

# **Plan for Prosperity**

## **2017 Legislative Agenda**

The Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce supports a wide variety of initiatives that build a stronger local and regional marketplace and economy. A strong economy provides the tax base necessary to support education and local services, along with building a sustaining community infrastructure. Consequently, we support a public policy agenda that fosters business growth and creates jobs.

The Northeast Wisconsin Chamber Coalition (NEWCC) consists of Chambers in Fond du Lac, the Fox Cities, Green Bay, Oshkosh and Waupaca. Together, we represent more than 5,000 businesses that employ over 300,000 people.

Collectively, we advocate for policies that strengthen talent and business attraction and retention to protect and grow family-supporting jobs in Wisconsin. For Northeast Wisconsin to be successful, policies must be in place which allows local and regional companies to compete on a global level.

As an organization:

- *We support* a tax system that incentivizes business growth and workforce investment.
- *We support* efforts to streamline and reduce regulation that increases the cost of doing business.
- *We support* empowering local government to use economic development tools in ways that will help them grow their employment and tax base.
- *We support* honesty in taxation that ensures revenues collected are expended for the reason stated.
- *We support* initiatives that ensure Wisconsin workers have the skills to compete in a global economy.

### **Economic Development**

Successful economic development plans will include plans for attracting, retaining and developing a strong pipeline of young workers. States who are successful at this will grow their economy much quicker and be more sustainable into the future. The Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce recognizes that all efforts to strengthen and diversify our local and regional economy must include a commitment to education and training, ensuring that citizens, businesses and other organizations benefit from new knowledge, research, workforce talent, entrepreneurialism and innovation. A strong K-12 and post-secondary education system is critical in creating a pipeline of talent to provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to enter the workforce quicker. We support initiatives that provide workers with necessary skills to compete in a global economy and meet evolving workforce needs of employers.

#### *Workforce Development*

Support modifications to the Wisconsin Fast Forward program so that businesses can utilize this program in a similar manner as WEDC Capacity Building Grants. (NEWCC)

Support equitable funding for K-12 public education so that all public school districts can afford equipment and personnel to provide skills/certifications for high school aged students in collaboration with their area technical college or university. (NEWCC)

Support initiatives to grow the State's skilled workforce, including incumbent and transitional worker training, recruitment and retention incentives for in-demand professions and technical education programs.

Support the provision of additional state General Purpose Revenue (GPR) as an investment in UW Oshkosh and UW System initiatives, including those that:

- Lessen the time-to-degree, a primary driver of the cost of college, to successfully move students through the educational pipeline and into the workforce faster. Strategies include expanding dual enrollment opportunities that move first-year college experiences into students' senior years of high school.
- Develop new partnerships with businesses and organizations that open doors to mutually-beneficial student internship and work experiences.
- Seek new flexibility in the management of procurement and construction, which can save the UW System time and money.
- Continue pursuit of greater operational efficiencies.

Support the UW System's and the Board of Regents' proposal to extend a statewide undergraduate resident student tuition freeze through year one of the 2017-19 biennium and provide a tuition control in year two that limits any proposed increase to the rate of inflation.

#### *Talent Attraction & Retention*

Support modifying the 'legacy cap' on the medical residency programs at hospitals of Northeast Wisconsin to attract and retain medical students in the area to reduce our doctor shortage. (NEWCC)

Support funding regional programs for career based learning initiatives which leverage current community assets. (NEWCC)

#### **Taxation**

Burdensome taxes – whether on individuals or businesses – make Wisconsin less competitive. Our high-quality services must be funded adequately, but continued progress must be made to eliminate excessive tax burdens on state residents.

- Support reducing personal income tax rates and corresponding businesses taxes. Wisconsin needs to repeal the top income tax bracket of 7.65 percent.
- Phase out and/or repeal the personal property tax paid by businesses on equipment which is difficult to administer and costly to comply with.
- Repeal the AMT where Wisconsin is one of only 6 states with an alternative minimum tax for individuals and businesses.

#### **Transportation Infrastructure**

A robust transportation infrastructure network is essential to economic growth. Ensuring adequate funding is available scheduled road maintenance and road improvements will give Wisconsin manufacturers an advantage over their competition.

Support the following transportation projects staying on schedule: (NEWCC)

- Construction of a southern bridge in De Pere with an interchange onto I-41
- Reconstruction of State Highway 23
- Expansion of State Highway 441
- Expansion of State Highway 15
- Safety upgrades on Highway 10
- Reconstruction & expansion of State Highway 26 to a four-lane facility from I-41 to US 151

Support the development of a fair and reliable transportation funding plan for Wisconsin.

### **Regulatory Reforms**

Unpredictable and overbearing government regulation can be responsible for driving businesses to states with more predictable and flexible regulations. Wisconsin's regulatory environment must strike a balance between protection and the cost of implementation. The State needs to have a competitive business climate and should seek to eliminate and reduce state regulations that impede economic growth and job creation.

Support legislation to exempt permitting requirements for the discharge of dredged or fill material into all artificial wetlands. (NEWCC)

Support legislation referred to as the Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny or REINS Act, which requires legislative approval for any changes to state administrative code that would cost over \$10 million to implement. (NEWCC)

Support a reduction from the salary threshold for the exemption of overtime pay under the Federal Labor Standards Act that is scheduled to go into effect on December 1, 2017. (NEWCC)

Support harmonizing Wisconsin's Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) law with the federal law to end duplicative, expensive compliance for employers.

Support state-wide employment standards. The State, not local units of government, should be in charge of setting employment law standards. Lawmakers should pre-empt local governments from being able to set employment law standards that are different from state law in areas like wage and hourly, employment discrimination, etc.