

will support and grow the regional economy, making the Greater Louisville region much more competitive in the global marketplace. 1si appreciates and supports involvement in this effort from all communities within the metro area.

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 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 member-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 both state and federal levels.

2016 ADVOCACY AGENDA

The role of One Southern Indiana in promoting a fiscally-stable, business-friendly environment transcends 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 2016 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:

- *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, as well as for students and mentors, and externships for teachers.

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 the Southeast Regional Logistics Council Strategic Plan:** Coordinated by Conexus Indiana, we support 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:
 - **Completion of the Ohio River Bridges Project:** While construction of the project is well underway, there are many details that 1si members and investors should stay abreast of to ensure that the long-term economic return on the state's investment will be realized.
 - **Widening/improving of Highway 62 from I-265 to Charlestown:** The development of River Ridge Commerce Center, along with the anticipated traffic 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 Airport Connector to River Ridge:** Encourage the design and construction of a new road west of the Clark Regional Airport connecting to Highway 62 at the River Ridge Commerce Center to realize economic development as a result of enhanced movement of cargo.
 - **Maintenance of locks and dams along the Ohio River:** Questionable 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. Additionally, we will assist all service providers and collaborative partners in the push for the expansion of these services to Southern Indiana.
- **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 in 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 in 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 impacts of tolling on the Ohio River Bridges project:** Specifically, 1si will 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.
- **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 is essential for our state and local competitiveness.
- **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 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.

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 the Indiana Economic Development Corporation's Regional Cities Program:** In the 2015 Indiana General Assembly authorized and appropriated funding awards to three regions across Indiana to implement collaborative plans for developing and maintaining attractive communities – communities where people want to live and work. Future funding commitments for this initiative would allow regional collaborations to build momentum so that local concerns could be addressed. 1si will continue to support incentives for regional cooperation.
- **Combined master planning document:** Both Clark and Floyd counties are working with master planning documents that are over 10 years old. 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.
- **Refresh 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 GLI's Regional Economic Development Organization:** Greater Louisville, Inc. has partnered with local economic development organizations within the metro area to accelerate regional economic growth and awareness both nationally and internationally. This partnership