GETTING INFORMATION OUT OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

Almost every part of our lives, from our jobs to the very air we breathe, is affected in some way by our government. It's only fair, then, that we should return the favor by keeping a close eye on those who make, interpret and enforce our laws.

Even if you don't know your "way around" the Washington maze, you can still find out what's going on there. The information you need is usually available. The challenge is sorting it out of all the information you don't need.

You should start your search in one of the Federal Information Centers located in major cities in most states. The information specialists there will help you find the right federal office to answer your particular questions. You can also write the Federal Information Center, General Services Administration, 7th and D Streets, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20407.

To get information out of Congress, start with the Congressional Staff Directory, which is available at most libraries. This annual publication lists names, room numbers and direct extensions of staff members of Senators and Representatives.

Another valuable source of information is the Government Printing Office. Not only is this office in charge of all government printing, it also operates bookstores in 20 U.S. cities. More than 25,000 titles are available, including one called Consumers Guide to Federal Publications.

For timely information on Congressional activities, consult the daily Congressional Record, The Congressional Monitor and The Congressional Record Scanner or the weekly Congressional Quarterly and Regulatory Monitor.