



*Franklin-Southampton Area
Chamber of Commerce*

2011 *Legislative Priorities*

The Franklin-Southampton Area Chamber of Commerce is strongly committed to regional cooperation and economic development. We work on behalf of our 225 members and their several thousand employees to create the best possible business climate for our community. The following legislative priorities represent our key business concerns for the General Assembly's consideration:

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

On April 15, 2010, International Paper closed its paper mill, located in southern Isle of Wight County. This resulted in the loss of jobs for 828 people regionally (Isle of Wight County, City of Franklin, Southampton County & City of Suffolk). Joining with the Isle of Wight-Smithfield-Windsor Chamber of Commerce

- We **SUPPORT** displaced workers with enhanced economic and retraining opportunities.
- We **SUPPORT** Isle of Wight County and Franklin-Southampton economic development teams to minimize the impact of the closing by replacing jobs with other company prospects so that citizens are not displaced.
- We **SUPPORT** and work closely with a regional task force to assess the impact on the Isle of Wight and Franklin-Southampton business communities and discuss strategies for future success and growth; and we call on local, state, and federal services to support us in all of our efforts to replace jobs and industry.
- We **SUPPORT** the inclusion of Isle of Wight County in the joint Enterprise Zone to include the revenue share area located in Isle of Wight County.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **SUPPORT** restoration of funding to the Virginia Small Business Development Center Network, which provides vital support to area businesses. Immediate assistance for small businesses is crucial.
- **SUPPORT** additional programs to assist entrepreneurs and small businesses and provide incentives to encourage growth & expansion of our existing manufacturing industry.

TRANSPORTATION

- **SUPPORT** funding for the approved Route 58 Overpass in Southampton County.
- **SUPPORT** long-term solutions to meet critical transportation needs throughout the Commonwealth.
- **SUPPORT** revenue streams dedicated to the Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) approved projects.
- **OPPOSE** fees designated to fund transportation that disproportionately target the business community.

EDUCATION

- **SUPPORT** funding for Paul D. Camp & other VA community colleges to accommodate the increasing demands for services to address the current economic downturn locally, regionally & statewide.
- **SUPPORT** full state funding of program mandates as prescribed by the Commonwealth to be implemented in the public school system. Adequate funding for existing education responsibilities must be a priority.
- **SUPPORT** funding for Early Childhood Education.

ENVIRONMENT

- **SUPPORT** and encourage collaboration between Virginia and US Government representatives to obtain resources that will implement a plan of action to alleviate flooding caused by the Chowan River basin.

HEALTHCARE

- **SUPPORT** greater control of healthcare costs and the investigation of new strategies to provide affordable healthcare to all citizens of the Commonwealth.
- **SUPPORT** legislation and programs that assist businesses, particularly small businesses, facilitate the health care needs of their employees.
- **SUPPORT** caps on medical malpractice liability awards.

TAXATION

- **SUPPORT** a comprehensive tax reform that encourages economic growth and creates a pro-business climate that would ease the burden of taxation on small business.
- **SUPPORT** adopting a simple uniform taxing system. Oppose any measure that taxes businesses at a different level than residential property owners.
- **SUPPORT** equalization of City/County taxing authority.

Endorsed by Board of Directors 1-20-11