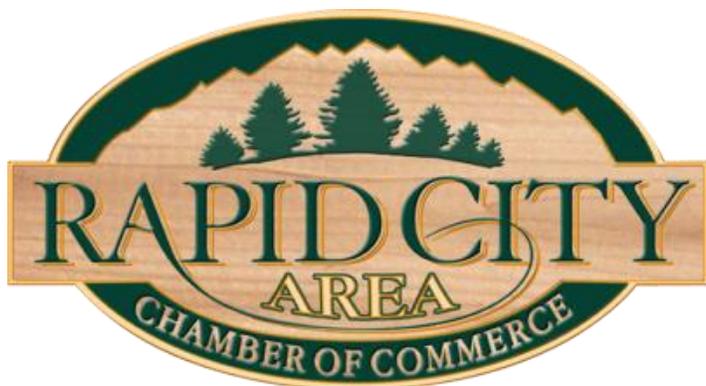


Rapid City Area Chamber of Commerce

Public Policy Manual

2019



Chamber Mission

Our Chamber is a membership organization of businesses and professional leaders dedicated to promoting a strong business climate in the Black Hills and enhancing the quality of life for members.

Vision Statement

Our Chamber is the leading advocate for business growth in the Rapid City area.

Core Values Statement

- A. Advocate for issues that foster a favorable business climate.
- B. Improve the economic well-being and quality of life in the Black Hills area.
- C. Ensure our members receive a benefit for their membership investment.
- D. Operate professionally, at a standard required to earn and retain a 5-Star rating.
- E. Maintain positive and collaborative relationships with municipal, county, state and federal governments and their representatives.

Strategic Goals

- A. Work to grow all private industry sectors.
- B. Support and advocate for all sectors of the visitor industry.
- C. Proactively support military affairs.
- D. Support the role of education in helping individuals reach their highest and best potential.
- E. Recognize and promote agriculture and natural resources industries.

- F. Collaborate with local, regional and state economic development agencies.

Public Policy Principles

The Chamber of Commerce advocates for public policies consistent with our Mission, Vision and Value Statements. Below are our public principles that provide a foundation for identifying priorities and positions on legislative and other public policy matters. The Chamber is a non-partisan organization and does not endorse candidates for public office. The Chamber welcomes elected officials to comment and provide information on issues pending before the Public Policy Committee and the Chamber Board of Directors.



1. We believe in a free market, competitive economy as the most effective means of ensuring high levels of service, innovation and competitive pricing. Regulations, although sometimes necessary, should undergo stringent cost/benefit analysis to ensure compliance costs and requirements will not stifle private enterprise.
2. We support proactive business development and economic policies that create a more favorable business climate for our members and promote economic opportunity.
3. We support business property rights that allow for efficient management and operation of businesses.
4. We support responsible, efficient and effective government and public institutions that are transparent, accountable and fiscally responsible.
5. We promote quality of life issues that directly correlate to business and employee recruitment and retention.

Public Policy Platform

Government

The Chamber supports responsible, efficient and effective government and public institutions that operate in a transparent, accountable and fiscally responsible manner.

Infrastructure

The Chamber supports responsible and proactive policy that meets the growing demands on our aging infrastructure. Transportation is a core service of government that is critical for safe, efficient citizen mobility, further economic growth, and facilitating the efficient delivery of goods and services.

- The Chamber supports **proactive and reasonable policy and funding levels that fulfill the growing demands of our aging roads and bridges.**

Adopted November 2014

Economic Development

The Chamber supports results-oriented programs that attract industry development and growth, create a skilled workforce, and promote cooperative city, county, state and private efforts to maintain and attract businesses to the Black Hills area.

- The Chamber advocates for **continued funding and development of the Sanford Underground Research Facility.**

Adopted May 2003

- The Chamber supports the concept of **expanding the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, and believes the process for consideration and approval should be transparent and the project completed in a fiscally responsible manner.**

Adopted July 2012

- The Chamber supports the responsible **use of economic development tools such as tax increment financing districts to spur business and housing development.** We believe such **tools should be flexible in order to address the unique needs of South Dakota communities.**

Adopted December 2017

Workforce Development

The Chamber supports maintaining and developing new and innovative workforce development programs that both enhance and retain the current work force and attract new talent.

- The Chamber supports **technical school governance options that encourage engagement between the schools and the local business community** to better meet the workforce needs of regional employers.

Adopted February 2015

- The Chamber supports **innovative efforts and partnerships geared toward the development of affordable home ownership and rental opportunities for our growing workforce.**

Adopted December 2018

Tourism

The Chamber recognizes the significant economic impact tourism has to our area and advocates for legislation that enhances and grows the hospitality industry.

Education

The Chamber supports K-12, post-secondary and higher education as vital components of a strong local economy. Collaborative partnerships between the education system, businesses and other employers are necessary to prepare students to enter the workforce and compete in a global economy.

- The Chamber encourages the **adequate funding of our k-12 education systems through equitable means and responsible management with transparent and measurable benchmarks.**

Adopted May 2015

Taxation

The Chamber supports South Dakota’s regulatory and tax environment that attracts business development and growth. The business-friendly environment has proved successful in growing business throughout the state. The Chamber recognizes the need to generate revenue to support basic government needs. Therefore, we support responsible tax policy that generates funds necessary to support essential government services.

Energy

The Chamber supports secure, reliable and advanced energy development and distribution that allows for the production of energy sources, including conventional and alternative forms of energy. We support common sense regulations that allow the continued production and development of cost effective energy for our local businesses.

- The Chamber supports **the inclusion of biofuels as an important energy alternative and encourages woody biomass from federal lands, such as the Black Hills National Forest be included in the fuels standard definition of “renewable biomass”.** This expanded definition would give incentive to managing overstocked forests, utilizing slash piles from logging operations and allow for better utilization of sawmill residues.

Adopted December 2008

- The Chamber supports **legislation addressing climate change that includes an international solution, promotes accelerated development and deployment of greenhouse gas reduction technology, reduces barriers to the development of climate-friendly energy sources, promotes energy conservation and efficiency, and preserves American jobs and competitiveness of American industry.**

Adopted July 2009

- The Chamber encourages the development of domestic energy supplies and **supports the U.S Chamber of Commerce Partnership to Fuel America Initiative and the development of the Keystone XL Pipeline.**

Adopted August 2011

- The Chamber opposes **the Greenhouse Gas Rule as drafted by the EPA** due primarily to the cost impact to energy customers and supports the State of South Dakota’s efforts to modify this rule.

Adopted November 2014

Health Care

The Chamber supports policies that allow employers to provide high quality and affordable health coverage for employees and their families. Health care coverage remains a top priority for employers and often times one of the biggest challenges facing businesses.

Natural Resources

The Chamber supports responsible and proactive management in stewardship of our natural resources including the Black Hills to sustain long-term health and resiliency. The Black Hills is one of our region’s greatest economic assets with a thriving timber industry, a global tourism attraction, and outdoor recreation that provides a quality of life for our community.

- The Chamber encourages the federal government to **develop new funding mechanisms and policies that end the process known as “fire borrowing”, and increase funds and efficiencies to treat additional acres through forest management activities.**

Updated 2017

- The Chamber supports the **pro-active planning, funding, and implementation of comprehensive, landscape scale forest management activities** that reduce wildfire hazards and the risk of another mountain pine beetle epidemic in the Black Hills.

Updated 2017

Equality

The workforce challenges facing our business community create an opportunity for employers to embrace the diversity of our growing population. The incorporation of varied backgrounds and talents into the local workforce will aid the expansion of industry and economy. We encourage policies that promote a diverse workforce.

- The Chamber supports **personal driver's license exams by the Department of Transportation to be offered in a language other than English**. We recognize the important economic impact our immigrant population has on South Dakota's workforce and encourage policy that allows people to participate in the workforce in a safe and timely manner.

Agriculture

The Chamber recognizes the significant economic impact of an strong agricultural industry and advocates for equitable policies that support the sustainability and growth of our agricultural producers and businesses that support our producers.

Military

The Chamber supports the continued viability and growth of the military installations in our region as an effective deterrent to global conflict. We support our military men and woman and advocate for policy that honors their commitment to our country.

- The Chamber supports the cooperative initiatives of the local, state and federal leaders **to ensure that Ellsworth Air Force Base is retained as a viable component of our nation's military capabilities**.

Reaffirmed March 2013

- The Chamber encourages policy that recognizes the **significant contributions of military spouses in the workforce and creates efficiencies to make gaining employment timely and cost effective**.

Adopted December 2018

