

The Oklahoma Professional Economic Development Council (OEDC) is an association of 180+ economic development professionals throughout the state of Oklahoma who support efforts to market the State, regions and communities as places where people want to live, work and invest in Oklahoma.

Our members are advocates for a prosperous economy in Oklahoma and strive to be active economic development resources for state elected officials and leaders.

OEDC supports the efforts of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce as the leading recruitment organization for the state of Oklahoma as well as the activities of the Governor's Economic Development Marketing and International Teams. We also work closely with The State Chamber lobby team in developing, implementing and educating citizens about legislative issues in order to maintain a profitable business climate.



# 2012

*Oklahoma*

# OEDC

*Professional Economic Development Council*

## Legislative Agenda

*“The Economic Development  
Resource for Oklahoma”*

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OEDC strives to work hand-in-hand with legislative leadership in efforts to allow Oklahoma to remain competitive in recruitment, retention and growth of industry. Our **2012 Legislative Agenda** was put together with careful thought and consideration of all 180+ members. We realize that with the state's budget shortfalls, legislative leaders will be challenged more now than ever when making decisions on legislative issues. OEDC stands ready to assist and provide expertise when asked.

## Top Three Legislative Priorities:

### **1. Economic Development Incentives - Investment and Job Creation**

- Fund the Governor's Quick Action Closing Fund enabling the state to respond quickly to economic opportunities and compete effectively.
- We need economic development incentives that are transparent and are fiscally responsible for continued growth of business across the state. The economic development profession is supportive of reviewing economic incentives to ensure they are being used appropriately in attracting and growing industry, by not only focusing on creating jobs but taking a look at capital asset and investment into the communities that make up Oklahoma.
- Protect the current objectives of Tax Increment Financing as a primary economic development tool.

### **2. Education and Workforce Development Training – Creating a Quality Workforce**

- Economic development growth must be coupled with education and training. As economic development professionals, we struggle daily with the need to have a skilled workforce and support efforts to improve Oklahoma's workforce and education system:
- Supports the development of a strong workforce by ensuring that Oklahoma's workforce delivery and training programs are the best in the nation and meet the skills needed by employers.
- Support ongoing efforts of the entire education system (common education; institutions of higher learning; and career technology centers) and the business community to assure that what is taught in the classroom is relevant to Oklahoma's current and future workforce needs. Programs include, but are not limited to, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Training for Industry Programs (TIP) and Certified Ready Certificates/Communities (CRC), i.e., WorkKeys, Key Train.

- Support a performance based system for educators and the incorporation of career awareness programs into the common education system while allowing local school districts the flexibility of lengthening the school year.

### **3. Workers Compensation – Alternative Coverage and Equivalent Benefits**

- We support legislation that will allow Oklahoma employers to obtain alternative coverage in providing workers' compensation, as long as they provide equivalent benefits to protect their workers.

## Areas of Continued Focus:

The items below are areas/tools we feel should still be kept in mind for Oklahoma's economic development climate:

### **Transportation**

- Support the passage of the Bridge Improvement and Turnpike Modernization Plan that would, upon completion, bring the number of currently known structurally deficient highway bridges to less than 1%.
- Develop a competitive fee based system and expedited payment process for oversized and overweight freight permits to encourage commerce.
- Develop a long-term statewide transportation plan that addresses all needs in the state including, but not limited to, the commercial, industrial and distribution needs of Oklahoma businesses and communities.

### **Research and Technology**

- Find creative ways to protect the states investment of research dollars to grow new companies.
- Explore ways that appropriate agencies can utilize the Oklahoma Enterprise Research and Investment Endowment to fund and match grants for technology investments in leading edge technologies to help transform Oklahoma's rural and urban economies. Oppose attempts to raid the fund to shore up general revenue.

### **Water**

- Ensure the revised Comprehensive Water Plan meets the needs of Oklahoma's citizens and assures adequate water to grow our state's economy.

### **Energy**

- OEDC supports the existing oil and gas industry and the increased CNG and wind infrastructure statewide. We realize that there is a need for sound policies to support growth of all energy industries.