface transportation industry, safe driving on the roads around Commercial Motor Vehicles. We have welcomed the Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA), the National American Fleet Association (NAFA), National Motor Freight Traffic Association (NMFTA), Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries (ISRI) and the American Driver & Traffic Safety Education Association (they will be incorporating our videos and materials into their training modules.). The Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao has made this FMCSA’s number one safety campaign, so look for more materials, videos, events and signs in the top 10 states for traffic accidents.

We will start planning the next round of videos early in 2018, the partnership is considering creating videos on distracted driving, driving with pedestrians and bicyclists on the streets and driving with school buses on the road.

Government Affairs & Policy

We have been quite busy on the legislative and regulatory side of the association. Early in the summer, ABA joined other travel industry associations to show support a number of travel and tourism issues, such as: funding cuts for Brand USA; funding cuts for state tourism offices; and visa processing issues.

ABA also made several statements regarding Intercity Bus Security Grant program funding; tax reform, National Park Service fee increases and other issues affecting the motorcoach industry.

ABA Annual Meeting & Marketplace 2018

ABA Communications has tried a number of new initiatives to promote ABA’s Annual Meeting & Marketplace in Charlotte. We worked with a number of our educational speakers to create promotional videos showcasing their sessions and Marketplace, these were often posted on social media on Marketplace Mondays. We have been busy utilizing the other days of the week to highlight our Council meetings, business appointments, networking and other advantages of ABA’s Marketplace on member businesses.

We have also been working closely with #ABACharlotte’s keynote speaker Steve Miller to promote the Sunday All-Delegate Lunch as well as ways Steve can help members improve their marketing activities.

Finally, this year we will be hosting a Twitter Board in the ABA lounge at the show that will show all the social media tweets happening during the show.
Membership

During the Fall, the Communications team created targeted social media advertisements to promote the value of ABA membership. These ads were highly targeted focusing on east coast, west coast, travel and bus operators, resulting in:

Facebook: 31,040 impressions, reached 26,094 people, 15,209 video views

Twitter: 32,253 impressions

ABA also created a new web page under About Us on the website titled ABA Cares. This page was originally used to promote ABA’s partnership with Tourism Cares during the hurricane season to raise money for industry colleagues affected by hurricanes Irma and Harvey. In 2018, the page will switch over to promote ABA members corporate social responsibility activities: Heroes of the Industry.

ABA Communications team has also been active on social media promoting ABA member businesses and attractions through special “National Days” as well as other news worthy events.

Activities:

Media Engagement

Between October and December, ABA sent out 10 statements and comments regarding government action as well as announcing Baltimore as the site for the 2021 ABA Annual Meeting & Marketplace.

Peter also did a number of interviews with Sirius XM’s Road Dog Trucker, Business View Magazine, Leisure Group Travel, Tourism Pros and USA Today.

Social Media Activities

We have been utilizing our social media channels more with the #ABAWorkingForYou campaign, highlighting our members with “National Days” each week and promoting the benefits of being a member of ABA as well as attending ABA events. This year we have been utilizing videos taken at ABA’s Annual Meeting & Marketplace to promote ABA’s Councils, meetings and ABA work in general. These videos have proved to be quite popular with followers. We also relaunched ABA’s Instagram page in August.

Because of our increase engagement and use of social media networks, we have seen our social media audience and interaction continue to grow:

Facebook: 4770 in Sept to 4868 (as of Dec. 28) We created a buzz campaign to reach 5,000 followers by Marketplace.

Twitter: 3807 in Sept to 3917 (as of Dec. 28)

LinkedIn: 3560 in Sept to 3568 (as of Dec. 28)

Instagram: 397 in Sept to 440 (as of Dec. 28)
**Crisis Communication**

While we had a relatively quiet summer regarding bus accidents, ABA put forth a campaign to educate our bus and tour operator members about ABA’s Crisis Communications member benefit. We mailed a flier to members laying out what to do in a crisis. Melanie Hinton participated in two webinars focused on crisis communications and social media. ABA Communications also helped members prepare crisis communications plans as well as deal with customer service communications issues.

In 2017, ABA has assisted the following companies with Crisis Communication needs:

- Storer Coachways (1/4-1/5)
- Burlington Trailways (2/24)
- Transportation Charter Services (5/5)
- First Class Tours (5/9)
- Werner Coach (5/15)
- Miller Transportation (7/22-26)
- Chicago Classic Coach (8/2)
- Fullington Trailways (9/8)
- Fullington Trailways (11/1)

ABA also provided “other” communications assistance to members during 2017 whether it was to help them create a crisis communications or deal with difficult customer service situations:

- Easy Breezy Tours (10/5)
- Rocky Mountain Transportation (9/16)
- Premier Transportation (8/1)
- Turner Coaches (7/28)
MEETINGS, EDUCATION AND MEMBER SERVICES DEPARTMENT

2018 ANNUAL MEETING & MARKETPLACE
Registration (MKPL 2018 numbers are as of Dec. 15)

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<tr>
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<th>MKPL 2018</th>
<th>MKPL 2017</th>
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| TOTAL         | 2703      | 2755      | 2876      | 2673      |

- Appointment-taking Buyers have the option of having a traditional table and chairs or a tall table and high stools in their booth.
- The Buyer booths feature flags that represent the company’s tour audience and locations and gives the sellers a snapshot of the company at a glance.
- ABA is offering a National Park Service Seminar on Saturday and a TSA Security and Emergency Planning Workshop on Tuesday.
- Steve Miller is our keynote speaker on Sunday. Steve is known for his non-traditional, no-spin approach to marketing and branding. ABA will give every attendee at the lunch a copy of his book “Uncopyable”.
- The ABA Lounge is a new area on the Networking Floor where attendees can relax, network and get help from ABA staff. It includes the Education Bites, fourteen 30-minute education sessions led by professional speakers and partners. It also includes ABA’s Twitter Wall, a new feature this year, allowing attendees to share their Marketplace experience.
- We have contracted 21 professional speakers and expanded their contractual obligations to include hosting webinars and publication requirements.
- We have 85 signed sponsorship contracts. Most of these contracts are signed by multiple partners, allowing them to have bigger exposure and spend more money.
- Currently sponsorship fees total $368,300. The sponsorships that we did not retain from 2017 were due to budget cuts or a change of where they want to spend their money.
- NEW: Asian Operator Council
- NEW: School Bus Council

MEMBERSHIP DEPARTMENT

We started off the year with record 619 new members and a 90% retention rate. 338 new companies have joined since January 1.

Membership Totals (Count comparison from December 1, 2017-2016)

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<tr>
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