



# 2010 Business and Quality of Life Agenda

**PURPOSE STATEMENT:** *The Chamber advocates for business success and regional economic growth by promoting business-friendly policies and funding decisions on behalf of its members to local, state and federal governmental officials.*


**NOTE:** *Letters used on this document do not reflect a specific order of importance, but are there as a reference tool.*

	Local	State	Federal	Arts, Culture and Tourism	Workforce Development	Core City/Urban Develop	Education and Training	Environment	Legislation and Regulations	Regionalism	Transportation	Healthcare
<b>Core City and Urban Development</b>												
A. Participate in revision of the Kalamazoo City Charter including review and research on the Kalamazoo mayor election process.	L					●			●	●		
<b>Education and Student Development</b>												
A. Develop partnerships to increase enrollment in colleges and universities and to retain graduates within the region.	L	S			●		●		●	●		
B. Encourage businesses to engage with area schools to increase graduation rates while ensuring graduates are prepared to either enter the work force and /or college or other institution of higher education.	L				●		●					
C. Support State reforms that provide tools for local school boards to stretch shrinking financial resources through consolidations, operating efficiencies and cost savings measures.	L				●		●					
D. Promote state higher education funding formulas that increase the per student allocation for regional higher educational institutions: Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo Valley Community College, without increasing taxes on Michigan citizens and businesses.	L	S	F		●		●		●	●		
E. Engage where appropriate to ensure children are prepared to start school.	L	S			●		●					
<b>Environmental</b>												
A. Support a fair and equitable solution to addressing the problem of air pollution transport across Lake Michigan regarding the EPA's enforcement of air quality standards in west Michigan while continuing to encourage the region's businesses to implement environmentally sustainable practices.	L	S	F		●	●	●	●	●			
B. Monitor and provide ongoing input regarding the Kalamazoo River and associated watershed cleanup issues and oppose importation of any additional PCB contaminated material into Kalamazoo County. Support effective or productive reuse of the former Allied Landfill site.	L	S	F	●	●			●	●	●		

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C. Support Brownfield redevelopment initiatives throughout the region	L	S	F			●		●	●	●		
D. Support state and federal environmental legislation, regulations and initiatives which: foster positive economic growth, promote reasonable and responsible use of our natural resources; support green and sustainable business practices.	L	S	F		●			●	●	●		●
<b>Healthcare</b>												
A. Support entities and legislation that develop and institute proactive wellness programs	L	S	F		●				●	●		●
B. Preserve current Michigan Tort Reform protections and oppose amendments that would target specific industries and or expand current protections afforded by the Consumer Protection Agency	L	S			●				●			●
C. Provide information resources and political support to develop affordable health care delivery systems for small- to mid-size employers	L	S	F		●				●			●
D. Promote wellness and health improvement activity amongst employees of southwest Michigan employers to reduce their health care costs, and ultimately the overall costs in the region.	L	S			●					●		●
E. Support legislation and private initiatives which promote the availability of affordable health insurance and containment of health care costs, and oppose legislation that does not accomplish these goals.			F		●				●			●
<b>Regionalism and Development</b>												
A. Obtain local representation on key state boards and agencies	L	S		●	●		●		●	●		
B. Eliminate barriers to consolidation, partnership opportunities, and efficiencies between units of government and educational entities, starting with reforming PA 312.	L									●		
C. Grow and maintain collaborative partnerships and shared regional goals amongst business, governmental and educational entities through the Southwest Michigan Alliance.	L	S	F	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
D. Support the further development, broader utilization and education of the countywide Geographic Information System (GIS)	L	S			●					●	●	
E. Reduce costs and jail populations through replacement of the county's aging and inadequate justice facilities, systems and programs, and supporting programs that reduce recidivism	L	S			●	●				●		●
F. Support funding opportunities to further develop the urban core residential and business development. Encourage partnerships, mergers and efficiencies between all governmental entities and eliminate state and otherwise imposed barriers to said partnerships.	L	S	F	●	●	●			●			●


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G. Promote support for water and sewer system infrastructure development and maintenance for all area municipalities.	L	S				●		●				
<b>Regulations and Legislation</b>												
A. Actively recruit and elect candidates for governmental offices within the region that support the Chamber's Business and Quality of Life Agenda -- particularly within the cities of Kalamazoo, Portage and the County of Kalamazoo	L	S	F		●				●	●		
B. Support efforts toward a more effective and efficient state government and demand a timely, balanced state budget supported by reforms and available tax revenues.		S							●			
C. Support the elimination of "Living Wage" initiatives here and throughout the state.	L	S					●		●	●		
D. Reduce costs to the state's correctional system and reduce criminal activity by supporting legislation that reduces and prevents recidivism such as MPRI and providing proper ID's for those returning to our communities	L	S		●	●				●			
E Support a reasonable and stable state business tax system that replaces the Michigan Business Tax and eliminates the surcharge.		S							●			
F. Actively oppose the federal "Card Check" legislation currently known as EFCA.	L	S	F		●				●	●		
G. Create 'date certain' regulatory policy – if a business makes a proper application they are granted the license by default if the agency doesn't respond by the date promised.		S						●	●			
H. Develop a position with regard to the constitutional convention ballot initiative and educate Chamber members and elected officials accordingly.	L	S							●	●		
I. Support the modification or elimination of term limits.		S							●			
J. Actively oppose the federal "Cap and Trade" legislation			F					●	●		●	
<b>Transportation</b>												
A. Support the development of a short- and long-term sustainable, stable funding mechanism for state and local transportation needs as identified by the state's Transportation Task Force, starting with an increase in the state fuel tax, which allows us to secure critical federal funding.	L	S			●	●					●	
B. Completion of the I-94 project – widening it to six lanes throughout Kalamazoo and Calhoun Counties and improving I-94's exit to Mattawan to accommodate current and future job growth for the area.	L	S	F		●	●				●	●	
C. Support expansion of air service and continued development of the	L	S	F	●	●					●	●	

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Kalamazoo/ Battle Creek International Airport in order to accommodate anticipated increased traffic and enhance local economic development and tourism.												
D. Support funding and completion of a sustainable plan for improvement of the U.S. 131 / U.S. 131 Business Route Interchange with south connectors to the Northside of Kalamazoo	L	S	F		●	●				●	●	
E. Support the completion of a U.S. 131 controlled access route from Kalamazoo (south) to I-80	L	S	F		●					●	●	
F. Support continued full funding for Amtrak at the state and federal level to create a Regional Hubs in the Kalamazoo / Battle Creek area to facilitate development of a high-speed rail system in the Midwest, specifically by improving commuter access to Chicago and Detroit.	L	S	F		●	●	●			●	●	
G. Support the ongoing operation of a cost-effective, efficient and accessible countywide public transit system	L	S	F	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●
H. Maintain and improve the region's major and primary roadways to maximize safety and efficiency and integrate effectively with I-94 and U.S. 131	L	S	F	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
I. Support the expansion, connectivity, and maintenance of a regional non-motorized trailway system.	L	S		●	●	●		●		●	●	
J. Support the funding for enhancement grants needed for the Eastern gateway of Kalamazoo to aid in traveler navigation.	L	S		●	●	●				●	●	
<b>Tourism, Arts and Culture</b>												
A. Encourage the State to create permanent, dedicated travel promotion funding from the state to effectively operate Travel Michigan -- the state's tourism arm.	L	S		●	●					●		
B. Support the downtown Kalamazoo Master Plan revitalization initiative, specifically the development of Arcadia Commons West and a downtown event center.	L	S		●	●	●				●		●
C. Support the development of the region as an arts and cultural resource	L	S	F	●	●	●			●			●
<b>Workforce Development</b>												
A. Recruit and retain high quality labor force in the region	L	S		●	●		●			●		●
B. Assist new residents and businesses locating to the region and retain those already here	L	S		●	●					●		●
C. Secure an effective relationship with the state of Michigan to obtain regional workforce development and training support	L	S			●		●			●		
D. Work collaboratively with business and higher education institutions within the region to increase the number of internships offered by	L	S			●					●		

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southwest Michigan businesses.												
G. Partner with the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians (Gun Lake Tribe) to create and fill new jobs within the region and connect other Chamber member firms as potential vendors for their ongoing operations. <i>(Moved to Workforce development – for follow-through on Tribe’s promise to contract with Chamber members)</i>	L				●					●		

Please visit the Chamber’s Web site [www.kazoochamber.com](http://www.kazoochamber.com) for more information.