



2014 Legislative Agenda

Approved: December 10, 2013

The following is a summary of state legislative priorities adopted by the Greater Spokane Valley Chamber of Commerce which address important needs in the community we serve. In addition to these specific priorities, we continue to support efforts to advance economic development. We also support efforts to address costs and access to healthcare.

Knowing that state funds are extremely limited, we have selected specific issues for attention and a limited number of funding projects that we believe will have the greatest positive impact on communities in the Spokane Valley as well as the Spokane Region. We urge the legislature to refrain from imposing any new taxes and fees on businesses in Washington during the current economic conditions. Government should be efficient and effective and encourage innovative and alternative methods for such things as workers' compensation insurance.

High Priority Issues:

Business Climate: We support efforts to improve the business climate in our state by reforming permitting processes, workers compensation, unemployment insurance and prevailing wage requirements for construction.

Transportation:

- **North South Corridor** – Supports WSDOT's funding request \$750 million for the design and construction of an interim connection between I-90 and Francis Avenue.
- **I-90 Barker Road to Harvard Road** – \$89 million for design and reconstruction of three lanes of I-90 from Barker Road to Harvard Road including the reconstruction of the Barker and Harvard Road interchanges.
- **Bridging the Valley** – We support continuing the project to remove at-grade rail crossings due to increased rail traffic in the Valley, with particular emphasis on the Barker Road project as the most immediate priority.
- **Maintenance and Preservation** – Fund necessary projects to maintain and preserve roads and bridges.
- **Appleway Trail** – We advocate funding to support the City of Spokane Valley's plan to complete this pedestrian thoroughfare that will eventually connect University Road to the city's eastern border.

Education:

● **K-12 Education**

Fully Fund Basic Education – Based on the WA State Supreme Court's McCleary decision, finding that the state is not meeting its obligation to fully fund K-12 education, we support efforts to find solutions the state's court-ordered obligations while protecting other programs vital to school districts in eastern WA.

Levy Equalization – We support levy equalization as necessary to fund education in our West Valley, Central Valley, East Valley and Freeman School districts and as a way to maintain quality education throughout the state. The potential of any new proposal needs to be evaluated in terms of a negative impact on existing funding to schools.

Charter Schools – To be both accountable and innovative toward needed improvements, our school boards need flexibility and reduced bureaucratic entanglement to meet the needs of local students, and we believe legislative action toward this end must have an equitable impact for all students in our state, not merely students in a few select schools.

● **Higher Education Funding**

Keep College Tuition Affordable – We support holding the line on tuition costs at area colleges and universities so that more students can complete 2 and 4 year degrees to become a competitive part of the local and regional workforce.

Graduate Medical Education Program at Riverpoint Campus – We support the continued Development of medical education, health sciences graduate education and biomedical research at WSU Spokane. We support the request for funding to expand the WWAMI program to allow for 20 second year medical students per year and a one-time funding for the purchase of scientific instrumentation needed to support modern instruction and research.

Science I Building - We support EWU's capital funding request to replace the current Science building with a new facility with needed lab space and technology to address the increasing demand for sciences at EWU to support engineering and health care related degree programs.

● **Community Projects (Capital Funding)**

Phase II Spokane Valley Tech Center – We support the request for \$2.5 million in funding to complete this approved branch campus for the Spokane Skills Center. Funds will complete the project which was begun with local funding and will ready the facility for aerospace and advanced manufacturing training to serve up to 500 FTE.

Phase III Spokane Valley Tech Center – We support the request for \$1 million to build Phase III of this training center.