

AMES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The **Ames Chamber of Commerce** exists to promote economic growth and community development in Ames and the surrounding area. Our mission is to provide our members services that strengthen the economic vitality in Ames and enhance the quality of life in our community. It is important for the Chamber to work within the political realm to advocate positions important to the business community.

The state legislative priorities listed in this document reflect the opinions of membership as measured by the responses of the Chamber's annual Legislative Survey and from discussions with the Ames Chamber Board of Directors and like-minded partner organizations in our community, state and nation.

These priorities set the direction for our advocacy efforts for the 2012 Session of the Iowa State Legislature.

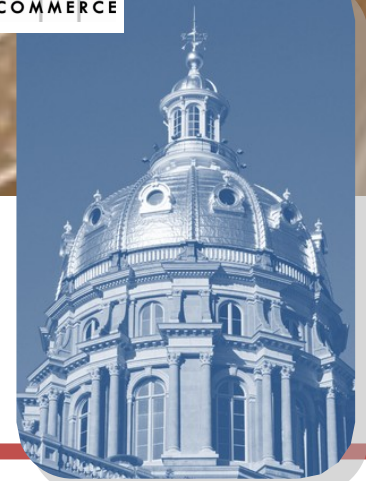


AMES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2012 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



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BUSINESS CLIMATE

The Ames Chamber believes that in order to maintain and enhance Iowa's appeal to current and potential businesses, it is essential that Iowa provide a positive economic environment. The Chamber welcomes the creation of the newly formed Iowa Economic Development Authority and the Iowa Partnership for Economic Progress. This public-private partnership will be on the forefront of identifying business and industry to bring to Iowa. Their proactive approach will play an important role in future job creation and business attraction.

The Chamber supports continued funding for research parks and regional business accelerators and encourages maintaining research and development (R&D) tax credits.

Story County's initiative to create a tax increment financing (TIF) district is welcomed by the Chamber as an opportunity to encourage economic development throughout the county.

The Ames Chamber supports the expansion of renewable fuels and wind production, while maintaining non-mandated incentives to consumers and industries to use such products.

The Chamber upholds the preservation of Iowa's "Right to Work" Laws.

TAXES

The Chamber believes Iowa's tax code should encourage business growth and reflect the principles of equity, neutrality, simplicity, and predictability.

Commercial & Industrial Property Taxes

Currently Iowa's urban property tax rate and Iowa's commercial property tax rate are both ranked 2nd highest in the nation. Iowa's urban industrial property tax rate is 8th highest in the nation.* To compete with other states, regions and countries, Iowa must improve its business tax climate.

*Source: Minnesota Taxpayers Association

The Ames Chamber supports commercial and industrial property tax relief that is permanent and substantive. The Chamber encourages development of a simplified property tax system that is equitable to all classes of property and more competitive with neighboring states.

However, consideration must be made to the impact such a relief proposal may have on the budgets of local government. It isn't in the best interest of our community for our local government to be forgotten in this process. The Chamber supports addressing unfunded mandates, pensions and other measures to help offset rollback effects on local governments. Backfill measures may be needed to assist local government.

Personal Income Tax

In order for Iowa to attract additional economic development, the Chamber feels Iowa's personal income tax code needs to be simplified. Streamlining and flattening the personal income tax would encourage outside businesses to choose Iowa and provide relief to Iowa's existing businesses and residents.

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE & INFRASTRUCTURE

In order to reduce the cost of government, the Chamber encourages the State of Iowa to evaluate the concept of subcontracting appropriate public services to the private sector in order to reduce state expenditures or to avoid unfair competition with the private sector.

Investment in Iowa's public roadway system is needed to support economic growth. The Chamber supports the funding formula for surface transportation funding recently established by the Transportation Investment Moves the Economy in the 21st Century Fund (TIME-21). The Chamber supports new or alternative sources of revenue, including a possible fuel tax increase, so long as the cap on TIME-21

is removed so that any new revenues will not be distributed under the old Road Use Tax Fund (RUTF) formula.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

A vibrant, educated workforce is vital to economic development in the Ames area. The Chamber welcomes innovative ideas that will educate, attract, and retain a quality workforce.

The Chamber supports outcome-based student achievement standards and the improvement and enhancement of existing technological tools to better connect the workforce needs of businesses to school curriculums.

In order to properly train and retool workers to meet the skills demanded of Iowa businesses, the Chamber believes the state should continue to encourage partnerships between Iowa's business and industry and community colleges and other educational institutions. The Chamber supports continued funding for job training programs which will maintain Iowa's competitive advantage.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Research and development at Iowa State University (ISU) is unlocking new economic potential in plant and animal products and their utilization, including stimulating new kinds of value-added products and processes. The Ames Chamber supports continued funding of ISU's renewable energy and value-added agriculture initiative. ISU's research will result in economic development and job creation in the state.

The Chamber also supports continued funding of ISU's existing economic development units. Through ISU's Institute for Physical Research and Technology, Small Business Development Centers, and the ISU Research Park, the University fosters new technologies, grows new businesses, and educates entrepreneurs.