



**Cedar Valley Legislative Agenda
for Economic Progress
2015 Legislative Policy Agenda**

Greater Cedar Valley Alliance & Chamber Legislative Policy Agenda 2015

The Greater Cedar Valley Alliance & Chamber has identified priorities in four main areas for the 2015 Iowa Legislative session: (1) Workforce Recruitment, Retention & Education, (2) Economic Development Program Support, (3) Improving Iowa's Tax Climate, and (4) Critical Physical Infrastructure Projects.

Education, recruitment and retention of workers is a top priority for business and as such, efforts to more closely align the skills required by Cedar Valley employers and the skills possessed by the current and future workforce must be pursued to ensure continued economic growth. All levels of education must be fully funded to achieve this outcome.

1. Support continued funding for the Iowa Jobs Training Program and for the workforce development, adult literacy and student financial aid programs in the Iowa Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund and other workforce training programs.
2. Promote the National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC), an assessment-based credential that gives employers and career-seekers a uniform, standard objective measure of key workplace skills.
3. Expand the Iowa Apprenticeship and Job Training program so companies hoping to expand or locate in Iowa will have a well-trained workforce.
4. Seek funding for community attractions as an integral piece of a workforce attraction and retention program aimed at improving quality of life in the Cedar Valley.
5. Support programs to provide incentives for veterans in the areas of education, job training and hiring to help service members transition to civilian life with the training and educational resources they need.
6. Advocate for fully funding educational opportunities at all levels – pre K-12, community colleges, Regents' universities, and at private colleges through the maintenance of the Iowa Tuition Grant program.
7. Continue to highlight STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), secure or expand its funding, and maintain the administrative control of the initiative at UNI.
8. Replace the current 20-year sunset on the local option sales tax for schools with a rolling 20-year sunset that would help schools bond for improvements by ensuring consistency of funding for the future.
9. Support the Board of Regents' new funding mechanism for state universities that emphasizes in-state student enrollments which will increase the share of Regent's funding that is allocated to UNI.
10. Support a modest tuition increase at state universities if advanced by the Board of Regents.
11. Evaluate immigration policies that could increase the number of workers in Iowa, possibly including offering incentives to refugees to live and work in the state, as well as other immigration strategies that would be under state control.
12. Protect the Iowa Core Curriculum, to place an emphasis on the need for standards and accountability in our pre-K-12 education system.

Economic development programs and incentives are necessary for economic growth in Iowa.

1. Support status quo funding for IEDA incentives to meet the Authority's request of the Legislature.
2. Fully fund and expand the Strategic Infrastructure Fund as it is the vehicle that would provide support to the Iowa Advanced Manufacturing Center at the TechWorks Campus.
3. Remove from code the current prohibition on modifying approved Iowa Reinvestment District Plans beyond 2018.
4. Support programs and initiatives for entrepreneurs that will foster their establishment and growth of businesses in the Cedar Valley.

5. Explore and establish programs that allow Iowa and its cities to compete head-to-head with the most successful locations to attract quality jobs, foster innovation, business growth and expansion.
6. Maintain state level incentives to promote business growth and new business locations.
7. Promote the *Advance Iowa* Economic Gardening network, designed to work with small and mid-size companies to enhance their growth.

Improving Iowa's tax climate and reducing the complexity of the state's tax system are essential to heightening the Cedar Valley's competitiveness for business growth and recruitment.

1. Reduce, simplify or eliminate corporate income tax.
2. Simplify and reduce the state's personal income tax.
3. Establish a consumables sales tax exemption that would relieve manufacturers from paying sales tax on supplies that are used in delivering their final products, for instance, oils and greases used in a manufacturing process.
4. Continue to advocate for fair and equitable property tax system.
5. Protect tax increment financing (TIF) and maintain maximum flexibility in its use as an essential economic development tool for use by city and county governments.
6. Support legislation that would allow cities and counties to self-fund general obligation bond debt so they can minimize fees and interest associated with the traditional bonding process.
7. Create a mechanism to allow for inter-school district and inter-governmental pilot programs aimed at increasing shared services among public entities in an attempt to increasing efficiency in the use of tax dollars.

Infrastructure, Transportation and Communications

1. Support the programs like *Connect Every Iowan* and ensure that any state barriers to the most rapid expansion of broadband infrastructure across political boundaries and between providers serving the Cedar Valley are removed.
2. Seek immediate state funding for the full reconstruction of University Avenue in Waterloo and Cedar Falls in order to facilitate and restore the flow of traffic and commerce throughout the Cedar Valley.
3. Support new or alternative sources of funding highway and bridge repair/replacement such as a fuel tax increase, or alternative means of levying taxes on fuel, for instance a sales tax on the total fuel purchase that will be based on the dollar amount of the purchase rather than the number of gallons purchased or a wholesale tax on fuel that would be passed on to consumers that would not be related to the amount of fuel purchased.
4. Explore alternative methods for funding transportation infrastructure construction that do not involve taxing fuel in recognition of greater fuel efficiency in today's vehicles.
5. Promote creation of direct state air service subsidies to retain and expand commercial passenger service in Essential Air Service communities such as, and including, the Waterloo Regional Airport.

**Approved by the Greater Cedar Valley Alliance & Chamber Board of Directors
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The Alliance & Chamber provides One Voice for Cedar Valley businesses and institutions, advocating for business and development friendly policies with local, state and federal agencies and elected officials. Our agendas also reflect important infrastructure, education, civic development, and quality of life initiatives that impact our attractiveness as a place to do business, live, learn, and build a career.

Steven J. Dust, CEcD
President/CEO
sdust@cedarvalleyalliance.com
(319) 232-1156

Steve Firman
Director of Government Relations
sfirman@cedarvalleyalliance.com
(319) 239-6067