



Greater North County Chamber of Commerce,
Maryland Heights Chamber of Commerce,
North County Incorporated Regional Development Association,
North County Chamber of Commerce and Northwest Chamber of Commerce

2009 North County Legislative Agenda

Economic Development

Economic Development Tax Credits

We support the expansion of proven tax credits that leverage private investment and stimulate employment and economic growth for our region.

We support the exploration of an incentive to encourage Missouri businesses to attract their supplier(s) (and the associated jobs and economic activity) to locate or expand in Missouri.

We support the use of tax credits for job retention, as well as job attraction activities and the elimination of sunsets and caps on proven tax credit programs, including the Missouri Quality Jobs Program.

We oppose efforts to cap or reduce the Missouri Historic Preservation Tax Credit, and maintain its transferability.

Job Training

We support restoration and enhancement of state appropriations for job training and exploration of avenues to make programs more accessible.

Encourage Local Economic Development Activity

We encourage the State to support local economic development organizations, which participate in economic development needs best served at the local level.

We support a tax credit for donations made to regional economic development organizations.

Business Retention and Expansion

We lend support to potential DED retention enhancement, and the addition of a commission that would decide when retention incentives should be offered to a particular Missouri company.

Small Business and Entrepreneurial Growth

We encourage policies that stimulate an entrepreneurial culture and enhance the growth of small businesses. Policies that provide direct assistance to small businesses with high-growth potential, such as grants for professional services, mentoring and training, greater access to low-interest loans for start-up and expansion capital or state matching grants for federal Innovation Research or Technology Transfer programs. We encourage greater access to markets for minority and women business enterprises in the public and private sectors.

We support pooled-purchasing associations to offer self-insured coverage under ERISA to small businesses, individuals, and the self-employed.

We support above-the-line deductions for individuals who pay their own health insurance premiums.

Redevelopment

We support initiatives to spur redevelopment efforts in economically distressed areas, such as increasing direct funding and tax credits for Brownfield cleanup.

We support meaningful liability reform for Brownfield sites to encourage their turnover to a productive use.

Sustainable Development

We support legislation that creates regional solutions and partnerships reducing neighborhoods in downward transition.

We support legislation that provides for a rebuilding and conservation of assets, while guarding against policies that cannibalize St. Louis County, and imprudently use taxes to unnecessarily develop large areas causing conflict with the sustainability of already established communities.

Condemnation for Economic Development

We oppose legislation that would prohibit the use of eminent domain to rehabilitate blighted areas and negatively impact zoning, subdivision ordinances, and nuisance abatement programs. Eminent domain is often used as a last resort for revitalizing local economies, creating much needed jobs, and generating revenue that enables cities to provide essential services. Its prudent use, when exercised in the sunshine of public scrutiny, benefits the entire community when used appropriately.

Education

Primary & Secondary Funding

We support appropriations for public schools sufficient to fully fund the Foundation Formula and categorical programs and support reducing the number of years to phase in the full funding of the new formula.

We support equitable funding of educational facilities.

We oppose further mandating of programs until all current programs are fully funded. Unfunded mandates place an unnecessary burden upon school districts.

We support legislation mandating fair and accurate property assessments.

We support legislation to offer greater financial assistance to local education agencies to improve the quality of and access to pre-kindergarten education programs for all students.

We also endorse the consolidation of responsibility for early childhood education programs to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

We support continuing and expanding the "Parents as Teachers" program.

We oppose programs that would divert public funding into private institutions and be detrimental to our public school systems.

We support local school districts having a voice on governing commissions that grant tax abatements.

Autonomy

We support the local autonomy of school districts. Local school districts are in the best position to determine the most effective use of funds and other resources.

We oppose any effort to impose new restrictions upon the authority of local school districts.

We oppose legislation that would erode local control of public schools, legislation that would destroy teacher associations, and that fails to support libraries, teacher training, health services, transportation, or school support staff. The State should not override the fiscal oversight of our local Boards of Education by mandated spending of local tax dollars.

Higher Education Funding

We support the new CBHE unified budget request that includes a 4.4 percent increase for core operating budgets of Missouri colleges and universities.

We encourage the governor and general assembly to fully fund higher education and not subject our colleges and universities to any funding hold-backs or with-holds.

We support a plan to provide consistent funding for capital funding for maintenance and repair of buildings and equipment.

We support funding for workforce training and skills development with special emphasis on advanced manufacturing, information technology, and plant and life sciences.

St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley and the University of Missouri-St. Louis play a vital role in the vitality and economic development of our area. Higher education, through its training programs, is an important partner in our region's efforts in developing plant and life science companies, and expanding manufacturing and engineering interests.

We support St. Louis Community College's efforts to expand plant and life sciences programs as part of the BRDG Park initiative at the Danforth Center.

We support the University of Missouri's effort to provide increased funding (\$1.9 million) for UM-St. Louis to help correct lingering equity issues, as well as the continuing state commitment to fund the \$28.5 million renovation of Benton and Stadler halls.

We support the capital requests for new facilities at the Colleges of Nursing and Optometry.

We support the "Caring for Missourians" initiative that increases capacity of Missouri's colleges and universities to train and strengthen the State's healthcare workforce.

Healthcare

MoHealthNet

We support this public/private partnership, which must maintain the safety net for those who cannot afford health insurance, such as those with pre-existing conditions who are ineligible for health insurance, the disabled and mental health parity. This legislation should restore other MoHealthNet funding for medical equipment and supplies. The program should adequately reimburse health providers, including dentists. This would increase access to care. The availability of primary care physicians to this population will promote preventive and long-term care, alleviating the use of hospital emergency rooms for non-emergency care. Long-term, this would create a "healthier state."

We support adequate state funding for MoHealthNet to enhance the capture of available federal matching funds.

Adult Outpatient Therapy

We support the restoration of funding for adult outpatient therapies. State FY2006 budget removed from Medicaid all funding for adult outpatient therapies. We ask that funds be restored for the balance of the State FY2008 through a supplemental appropriation and the State FY 2009 through a regular appropriation. Without outpatient therapy, many people are unable to restore their quality of life, mobility, and independence.

Certificate of Need

We oppose repealing the Certificate of Need (CON) for new health care facilities. Repealing the CON would encourage niche providers who only serve a limited segment of the medical market focusing on the most profitable services, such as uncomplicated outpatient surgeries for individuals with insurance, medical imaging, etc. Niche providers focus on only the most profitable hospital services, attacking hospitals' major revenue streams, making it difficult to sustain other critical but unprofitable services, such as emergency rooms and trauma centers.

Trauma Centers

We support additional funding for trauma centers to maintain high-quality health care services for North St. Louis County.

Healthcare Coverage

We support pooled-purchasing associations to offer self-insured coverage under ERISA to small businesses, individuals, the self-employed, and municipalities.

We support tax deductions for individuals who pay their own health insurance premiums.

Home Care Council

We encourage the State to monitor accountability and quality of the home care council created by Proposition B.

Transportation

Funding

We support adequate Missouri transportation funding and a formula that reflects the economic strength and development needs of the St. Louis region.

We oppose efforts to redistribute money away from the St. Louis region.

We support fair and equitable distribution of transportation funding and encourage the consideration of economic development and job creation impact when funding future projects.

We encourage legislators and State agencies to continue the emphasis on maintenance of existing infrastructure.

We support maintaining St. Louis representation on the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission.

We support a dedicated, reasonable, and equitable source of State funding for multi-modal forms of transportation; including support to increase funding for the METRO system expansion and operations in bus service to North St. Louis County.

We support various forms of user fees be considered as one source of new transportation funding.

We oppose a statewide sales tax as a source of funding for the Missouri Department of Transportation.

We support the efforts designed to educate citizens on the importance of multi-modal infrastructure and identify the most critical transportation needs.

Safety

We support passage of the primary seat belt law to increase the number lives saved from vehicle accidents and to increase federal funding for transportation safety projects.

General Issues

Electronic Publication of Legal Notices

We support legislation to authorize electronic publication of legal notices for local governments in order to save tax payers money. Local governments are incurring considerable costs for these notices.

Deceptive Lenders

We support legislation that would impose stricter regulations, with penalties, on lenders who engage in unfair and deceptive mortgage lending practices. These practices have created an increase in home foreclosures, stripping hard earned equity from families contributing to the problems of vacant and abandoned houses.

Predatory Lending

We support legislation establishing that the Missouri Attorney General should have increased responsibility to investigate and take legal action against predatory lenders, such as payday and title loan companies. In addition, legislation should allow cities to impose limits on the number of payday loan companies or, if desired by the community, to ban these operations entirely.

Emergency Cell Phone Tax

We support legislation to authorize a county-by-county vote for a cellular phone fee to fund enhanced '911' mobile service. With the huge growth in mobile phone usage, the '911' system is challenged to pinpoint calls and coordinate responses to incidents.

Extension of Term Limits for State Legislators

We support the elimination of term limits or increasing the number of terms legislators may serve. Term limits can erode institutional knowledge and lead to undue influence by lobbyists for the continually changing members of the House and Senate. Legislators are limited to a maximum of eight years in each chamber. An additional four years in each chamber for legislators would be a welcome change.