



2008 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Workforce Development is the top issue facing business and the future economic development of Broken Arrow. The Chamber supports efforts to create a competitive edge with the creation of a strong workforce including:

- ▶ **Training, Lifelong Learning and Local Workforce Development:** The Chamber will work to ensure Oklahoma's workforce delivery and training programs are the best in the nation. The Chamber supports full funding of Incumbent Worker training systems, the Chamber also supports increased funding of Oklahoma's nationally known Training for Industry Program (TIP). The Chamber will also support legislative efforts to expand the TIP program to include re-training.
- ▶ **Aerospace Initiative:** Support funding authorization for the Oklahoma Aerospace Institute which was signed into law without funding in 2007.
- ▶ **Talent Attraction & Retention:** Support efforts to market the State, regions and communities to encourage people to live, work and invest in Oklahoma.
- ▶ **Intern Tax Credits:** Support legislation that gives companies a tax credit for employing college students as interns.

OKLAHOMA INFRASTRUCTURE

- ▶ **Local Roads & Bridges:** The Chamber supports the proposed legislation to give back ½ cent of the State sales tax generated within the municipal boundaries of the cities and towns or the unincorporated areas of the counties with some special help for the towns that don't generate much sales tax.
- ▶ **Water:** The Chamber supports Oklahoma's need to (1) determine how much water we have; (2) determine how much we need the next 50 years; (3) determine where it's needed; and (4) devise a plan to pay for the infrastructure to get it where it's needed, when it's needed.
- ▶ **Lawsuit Reform:** The Chamber supports a re-submission of lawsuit reform legislation that was passed in the last session but vetoed by the governor.

COMMON AND HIGHER EDUCATION

- ▶ **Education** consumes the largest share of the state's budget (common, higher and career tech). The Chamber will support legislative issues regarding education including: Merit compensation for educators, tuition increases, funding equity for higher education, career exploration programs for common education, higher education support for more dollars in research & development i.e.: the EDGE Fund, resolution of OSU's problems with Ardent to allow the teaching hospital in Tulsa to remain viable.

OKLAHOMA DEVELOPMENT LAW

- ▶ **Eminent Domain** – The Chamber recognizes that Oklahoma's current Eminent Domain laws are more than adequate to protect the rights of property owners and that Eminent Domain is a necessary system for the development of lands for public purpose. The Chamber will oppose any legislation proposed that would limit the rights of the City, County or State to use Eminent Domain for public purpose and the Chamber will work to assure that no changes are made to Oklahoma's eminent domain statutes that would negatively impact economic development.
- ▶ **Opportunity Fund** – The Chamber supports proposed legislation to reauthorize the Opportunity Fund Law being re-written to conform to the Supreme Court ruling and refund the system at a level that will make Oklahoma competitive with the region.
- ▶ **Five-Year Ad Valorem Exemption** – The Chamber views the ad valorem exemption as a critical incentive for us to remain competitive with other states. The Chamber will support and defend the current Ad Valorem exemption law as it now stands. Any attempt to change the benchmarks for qualifying projects will be opposed. At the same time, the Chamber desires

legislation to solve the depletion of the Ad Valorem Reimbursement Fund.

- ▶ **Sales Tax Exemptions** – The Chamber view the sales tax exemption for manufacturers in Oklahoma as vital to the health and profitability of the manufacturing sector, any attempts to remove those sales tax exemptions will be opposed.
- ▶ **Tax Increment Financing** – (TIF Districts) The Chamber supports the proposed compromise legislation to make adjustments in the TIF law based on representation on the TIF Review Committee, and full transparency of the TIF system.
- ▶ **Quality Investment Act** - The Quality Investment Act was passed to provide incentives to encourage "at risk" industries to keep their doors open and remain in Oklahoma. The Chamber supports the need to amend the law to allow investments in capital facilities by a second party to satisfy qualifications of the Act as long as the "at risk" industry stays in Oklahoma and fulfills other criteria of the Act. An example would be construction of a new facility by an investment firm which then leases the facility to the "at risk" industry.
- ▶ **Workers' Compensation** - Reforms passed in 2005 are not being fully implemented, and Oklahoma's courts have overturned some key reform provisions. The Chamber supports judicial reforms to further enhance the 2005 changes.
- ▶ **Oklahoma Council For The Advancement Of Science & Technology** - The Chamber supports a significant increase in the funding of this agency. The current request is for an increase of \$17.5 million to a total of \$40 million.

SOCIAL ISSUES & QUALITY OF LIFE

- ▶ **Health Care** - The Chamber supports incentives for the incorporation of Evidence Based Medicine and Pay for Performance programs into the health care delivery system. The Chamber also supports the need to find a long-term solution to the Medicaid reimbursement problem.
- ▶ **Immigration** – The Chamber supports the idea that Oklahoma's immigration laws must conform to federal laws.

TAXATION

- ▶ **Taxation** - The Chamber will monitor all proposed taxation legislation to assure that Oklahoma's tax system is fair and responsive to both businesses and individuals – designed to encourage entrepreneurs and jobs growth.
- ▶ **Erosion of Incentives** – The Chamber will oppose any and all attempts, whether by legislation or litigation, to reduce or repeal necessary economic development incentives to fund proposed personal and corporate tax rate reductions.

BROKEN ARROW AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA PROCESS:

The Chamber derived these positions through a combination of a survey to the membership and evaluating a variety of legislative agendas from chambers and other development organizations across the state. The issues and survey results were presented to the Legislative Committee. After discussing the issues, the Committee took a position on each issue. The issues were presented to the Board of Directors for consideration and position on each issue. Issues approved by the Board were compiled into the official Broken Arrow Area Chamber of Commerce Legislative Agenda. The Legislative Agenda was then delivered to the Broken Arrow legislators and Leadership to ensure that they are educated on our positions on business issues, as those issues appear throughout the Legislative Session in the form of bills.

WHAT CAN YOU DO? Get involved. The Chamber cannot influence its legislators without the support of its members. Take the survey when the Chamber sends it out. Join the Legislative Committee. Participate in the Broken Arrow Day at the Capitol. Vote in the Elections and make sure your employees are informed. For more information, contact one of the following individuals.

Mickey Thompson, President/CEO Broken Arrow Area Chamber
mickeythompson@brokenarrowchamber.com 918.251.1518

Tim Hendricks, Legislative Committee Chair
thendricks@bpgok.com 918.488.1111

Deb Marshall, VP Existing Business & Public Affairs
debmarshall@brokenarrowedc.com 918.251.1518