

2017 ADVOCACY AGENDA

The role of One Southern Indiana in promoting a fiscally stable, business-friendly environment is deeply impacted by local, regional, state and national issues. Through our Advocacy Council's initiatives, we promote positive change by serving as the "Champions of Ideas" to achieve economic and business vitality for the region. Additionally, we strive to provide for our investors and members access to policy makers at all levels of government through forums, roundtables and one-on-one meetings.

The 2017 Advocacy Agenda, as presented, provides the prioritized efforts of the 1si Advocacy Council over the next 12 months.

Career-Ready Workforce and Educational Initiatives

New business growth, along with the retention and expansion of existing businesses, is increasingly more dependent on the availability of a qualified workforce. There are many contributing factors to developing a region's ability to grow, maintain and attract talent to help make businesses profitable, and 1si supports many of the organizations and programs dedicated to learning and development throughout a person's lifetime.

1si will monitor and communicate on the following priority areas:

- *Coordinated Voice of the Demand Side of the Talent/Workforce Equation:* Because of significant job growth in Southern Indiana, along with low unemployment rates at the local, state and national levels, 1si members are experiencing difficulties in hiring talent to fill the open positions within their organizations. This talent shortage is not limited to a particular industry sector or the Southern Indiana community – it is common to all employers. While there are several resource providers and partners working on the talent supply side, 1si has assumed our role as the voice of the demand side of the equation. We will engage in efforts to coordinate this voice on behalf of area employers.
- *Higher Education:* We support and encourage efforts to increase the percentage of our population that has attained bachelors or associates degrees in fields of study that are in demand by area employers, as identified by the Indiana Region 10 Works Council.
- *Post-Secondary Completion, Skills Training, Certifications and Licenses:* We support and encourage efforts to increase the percentage of our population that has attained the types of degrees, skill enhancements, technical certifications and licensing which are in demand by area employers.
- *Innovations in K-12 Education:* We support and encourage efforts by area school corporations to advance the college and career preparedness of our youth, starting in early levels, and specifically as they relate to STEM education (science, technology, engineering and math) and work-ethic motivators. These innovations, through both in-school and out-of-classroom programming, will include, but not be limited to, plans and strategies for students and mentors and externships for teachers.
- *Evaluating Public Funding for Schools:* One Southern Indiana supports fiscally responsible investments in our education systems that result in quality educational opportunities for all learners. These investments must result in measurable increases toward establishing a competitive workforce. High-performing and competitive schools drive economic development, resulting in improvements for our workforce and our overall economy.

Infrastructure and Transportation

A strong infrastructure network is key to serving the region's existing employers, attracting new companies and growing start-up entities. We encourage ongoing efforts to identify the critical gaps and develop recommendations for infrastructure that will support economic growth strategies for Southern Indiana. Infrastructure and transportation

project planning and development will involve advocacy efforts at many levels – local governments, state government, regional partners and federal agencies, and the returns on these investments are likely to be realized across the entire region.

1si will monitor and communicate on the following priority areas:

- *Indiana Road and Highway Funding:* If Indiana is to maintain its image as the “Crossroads of America,” the General Assembly must identify a reasonable, rational and sustainable solution to funding shortages for our local and state road network. 1si supports policies at the federal and state levels that will increase funding streams dedicated to building and maintaining critical road and highway projects.
- *Support the Southeast Regional Logistics Council Strategic Plan:* Coordinated by Conexus Indiana, we support the implementation of plans and strategies to enhance the logistics industry and our region’s competitiveness through infrastructure, workforce and policy improvements. Included in this plan are four specific project areas:
 - *Widening/Improving of Highway 62 from I-265 to Charlestown:* The development of the River Ridge Commerce Center, along with anticipated traffic growth in the area due to the East End Crossing, is creating congestion that likely will hamper future industrial, commercial and residential development in the area if not addressed comprehensively.
 - *Development of a Connector Road from I-65 Exit 7 to River Ridge:* Encourage the design and construction of a new road east from Exit 7 on I-65, passing the Clark Regional Airport, and connecting to Highway 62 at the River Ridge Commerce Center to realize economic development opportunities resulting from enhanced movement of cargo.
 - *Maintenance of Locks and Dams Along the Ohio River:* Questionable maintenance of the locks and dams along the Ohio River poses a threat to the economic well-being of industries that use river transport for obtaining supplies or shipping final products. Steel, agriculture and many other industries are at risk if this transportation route is restricted in any way. 1si can assist in creating an awareness of this risk to the lawmakers and regulators with authority to address it.
- *Communications Infrastructure:* Communications infrastructure is not always categorized as an essential service, but in today’s business environment, the lack of high-speed internet connectivity can severely limit growth of existing businesses and hamper the attraction of new businesses. 1si will assist all service providers and collaborative partners in the push for the expansion of these services to Southern Indiana and will advocate for Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) Broadband Ready Community Certification, a tool to exceed High Speed Internet Access (HSIA) expansion to encourage broadband development in our communities.
- *Ohio River Aquifer Study:* 1si supports legislation requiring study of the aquifer to not only identify and examine measures necessary to link water distribution systems, but also to study ownership rights to the groundwater resources shared by Indiana and Kentucky. Development of an interstate compact with Kentucky concerning the use of the groundwater underlying Southern Indiana and Northern Kentucky would be the first step to maximizing this natural resource.

Business-Friendly Tax and Fiscal Initiatives

Indiana has made great strides over the past decade to enhance the business friendliness of the state’s fiscal policies. These efforts have been noted as Indiana is consistently ranked as a top state for doing business when compared with other states by fiscal analysts and site-selection consultants – earning many “top state in the Midwest” honors. However, efforts toward continuous improvement are needed to maintain Indiana’s competitiveness – as well as maintaining local advantages – because other locations are constantly adjusting their policies toward improvement.

1si will monitor and communicate on the following priority areas:

- *Minimize the Impact of Tolling on the Ohio River Bridges Project:* 1si will continue to monitor and advocate for

exploration and consideration of the issues presented to the Indiana Finance Authority, including reviewing truck classifications; exemptions for public and tour buses; load restrictions on the Clark Memorial Bridge; toll collections aligning with new bridge usage; and high-frequency-user discounts or credits.

- *Simplify the Tax and Regulatory Environment:* Federal business taxes and the regulatory environment are complex and burdensome on businesses of all sizes. 1si's advocacy efforts will ensure the voice of local business is heard in these state and national debates.
- *Support Proper Use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as an Economic Development Tool:* Local municipalities have very few economic development tools to help "close the gap" to land new projects or retain existing employers. Maintaining the ability of local governments to use tax increment financing mechanisms is essential for state and local competitiveness.
- *Incentive Reciprocity for Economic Development:* Both Indiana and Kentucky provide incentives to new and existing companies to create new jobs. However, both states only allow credits for jobs that are filled by residents of each respective state, creating a disadvantage to hiring individuals who live in the region. 1si will advocate for reciprocity so that hiring incentives may be maximized for regional benefit. The intended result is to allow companies to hire the best candidates, regardless of their location within the region, and discourage "river hopping" amongst regional companies.

Regional Initiatives

Coordinating the activities and positions of the communities in Clark and Floyd counties offers several advantages – and creates greater influence – when compared to individual community agendas in other parts of the state. Additionally, recognizing our connectivity to Louisville adds impact in policy discussions that cross state and other jurisdictional boundaries. 1si will explore regional opportunities that can benefit the economic climate of our communities.

1si will monitor and communicate on the following priority areas:

- *Support Continuation of the Indiana Regional Cities Initiative:* In 2015, the State of Indiana awarded \$42 million to three regions within the state, as well as \$600,000 to Regional Development Authorities (RDAs) that submitted applications to the program. These regions are now leveraging these state funds to attract private investment to increase their tax bases, as well as to add "quality of place" attractions throughout their multi-county areas. Future funding commitments for this initiative should incentivize Southern Indiana communities to form an RDA to prepare and submit an application for this designation in future funding rounds. 1si will continue to support incentives for regional cooperation, as well as changes in authorizing legislation that remove eminent domain authority from the RDAs.
- *Tuition Reciprocity for Higher Education:* Residents of border communities have benefited from college tuition reciprocity for nearly 14 years, but the agreement between the Indiana Commission for Higher Education and the Kentucky Council for Post-Secondary Education is set to expire in June of 2017. 1si supports continuing this agreement for an additional 10 years so students in both states have consistent options for advancing their educations.
- *Combined Master Planning Document:* Both Clark and Floyd counties are working with master planning documents that are more than 10 years old. The new bridges, along with residential growth and business demands, are changing local planning options at a rapid pace. 1si encourages a new way of thinking about planning at a comprehensive level in the two counties.
- *Implementation/Maximize Regional Benefit of the Ohio River Greenway Plan:* The Ohio River Greenway Commission now has a refreshed Master Plan, putting forth a vision for a world-class linear park system along the Ohio River Greenway. 1si encourages, through collaborative partnerships, the further planning, development and construction of this vision which will greatly add to Southern Indiana's "quality of place."
- *Growth of Advance Greater Louisville's Regional Economic Development Organization:* As of 2016, 15 regional

economic development entities within the metro area agreed to work together to accelerate regional economic growth and awareness both nationally and internationally. This partnership will support and grow the regional economy, making the Greater Louisville region much more competitive in the global marketplace. 1si appreciates the dedication of Greater Louisville, Inc. to leading this effort, and 1si supports involvement from all communities within the metro area.

- *Collaboration for Regional Benefit:* 1si will continue to partner with other like-minded business organizations to unify our regional efforts of strengthening our regional economic stability and impact. Through these partnerships, we create the opportunity to share ideas and information, as well as forge greater collective influence on matters of common concern.

Civic Engagement

Harnessing the voice of business is essential for good policy at all levels of government. By providing forums and events to increase access to policy makers for our business members and investors, 1si will ensure local issues are heard.

1si will promote civic engagement of our business members in the following priority areas:

- *Conduct One Educational Advocacy Event Each Year for Members and Investors:* With continual changes in regulations that affect businesses of all sizes, 1si will host educational forums for local businesses to access technical updates and opinions from subject matter experts in those fields.
- *Host Six Advocacy Events Each Year for Local, State and Federal Officials:* In keeping with the tradition of providing access to public officials, the Advocacy Council will host members-only sessions with elected officials at three primary levels of government.
- *Participate and Promote Drive-In/Fly-In Events to State and Federal Legislators:* By building collaborative partnerships, 1si's Advocacy Council can harness the influence of our area with other business organizations in both Indianapolis and Washington, D.C., to affect policy makers at state and federal levels.