



2020 ADVOCACY AGENDA

The role of One Southern Indiana (1si) in promoting a fiscally stable, business-friendly environment is deeply impacted by 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 2020 Advocacy Agenda, as presented, provides the basis for 1si Advocacy positions over the next 12 months. These positions will be monitored and supported while new 1si Advocacy policies and processes are implemented during the next several months. The goal of these policies is to further establish 1si as the voice for Southern Indiana businesses.

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. 1si will monitor and communicate on the following priority areas:

Coordinated Voice of the Demand Side of the Talent/Workforce Equation

Because of significant job growth in Southern Indiana and low unemployment rates, 1si members are experiencing difficulty in hiring talented individuals to fill the open positions within their organizations. This talent shortage is not limited to a particular industry sector— it is common to all employers. While there are several resource providers and partners working on the talent supply side, 1si has assumed our role as the voice of the demand side of the equation. We will engage in efforts to coordinate this voice on behalf of area employers.

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. These innovations should include both in-school and out-of-classroom programming for students and teachers.

Evaluating Public Funding for Schools

1si supports fiscally responsible investments in our education systems that result in quality educational opportunities for all learners. These investments must result in measurable increases towards establishing a competitive workforce. High-performing and competitive schools drive economic development, resulting in improvements for our workforce and our overall economy.

Licensure Reciprocity

With many of the region's companies operating across state lines, it is important for the region to maintain and attract talent. Indiana should pass legislation to authorize non-legal professionals and skilled trades to maintain their in-state licenses and practice in Kentucky. A seamless licensure process will benefit professionals, skilled trades, and employers as they provide services on both sides of the river. 1si not only encourages Indiana to move forward with licensure reciprocity, but also supports the initiation of similar efforts in Kentucky.

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 efforts to identify the critical gaps and develop recommendations for infrastructure that will support economic growth strategies for Southern Indiana. 1si will monitor and communicate on the following priority areas:

Development of Connector Road from I-65 Exit 7 to River Ridge

Encourage the design and construction of a new road west from Exit 7 from I-65, passing the Clark Regional Airport, and connecting to Highway 62 at the River Ridge Commerce Center to realize economic development resulting from enhanced movement of cargo.

Communications Infrastructure

Communications infrastructure is not always categorized as an essential service, but in today's environment, the lack of high-speed internet connectivity can severely limit growth of existing businesses, hamper the attraction of new businesses and resident workers and dissuade e-learning. 1si will assist all service providers and collaborative partners in the push for the expansion of these services within Southern Indiana.

Ohio River Aquifer Study

1si supported 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. After the 2017 passage of legislation to create an interstate groundwater commission, 1si encourages the administration to not only move forward with this commission, but also supports efforts to pass similar legislation in Kentucky.

Minimize Impact from Sherman Minton Bridge Project

1si acknowledges the need for the rehabilitating and painting project to extend the service life the Sherman Minton Bridge. We will actively seek updates and offer input to INDOT and project partners for assistance and understanding, with the goal of keeping communication channels open to resolve issues and concerns as they arise. Our goal is to minimize the economic impact to our business community.

BUSINESS-FRIENDLY INITIATIVES TO INCREASE INDIANA'S COMPETITIVENESS

Indiana has made great strides over the past decade to enhance the business friendliness of the state's fiscal policies. 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:

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 for measurable economic development gains is essential for state and local competitiveness.

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.

Brownfield Assistance

Redevelopment of abandoned or under-utilized properties present both an opportunity and a challenge to our local communities. Designations of much of our downtown areas as "Opportunity Zones" can enhance the attractiveness for redevelopment. An increased state focus to prioritize remediated properties in these areas can assist in creating new economic development opportunities as well as creating livability in areas that need additional assistance.

Training for Local Elected and Appointed Officials

The fiscal accountability requirements on local governments are increasingly complex. Elected and appointed officials at the local level should be properly trained on legal, procedural and reporting requirements early in their terms to ensure that proper techniques are instituted immediately as new officials take office. This will ensure economic security for local governments is protected before irreparable mistakes are made.

Provide Protections for Pregnant Workers

As Kentucky and 26 other states have provided legal clarity and guidance for employers in providing reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers, 1si encourages Indiana to be the next to adopt legislation that would help deter avoidable litigation and support workforce participation among women, in addition to improved health outcomes for mothers and babies.

Enhancing Treatment and Recovery Efforts

Employers and stakeholders in southern Indiana continue to monitor the detrimental effects of substance use disorders on the workforce. 1si encourages and supports the creation of innovative programs and funding designed to prevent, treat and support employees in the many facets of this epidemic.

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 monitor and communicate on the following priority areas:

Support the Our Southern Indiana Regional Development Authority

While Southern Indiana can gain more influence by working regionally, the lack of sustainable funding for the RDA's initiatives creates uncertainty for its future role in regional activity. 1si will continue to support incentives for regional cooperation and regional project funding.

Implement and Maximize Regional Benefits from the River Heritage Conservancy Plan

The River Heritage Conservancy is creating a Master Plan which puts forth a vision for a world-class park system along the Ohio River. 1si encourages the further planning, development and construction of this vision which will greatly add to Southern Indiana's quality of place.

Collaboration for Regional Benefit

1si will continue to partner with other like-minded business organizations to unify our regional efforts of strengthening our regional economic stability and impact. Through these partnerships we create the opportunity to share ideas and information as well as forge greater collective influence on matters of common concern. It is time for our region take steps to solidify and develop an emboldened advocacy effort to ensure a strong presence at the Indiana Statehouse.

Expand Direct Air Service from SDF

1si is supportive of the Louisville Regional Airlift Development (LRAD) in its quest to develop new nonstop air service routes from Louisville International Airport (SDF) as the resulting economic development opportunities will benefit the entire region. Individuals, businesses, and other organizations – including the State of Indiana -- can support this drive by making a tax-deductible pledge to provide funds to be used for minimum revenue guarantees to support the launch of the recently announced direct route to Los Angeles as well as new air service destinations from SDF.

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 Four 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 sessions with elected officials at three primary levels of government.