



## AEG Advocacy Committee report

**By Phyllis Steckel**

The AEG Advocacy Committee. Hmmm. So just what is that? “Advocacy” sounds like something good. But what does it really mean and how does it relate to geoscience?

One dictionary definition says that *advocacy* is “giving aid to cause” or “active verbal support for a cause or position.” Another says it is “strong public support for something.” A thesaurus lists “support,” “encouragement,” “backing,” “sponsorship,” and “promotion” as synonyms.

This doesn’t sound like it has much to do with the practice of geology, yet there is this Advocacy Committee. Well, folks, *the times they are a-changin’*.

AEG’s Advocacy Committee is both responding to and anticipating the changes in both the business and political world in which we now practice. It’s different now. Geoscience is being devalued on a lot of fronts – public education, professional registration, research funding, policy development, and the list goes on. These are new and more malicious threats. In the past, there has not been a lot of reaction from the geoscience community as these external pressures increase. That must change.

AEG’s Advocacy Committee has some ideas. These ideas range from simple outreach to a proactive presence in broadcast, print, and electronic media.

The Committee recently completed a ready-made PowerPoint that every AEG member can use to reach local non-technical audiences. This is for your talk to the Rotary Club or the Scout troop.

There is also an AEG Press Release Protocol in progress. This is a proactive message from AEG to mainstream media that shows the value of a strong geoscience community. These may be in response to natural events like the karst collapse under the Corvette Museum or the ongoing Oklahoma earthquake activity. It may also offer an opinion or perspective from the collective membership of AEG, advising of the risks and benefits of certain decisions. The new District Visits Day and the Congressional Visits Day are, of course, also on the list.

This is new territory for many AEG members. So a workshop at the 2015 annual meeting in Pittsburgh is also being planned to teach some advocacy basics and expand our collective comfort zone.

The Advocacy Committee has morphed considerably in the past year or so. So if you are interested in being a real part of this new proactive voice of AEG, please contact Phyllis Steckel (psteckel@charter.net).

Pay it forward.