



2009 Legislative Session

SHARED BUSINESS PRIORITIES of Clark County

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2009 SHARED BUSINESS PRIORITIES

The **Shared Business Priorities** of Identity Clark County, the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce and the Columbia River Economic Development Council **for the 2009 Washington Legislative Session** are based on the full understanding that we find ourselves in unique and challenging times economically, socially and politically. Given a forecasted deficit exceeding \$4 billion, we recognize our joint responsibility to temper our agenda. Only shared sacrifice will balance the budget while maintaining essential services. Simultaneously we must acknowledge that economic development investment will help lead us out of the current recession. We look to our legislative delegation and the Washington State Legislature to provide us with **tools to meet our transportation, economic development and education objectives**.

TRANSPORTATION

The Legislature has admirably persevered in its efforts to fund state transportation projects. To that end, this combined body asks for your support of the following:

- Advocate for funding for the proposed **Columbia River Crossing** (I-5 Bridge) project.
- **Protect funding** currently allotted through the Nickel Tax and Partnership Package designated for southwest Washington projects and seek appropriate options to complete the funding of those projects.
- Identify a stable mechanism for **funding local jurisdiction transportation projects**.
- Support funding and projects adding **road and rail access, safety and capacity for freight** mobility including rail and road projects at the Ports of Vancouver, Ridgefield and Camas-Washougal.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development tools requested and granted in the past have proven to provide the state with a **significant return on investment** as well as enhance the economic climate of the region by providing an appealing place to do business. To build on and maintain that appeal, the business community asks the Legislature to:

- Adopt **incentive legislation to increase the competitiveness of Washington State** as a location for renewable energy/clean technology industries.
- Adopt a **bona fide Tax Increment Financing tool** to stimulate the economy and incentivize private investment.
- Continue to support and strengthen the current **Local Infrastructure Financing Tool (LIFT)** and expand the **Main Street Program**.

EDUCATION

The Washington State Legislature has recognized that southwest Washington is the least served region of the state in higher education. Additionally, our K-12 graduates must be ready for college, career and life which can happen only through a well-supported K-12 public school system. As our population, employment and community needs expand, we ask the Legislature to:

- Fund the construction of the **WSU Vancouver Applied Technology Building and Washington Technology Center Laboratory**.
- Fund the second round of **capital investment for Innovation Zones** including the Steinmueller Innovation Park at WSU Vancouver.
- The significant growth of the **Running Start** student population has had a severe impact on the Clark College budget with only partial funding for full time equivalent students. Support a policy change that will allow Washington State community and technical colleges to count Running Start students toward their state enrollment targets and increase funding for the future.



The business community of Clark County has provided a united voice and southwest Washington Legislators have been receptive and supportive. **Southwest Washington has enjoyed successes because of the team work this region demonstrates in both the public and private sectors. We thank you.**