



For Immediate Release
December 1, 2016

Contact: Marisol Molstre
515.681.4647
mmolstre@strategicelements.com

Tax reform and certainty in business environment will drive Iowa's economic success

Iowa Chamber Alliance announces 2017 legislative priorities

DES MOINES, IOWA (December 1, 2016) – At a news conference held today, the Iowa Chamber Alliance outlined policy recommendations for strategic initiatives key to fostering healthy economic growth. In particular, the Alliance focused on policies affecting taxes, business climate and regulations and economic development.

“The 2017 legislative session provides a unique opportunity for the Iowa Chamber Alliance to promote and advance economic growth policies,” said Jason Hutcheson, 2017 Iowa Chamber Alliance Chair and President & CEO of the Greater Burlington Partnership. “This legislative session will allow us to be thoughtfully engaged in several important conversations including those dealing with tax simplification and reform, minimum wage uniformity and economic development incentives.”

The Alliance believes economic growth can be achieved by the State of Iowa positioning for:

- Competitive and fair taxes.
- Strong fiscal management of taxpayer dollars.
- Necessary investments in the full spectrum of infrastructure.
- Forward-looking programs to encourage entrepreneurship and attract investment.
- Smart and comprehensive investment in developing and retaining a world-class workforce.
- Predictable and responsive regulatory environment.

2017 PRIORITY ISSUES

Taxes

Iowa's business tax climate may be improved in a host of ways. Specifically, the Alliance encourages policies that simplify and reduce corporate and personal income taxes as a means to better market Iowa as a destination for job-creating investments and to be more competitive with other states.

-more-

General Business & Regulations

The Iowa Chamber Alliance has consistently supported periodic review and cost-benefit analysis of agency rules and regulations in cooperation with affected businesses and organizations. Such reviews ensure a minimally invasive and efficient regulatory environment. Rules and regulations should be regularly evaluated for necessity, effectiveness, cost-efficiency, enforceability and financial impact. Regulatory stability and responsiveness must be recognized as a critical component of a healthy business climate and includes measures such as:

- Preempt local minimum wage ordinances so they are compliant with Iowa law. Any adjustments to the minimum wage should be done at the state-level, not by local government entities.
- Modernize and reform budget practices at all levels of government, including multi-year budgeting, and careful consideration of spending in order to maintain fiscal health at all levels of government. The Alliance also supports full funding of its existing budget obligations, including tax credits and promised backfill to local governments related to the property tax reforms of 2013.
- Efforts to reduce revenue demand from local and state governments through public pension reforms, which are viewed as an opportunity to positively impact government budgets without tax increases.

Economic Development

Investing in job-creating incentives and programs remains a top Alliance priority. Chamber Alliance recommendations include:

- Fully funding the incentives budget under the High Quality Jobs Program to help ensure Iowa is in a position to close the deal on highly competitive projects.
- Support a new front-end incentive fund – designed with appropriate accountability and protections – to help win more projects.
- Propose an initiative on rural and small economic development that may be coupled with existing incentives and programs to further economic development opportunities statewide.
- Support policy measures that align community attraction programs and expand the availability of resources for Iowa’s communities to attract and retain the workforce needed for Iowa’s economic growth. This includes securing sustained, reliable funding for the Enhance Iowa initiative.
- Strongly support local economic development tools, such as tax increment financing, as invaluable and integral pieces of Iowa’s economic development efforts. The Alliance will vigorously work to ensure their continued strength, flexibility and availability.

Workforce Development & Education

The Iowa Chamber Alliance advocates for state support of a comprehensive study of Iowa’s workforce issues to help assess needs and make sound policy recommendations that follow a broader strategy. Iowa’s workforce development strategy, must address three broad areas:

- Preparing Iowa’s future workforce with a quality education that readies high school graduates for either a four-year college education or a vocational training course without need for academic remediation.
- Equipping Iowa’s workforce of today with the skills they need to compete and fill the jobs industry needs.
- Attracting people to Iowa and retaining Iowans to participate in Iowa’s workforce, by making it a desirable place to live with robust communities and a high “quality of place” and appealing to New Americans.

-more-

Transportation, Infrastructure & Communications

Iowa's critical infrastructure continues to have significant needs for updating and investment. High quality and reliable infrastructure is central to economic growth. Prioritization of infrastructure investment should include water and wastewater, inter modal transportation and broadband.

Infrastructure related to water, waste water and storm water is a critical element to economic development. The Alliance supports additional funding sources and flexible policies to sufficiently address needed water infrastructure improvements.

Additionally, a solid inter-modal transportation network is critical to economic growth. Given the capital-intensive nature of transportation infrastructure, long-term funding and distribution issues remain. The Alliance supports a reexamination of current fund allocations to stay true to the TIME-21 formulas.

Iowa's broadband infrastructure is positioned to be an engine for economic growth in the 21st Century, and broadband investment must be pursued as aggressively as any other targeted industry — through a positive business climate, competitive tax treatment, appropriate incentives and a light-touch regulatory posture that is geared toward the future, not the past. The Alliance supports efforts and policies that attract investment to enhance the broadband infrastructure necessary to bolster our economic future.

For more information about the Alliances' positions and legislative agenda, please visit the website at www.iowachamberalliance.com.

About Iowa Chamber Alliance and Members

The Iowa Chamber Alliance is a non-partisan coalition representing the 16 largest chambers of commerce and economic development organizations throughout Iowa. Its 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.

- Ames Chamber of Commerce/Ames Economic Development Commission
- Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance
- Council Bluffs Area Chamber of Commerce
- Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Burlington Partnership
- Greater Cedar Valley Alliance & Chamber
- Greater Des Moines Partnership
- Greater Fort Dodge Growth Alliance
- Greater Muscatine Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- Iowa City Area Chamber of Commerce
- Marshalltown Area Chamber of Commerce
- Mason City Chamber of Commerce
- North Iowa Corridor Economic Development Corporation
- Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce
- Siouxland Chamber of Commerce

###