



2019 State Legislative Priorities

Ames Chamber of Commerce Mission

The mission of the Ames Chamber of Commerce is to provide our members services that strengthen the economic vitality and enhance the quality of life throughout Story County.

Ames Chamber of Commerce Public Policy Program Mission

To promote unity in the business community and encourage Chamber involvement through informed and active participation as public policy advocates for local business and industry.

2019 State Legislative Overview

The Ames Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice for promoting economic growth policies and initiatives on behalf of the Ames and Story County business community. Each year, the Ames Chamber of Commerce crafts strategic legislative priorities to advocate for the ongoing strengthening and growth of Ames, Story County, Central Iowa, and the State of Iowa's economic and community development efforts.

For the 2019 legislative session, the Ames Chamber of Commerce is not only focused on economic growth, we will invest considerable time and effort to find ways to attract people to Iowa, and once they are here, retain them as life-long Iowans. There is no single solution for Iowa's slow population growth, but as the Ames Chamber works to attract talent and residents to Ames and Story County, whether a policy will assist or hamper our goal of growing Iowa's population will be a key consideration when assessing the merits of any policy proposal.

The Ames Chamber of Commerce maintains its commitment to improving Iowa's business climate through the improvement of the state's economic and community development environment. One way the Governor and Legislature can do this is by continuing to modernize and strengthen Iowa's income and property tax systems and the financial assistance tools associated with each.

In addition, workforce and housing are two of the primary challenges facing employers today. Therefore, the Governor and Legislature need to develop policies and strategies to grow Iowa's population and enhance workforce and housing options throughout the state. This needs to be done in a prudent manner that includes all applicable parties.

Other key policy issues for the Ames Chamber of Commerce in the 2019 State Legislative Session include protecting the property tax backfill, improving Iowa's transportation and infrastructure network, and extending the Secure an Advanced Vision for Education sales tax penny for school infrastructure.

To advance these priorities, the Ames Chamber of Commerce will collaborate with Iowa State University, the City of Ames, Story County, our community school districts, Des Moines Area Community College, and our chamber and economic development partners throughout the state.

2019 Ames Chamber of Commerce State Legislative Priorities

Economic Development Environment

- Protect and strengthen Iowa's income and property tax systems and the corresponding financial assistance tools.
- The state needs to provide adequate resources to Iowa Economic Development Authority, Iowa Workforce Development, the Iowa Department of Education, K-12 education, Iowa State University, Des Moines Area Community College, and institutions of higher education throughout the state to address Iowa's workforce and economic and community development efforts.
- [Economic development assistance programs](#) and [tax increment financing](#) need to be protected and strengthened to keep Iowa competitive and continue to bring significant capital investment and high-quality jobs to the state.

Workforce Recruitment and Retention

- Workforce and housing are the primary challenges facing employers throughout Iowa.
- We must attract and retain the best and brightest and grow Iowa's population. To do so, the Governor and Legislature should explore new means of recruiting and retaining workers, and work with economic development organizations and professionals statewide to coordinate.
- Due to the high demand for the [Workforce Housing Tax Credit Program](#), it needs to be reformed to best serve Iowans. To improve the Program, the appropriation should be increased to \$40 million, it should be removed from the Iowa Economic Development Authority's tax credit cap, and the application process should be made competitive and merit based.
- Sufficient funding of [Future Ready Iowa](#), the [Last Dollar Scholarship Program](#) and [Iowa Employer Innovation Fund](#), and other career technical education/workforce programs is needed.

Property Tax Backfill

- [The property tax backfill](#) is a promise made to our local taxing entities and needs to be maintained. In FY2019, the backfill will provide \$1.317 million to Ames Community School District, \$973,210 to the City of Ames, and \$667,662 to Story County. In all, that equates to \$2,957,872 in local revenue.

Transportation and Infrastructure

- It is imperative that we build upon the progress made last Session to address Iowa's water quality needs by continuing to improve the state's water and wastewater infrastructure on a watershed basis, which will positively impact Iowans' quality of life.
- We support continued investment in Iowa's roads and bridges, water and wastewater, and energy and communications infrastructure that utilizes long-term planning, examination of innovative funding models, and aligns with any potential federal infrastructure proposals.

Secure an Advanced Vision for Education (SAVE) School Infrastructure Penny Sales Tax

- Extend [SAVE](#) to provide school districts the certainty needed to bond for new projects.
- With the current 2029 sunset, it is difficult for districts to pass 10-year bonds for projects.
- An extension of the tax could also allow schools to address other pressing needs and potentially address water quality or other statewide issues without raising taxes.

Contact us at www.AmesChamber.com or call us at 515-232-2310

