



Klamath County  
Chamber of Commerce

Government Affairs Committee

2011- 2012

Public Policy Agenda

***Klamath County Chamber of Commerce***  
***2011 - 2012 Government Affairs Policy Agenda***

As the voice of business in Klamath County, the Klamath County Chamber of Commerce is committed to keeping Klamath County competitive and improving the business climate. One of the best ways we can achieve this goals is through the legislative process. The Chamber's Government Affairs Committee (GAC), created at the direction of the Chamber Board to advise and take action on legislative issues, is proud to work on behalf of the membership to advocate policies and legislation that contribute to the growth and prosperity of Klamath County.

***Policy Agenda Statement of Purpose***

***The Klamath County Chamber of Commerce advocates for a business climate that is conducive to business retention and expansion, and believes the regulatory environment must be balanced and not burdensome for business.***

The agenda is organized into the following categories:

*Business Creation, Retention, Expansion and Recruitment*

*Education and Workforce Development*

*Environment, Energy and Regulation*

*Healthcare*

*Kingsley Field Retention and Expansion*

*Transportation and Infrastructure*

*Immigration*

Under each category are state, federal and local priorities. To find out more or to get involved in the Chamber's Government Affairs efforts, sign up for GAWatch, the Chamber's advocacy newsletter. GAWatch provides regular updates on issues monitored by the GAC as well as alerts on issues and legislation. Sign up through the Chamber's website at [www.klamath.org](http://www.klamath.org).

## *Developing the Agenda*

Each year, the GAC will identify, monitor and advocate for top legislative priorities. The planning process will begin with a membership survey asking for input to identify key issues. The GAC will then set priorities for the coming year and develop a Government Affairs Public Policy Agenda to be presented to the membership and Board of Directors for final input and board adoption.

The GAC also looks for issues that may be unique to the business community in Klamath County. Any Chamber member interested in government affairs can help develop the GAC agenda by forwarding thoughts, ideas or concerns to the Chamber office at [GovAffairs@klamath.org](mailto:GovAffairs@klamath.org).

### Implementation:

Once the agenda is adopted, the GAC and Chamber staff will communicate priority issues to local, state and federal officials through the following means:

1. **Contact with Elected Officials:** The Chamber maintains an active relationship with County and City elected representatives, State and Federal delegations and their staffs. The Chamber meets with appropriate elected officials on an ongoing basis to discuss issues impacting the business community.
  
2. **Legislative Reception:** The Chamber will host legislative receptions for local, state and federal elected officials. The timing of each event shall be within the first 45 days of legislative session opening or officials being sworn into office. The legislative agenda will be distributed to all attendees at the event. Those officials not in attendance will receive the legislative agenda by mail.
  
3. **Chamber staff and GAC members will attend local meetings of elected bodies whenever appropriate and act on behalf of the membership**

4. From time to time the GAC will send legislative alerts and calls for action to the membership as appropriate to ask for letters, emails and telephone calls to elected officials on subjects outlined in the policy agenda.

2011 - 2012 Government Affairs Committee:

Chairperson: Dan Keppen, Dan Keppen & Associates

Joe Spendolini, Business Consultant

Toby Freeman, Pacific Power

Kelley Minty Morris, Citizens for Safe Schools

Randy Shaw, Coldwell Banker/Holman Premier Realty

Trey Senn, Klamath County Economic Development Association

Stan Gilbert, Klamath Youth Development

Jodi Kucera, Mia & Pia's Pizzeria and Brewhouse

Mike Stier, Optilux Design

## **Government Affairs Policy Agenda 2011- 2012**

### **Business Creation, Recruitment, Retention and Expansion**

The Klamath County Chamber of Commerce supports legislation that prioritizes efforts to expand existing business and industry and attract new business, industry and jobs to Klamath County. In particular, the Chamber supports the expansion of growth clusters including; renewable energy production, medical services, natural resources, agriculture, manufacturing and the hospitality industry.

The Klamath County Chamber of Commerce supports legislation that positively impacts the profitability of local businesses and will actively oppose legislation, regulation and ordinances that negatively impact local business profitability.

### **Education and Workforce Development**

Mobilizing the resources and leadership necessary to achieve excellence in academics and career preparation is one of the top priorities of the Chamber. The Chamber will advocate changes necessary in primary and secondary schools to prepare all students for the careers of the future and work in partnership with organizations focused on workforce development and training.

Priorities Include:

- Opposing any effort that does not fully fund public education on a fair and equitable basis for all children.
- Working with partners to improve funding for post secondary schooling in Klamath County and the State of Oregon as a means to improve statewide per capita income and train the workforce of tomorrow.

## **Environment, Energy and Regulation**

The Klamath County Chamber of Commerce will advocate for environmental regulations that encourage and support a growing economy while balancing and protecting the region's quality of life. Environmental legislation should not unnecessarily increase the administrative burden, result in unnecessary regulations, project delays or become cost prohibitive to business or economic investment in Klamath County.

Priorities Include:

- Urging the development of a comprehensive environmental and energy policy that encourages wise use and management of natural resources.
- Working to ensure that Federal and State environmental regulations and legislation are based on widely accepted science, and that economic or community impact is part of any regulation review or new study.
- Supporting the development of a comprehensive energy policy at the federal level to reduce the country's dependency on foreign oil.
- Partnering with local organizations in efforts to reduce air emissions and improve the region's air attainment status.
- Working with local governments to ensure a positive business climate with a special focus on ensuring business license fees and regulations are not over burdensome to business.

## **Healthcare**

The rising cost of healthcare directly impacts business. The Chamber will work to reduce healthcare costs for local businesses and educate the membership and community on healthcare issues, for example; the Chamber's Healthcare Impact Workshop in September of 2010.

Healthcare Priorities Include:

- Opposing any legislation that includes employer mandates and surtaxes on small business. Additionally, the Chamber supports:
  - Incentives for employers to create wellness plans

- Medical liability/tort reform
- The ability to purchase insurance across state lines
- Adoption of information technologies to establish electronic medical records, decision support mechanism and claims processing.

### **Kingsley Field Retention and Expansion**

Kingsley Field directly employs approximately 1000 people in the Klamath Basin and its direct impact on the local economy surpasses \$86 million. The Chamber will support the ongoing mission at Kingsley Field and proactively partner to seek expansion of the mission and facility.

### **Land Use Planning**

The Chamber advocates for the adoption of land use policies that promote growth, and will work with County and City governments to promote better coordination and communications throughout Klamath County. The Chamber will also work to develop more uniform and consistent zoning regulations throughout Klamath County.

### **Transportation & Infrastructure**

Modern, up-to-date infrastructure must be maintained for the region to effectively compete in the global marketplace. Without the ability to move goods and services to customers, businesses cannot compete and succeed.

Priorities Include:

- Promoting a comprehensive regional strategy for Hwy 97 that focuses on moving goods and services in a safe and efficient manner, improving recreational opportunities, increasing tourism traffic, and creating supportive partnerships from Weed, CA to Mt. Hood, OR.
- Supporting public policies that encourage the deployment of next-generation broadband networks, maintain affordability, and apply consistent regulation to competing technologies and services.

- Supporting the development of a new comprehensive federal plan to address the infrastructure and transportation needs of the nation, to ensure the effective and efficient movement of commerce and plans for future increased capacity.
- Continuing to proactively work to expand low cost air service to the area and position the Klamath Falls Airport as a major entry point for Klamath County and Southern Oregon.

### **Immigration**

The Chamber supports comprehensive immigration efforts at the federal level to ensure a uniform approach and immigration laws that are fair and balanced. These laws must meet the needs of a growing economy and the test of common sense.

## **Federal Elected Officials serving Oregon**

### Senator Ron Wyden

Washington DC Address:

223 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510

1.202.224.5244

E-mail: <http://wyden.senate.gov/contact>

Web: <http://wyden.senate.gov>

Local contact information:

1220 SW 3rd Ave., Ste. 585, Portland OR 97204

503.326.7525

### Senator Jeff Merkley

Washington DC Address:

B 40B Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510

1.202.224.3753

E-mail: [senator@merkley.senate.gov](mailto:senator@merkley.senate.gov)

Web: <http://merkley.senate.gov>

Local contact information:

121 SW Salmon St., Ste. 1250, Portland, OR 97204

503.326.3386

### U.S. Representative Greg Walden

SOUTHERN OREGON OFFICE:

843 East Main Street, Ste 400

Medford, OR 97504

Main: 541-776-4646

Fax: 541-779-0204

Toll free: 800-533-3303

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE:

2182 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

Main: 202-225-6730

Fax: 202-225-5774

## **State Elected Officials serving Klamath County**

Governor John Kitzhaber

160 State Capitol  
900 Court Street  
Salem, Oregon 97301-4047

Phone: Governor's Citizens' Representative Message Line  
503-378-4582 Fax 503-378-6827

Senator Doug Whitsett

District: 28  
Capitol Phone: 503-986-1728  
District Phone: 541-883-4006  
Capitol Address: 900 Court St NE, S-303, Salem, OR, 97301  
District Office Address: 23131 N. Poe Valley Road, Klamath Falls, OR, 97603  
Email: [sen.dougwhitsett@state.or.us](mailto:sen.dougwhitsett@state.or.us)  
Website: <http://www.leg.state.or.us/whitsett>

Representative Bill Garrard

District: 56  
Capitol Phone: 503-986-1456  
District Phone: 541-882-0490  
Capitol Address: 900 Court St NE, H-480, Salem, OR, 97301  
District Office Address: 5845 Basin View Drive, Klamath Falls, OR, 97603  
Email: [rep.billgarrard@state.or.us](mailto:rep.billgarrard@state.or.us)  
Website: <http://www.leg.state.or.us/garrard>

Representative Mike McLane

District: 55  
Capitol Phone: 503-986-1455  
Capitol Address: 900 Court St NE, H-385, Salem, OR, 97301  
Email: [rep.mikemclane@state.or.us](mailto:rep.mikemclane@state.or.us)  
Website: <http://www.leg.state.or.us/mclane>