

as add Quality of Place attractions throughout their multi-county areas. Future funding commitments for this initiative should incentivize Southern Indiana communities to continue with the formation of the *Our Southern Indiana RDA* to apply for assistance. 1si will continue to support incentives for regional cooperation.

- **Combined Master Planning Document:** Both Clark and Floyd counties develop master planning documents through separate processes. The new bridges, residential growth and business demands are changing the local planning options at a rapid pace. 1si encourages a new way of thinking about planning at a comprehensive level in the two counties.
- **Implement and Maximize Regional Benefit of Ohio River Greenways 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 have agreed to work within the metro area 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 lead this effort, and 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. It is time for our region take steps to solidify and develop an emboldened advocacy effort to ensure a strong presence at the Indiana Statehouse.
- **Expand Direct Air Service from SDF to East and West Coasts:** 1si is supportive of the Louisville Regional Airlift Development (LRAD) in its quest to develop new nonstop air service routes from Louisville International Airport (SDF) as the resulting economic development opportunities will benefit the entire region. Individuals, businesses, and other organizations – including the State of Indiana -- can support this drive by making a tax-deductible pledge to provide funds to be used for minimum revenue guarantees to support the launch of new air service at SDF.

## 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 that 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 Four 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 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 both state and federal levels.

## 2018 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 2018 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 difficulty in hiring talented individuals to fill the open positions within their organizations. This talent shortage is not limited to a particular industry sector or 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 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 degrees, skill enhancements, technical certifications and licensing which are in demand by area employers.
- **Innovations in K-12 Education:** We support and encourage efforts of area school corporations to advance the college and career preparedness of our youth, starting in early levels, specifically as it relates to STEM education (science, technology, engineering and math) and work ethics 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:** 1si supports fiscally responsible investments in our education systems that result in quality educational opportunities for all learners. These investments must result in measurable increases towards establishing a competitive workforce. High-performing and competitive schools drive economic development, resulting in improvements for our workforce and our overall economy.
- **Enhancing Opioid Treatment and Recovery Efforts:** Employers in Southern Indiana are further concerned about the national opioid crisis resulting in demonstrative impact on the readiness of today's workforce. 1si supports creative approaches to prevention, treatment and enforcement of illegal drug use and the many facets of the epidemic, including support to employers in assisting their employees.

- *Strengthen Indiana's Expungement Process to Assist Workforce Reentry* – Hoosiers are eligible for expungement upon meeting all the terms of their sentence agreements. Indiana's current expungement law provides that certain non-violent convictions, with consideration to vulnerable populations, may be expunged from criminal records. However, the stigma of past crimes can be daunting to those entering the workforce. 1si supports strengthening this process to ease entry into the workplace.
- *Nurse Licensure Compact in Indiana*: Kentucky is one of 26 states benefitting from the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC). With many of the region's health care companies operating across state lines, it is important for the region to maintain and attract nursing talent. Indiana should pass NLC legislation to authorize its registered nurses to maintain their in-state licenses and practice in any member state of the NLC. A seamless licensure process will benefit nurses and their employers as they provide health services on both sides of the river, in addition to addressing the nurse shortage within the region.
- *Encouraging Private Investment for Housing Diversification*: 1si supports the diversification of housing options through private investment. Housing options that take into account a wide range of wages are critical to workers' quality of life, benefiting all employers looking to expand and grow. Communities within our region prosper when employees are able to live close to their place of work, families and local amenities.

## Infrastructure and Transportation

A strong infrastructure network is key to serving the region's existing employers, attracting new companies and growing startup 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:

- *Support Fair Funding for Road and Highway Projects*: If Indiana is to maintain its image as the Crossroads of America, the General Assembly must maintain funding formulas for road and highway improvements that are fair for all Hoosiers. 1si supports state policies that build and maintain critical roads, with the funding of these projects to be borne by those who benefit from them the most.
- *Support the Southeast Regional Logistics Council Strategic Plan*: Coordinated by Conexus Indiana, 1si supports 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 three specific project areas:
  - » *Widening/Improving of Highway 62 from I-265 to Charlestown*: The development of the River Ridge Commerce Center, along with the anticipated growth in the area due to the East End Crossing, is creating congestion that will likely hamper future industrial, commercial and residential development in the area if not addressed comprehensively.
  - » *Development of Connector Road from I-65 Exit 7 to River Ridge*: Encourage the design and construction of a new road west from Exit 7 from I-65, passing the Clark Regional Airport, and connecting to Highway 62 at the River Ridge Commerce Center to realize economic development resulting from enhanced movement of cargo.
  - » *Maintenance of Locks and Dams Along the Ohio River*: Delayed or over-due maintenance of the locks and dams along the Ohio River pose 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 Broadband Ready Community Certification, a tool to exceed High Speed Internet Access expansion to encourage broadband development in our communities.

- *Ohio River Aquifer Study*: 1si supported 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 in the groundwater resources shared by Indiana and Kentucky. After the 2017 passage of legislation to create an interstate groundwater commission, 1si encourages the administration to not only move forward with this commission, but also supports efforts to pass similar legislation in Kentucky.

## 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:

- *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 for local governments to use tax increment financing mechanisms for measurable economic development gains is essential for state and local competitiveness.
- *Simplify the Tax and Regulatory Environment*: Federal and state business taxes and the regulatory environment are complex and burdensome on businesses of all sizes. 1si's advocacy efforts will ensure that the voice of local business is heard in these state and national debates.
- *Incentive Reciprocity*: Both Indiana and Kentucky provide incentives to new and existing companies to create new job opportunities. However, both states only allow credit for jobs that are filled by residents of the respective state, creating a disadvantage to hiring individuals who live in the region. 1si will advocate for reciprocity so that hiring incentives can 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.
- *Craft and Artisan Alcohol Laws*: The State of Indiana should recognize craft and artisan alcohol producers as small businesses and remove barriers to entry, including regulatory burdens and other inhibitors to growth. These enterprises are essential components of our local tourism economy, and 1si supports state regulations that recognize their importance as small businesses.

## 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 the 2015, the State of Indiana awarded \$42 million to three regions that formed Regional Development Authorities (RDAs) and applied for funding. These regions are now leveraging these state funds to attract private investment to increase their tax bases as well