

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.

- 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.

### 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.

## 2015 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 2015 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.
- Technical Certifications: We support and encourage efforts to increase the percentage of our population that has attained technical certifications 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, specifically as it relates to STEM education (science, technology, engineering and math) and work ethic programming.

## 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:

- 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.
- 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. Ensuring availability for all businesses is essential.
- 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.
- Erosion along the Ohio River in Clarksville: For decades, erosion of the bank in Clarksville has deteriorated highest and best use development opportunities along the Ohio River in Clarksville. Unless addressed, existing assets, including the historical George Rogers Clark Homestead, are threatened.

## 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 to improve.

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.

## 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 Initiative: In the 2015 session of the Indiana General Assembly, lawmakers will be discussing how to best support economic development efforts of cities and regions as these local entities outline plans for creating dynamic environments. 1si is coordinating a Southern Indiana Regional Cities Initiative in preparation for the state's support, and can play a role in supporting the initiative with members of the General Assembly.
- 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