

IOWA CHAMBER ALLIANCE

A unified voice for economic growth

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Iowa Chamber Alliance Promotes Strategic Policies for Growth

DES MOINES, IA (December 6, 2007) — At a news conference in Des Moines today the Iowa Chamber Alliance presented strategies and initiatives for public policy they believe will contribute to and stimulate economic growth in Iowa. The Alliance is a non-partisan coalition representing 16 chambers of commerce and economic development organizations throughout the state. The Alliance promotes business and economic development issues that lead to job expansion, economic growth and increased state and local revenues.

Robin Anderson, Iowa Chamber Alliance Chair, and Executive Director of the Mason City Area Chamber of Commerce said, “The Alliance continues to work on issues that will impact the economy and businesses in Iowa. We believe statewide leadership must address issues impacting the business climate, implement statewide outcome-based education standards, develop a strong workforce and revitalize our communities. Addressing key issues will allow Iowa to grow its economy by attracting and retaining businesses, providing quality jobs, setting a high standard of education and achieving a higher quality of life.”

Statewide, the Alliance has identified four major areas of focus for 2008:

- Business Climate
- Community Revitalization
- Infrastructure
- Workforce

Nationally, the Alliance has taken a pro-business stance on four important issues:

- Immigration
- Social Security
- Equality of Medicare Reimbursement Funds
- Affordable Health Insurance

Business Climate

Economic Growth

The Alliance supports the state’s Right-to-Work Law, the statute for workers’ compensation regarding injuries on the job and opposes mandating prevailing wage rates for public construction projects. Taking away these protections could significantly impact the ability to attract a skilled workforce and/or impair business expansion and job creation in the state. To maintain and enhance Iowa’s appeal to current and potential businesses, it is essential that Iowa do what is possible to lower the cost to businesses and employees.

Property Tax Reform

The Alliance supports providing tax relief for commercial and industrial properties. Property taxes are not competitive for commercial and industrial properties in Iowa. Delaying reforms to Iowa's property tax system is intensifying the tax burden for commercial and industrial payers.

Income Tax

The Alliance continues to call for simplification and overall reform of the state income tax formula. The Alliance believes the state should flatten and adjust the current income tax structure to a two-tiered system. This change would allow the state to maintain its income tax revenue stream while eliminating the confusion in marketing the state of Iowa.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

The Alliance believes Iowa's Tax Increment Financing laws make its cities and communities more competitive for business and industrial growth. TIF districts stimulate an increase in the tax base for the long term and allow communities to compete for jobs, sales tax and tourism dollars.

Community Revitalization

Destination Attraction Fund

The Alliance supports continued funding and removing the cap for the Destination Attraction Fund. This matching fund supporting visionary community projects or destination attractions is important to grow local economies, attract visitors and retain businesses and workers for those businesses.

Brownfield Redevelopment Program

The Alliance supports funding for the Iowa Brownfield Redevelopment Program at \$3 million per year. Communities are in need of readily accessible funding for environmental site investigations prior to acquiring nuisance Brownfield sites. These funds must also be open to use on soil and water contaminant discovery as well as asbestos and lead based-paint for the safety of communities with the Brownfield sites.

Entrepreneurship

The Alliance supports creating a culture of entrepreneurship in Iowa with continued funding for research parks and regional business accelerators. To accelerate business growth and vigorously participate in the dynamic global economy, Iowa's leaders must nurture entrepreneurial talent and venture capital in the state.

Infrastructure

Road Use Tax Fund

The Alliance supports revision of the current Road Use Tax Fund formula to allocate more funds to highly traveled roads and implementation of Time-21. Continuous investment in Iowa's public roadway system is essential to support economic growth and help attract new businesses to the state. While the Alliance supports these initiatives, current expenditures should be carefully scrutinized before considering revenue sources.

Workforce

Workforce Development

The Alliance supports implementation of 21st Century learning skills by setting statewide outcome based standards in addition to strengthening workforce training retention and recruitment to meet future workforce needs. Workforce issues must be addressed from a comprehensive perspective.

Tell the Iowa Story

The Alliance encourages state and local communities to collaborate in telling the Iowa story by creating and marketing a positive, inviting image of Iowa through a well-funded strategic marketing plan. This marketing initiative should be both regional and statewide.

Federal Issues

Immigration

The Alliance supports streamlining the processes for highly skilled workers, raising the cap on H1-B visas, improving the international student visa program, allowing employers to recruit immigrant workers to fill labor needs when there is a shortage and establishing an employment eligibility confirmation system to ensure compliance with state and federal laws.

Social Security

The Alliance encourages federal officials to refrain from penalizing workers who return to work while still receiving social security benefits.

Equality of Medicare Reimbursement Funds

The Alliance supports high-quality health care as a priority in Iowa and recognizes its vitality to the state's economic development. The single largest payer for care in Iowa is Medicare; however, Medicare fails to pay its fair share impacting private health care premiums small businesses pay. The Alliance supports removing undo burden on businesses that provide health insurance and creating a system where the uninsured can afford health care.

Affordable Health Insurance

The Alliance supports making affordable quality health care accessible for small business owners and their employees. The Alliance endorses state and federal legislation that promotes consumer-driven health care such as Health Savings Accounts, Flexible Spending Accounts and use of wellness programs. The Alliance supports strengthening and expanding the current employer-based system while developing alternatives for individually-owned health coverage.

To encourage public involvement in key issues addressed in its agenda, the Iowa Chamber Alliance has developed a new Web site, Vote for Iowa Business. For more information about the Alliance's positions and agenda, please visit the new Web site at www.growiowabusiness.com.

About the Iowa Chamber Alliance

The Iowa Chamber Alliance's mission is to put forth and enact an agenda to grow the state's economy through support of proactive programs that stimulate economic growth opportunities for the entire state and its residents. The Alliance members include chambers and economic development organizations in: Ames, Bettendorf, Burlington/West Burlington, Cedar Falls/Waterloo, Cedar Rapids, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Des Moines, Dubuque, Fort Dodge, Iowa City, Marshalltown, Mason City, Muscatine and Sioux City.

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