

## Economic & Workforce Development

At its core, the St. Louis Regional Chamber is a business advocacy and economic development organization that encompasses seven counties in Missouri and eight counties in Illinois. The Chamber advocates for governmental policies that support high employment, low transaction costs, and sustainable growth for our region. These objectives are advanced by monetary and fiscal policies, regulations of financial institutions, trade, and tax policies.

Workforce development is the catalyst of economic development. Our region's economic stability and prosperity is strengthened by investing in the people, organizations, and processes that comprise our workforce. Our labor market is critical to our success as a region. Ensuring our region has a diverse, educated, and skilled labor market allows us to embrace continuous growth and innovation.

### Action Items:

- [SB 1613 \(Sims\)](#)—Streamlines Enterprise Zone selection process
- [HB 2900 \(DeLuca\)](#)—Minimum wage increase relief for businesses in areas most impacted

## Transportation & Infrastructure

The development of our region's infrastructure will always be a top priority for the Chamber at all levels of government. Continued investment in our roads, highways, bridges, airports, railways, waterways, intermodal links, and internet infrastructure is integral to our region's prosperity. More specifically, improvements to our water supply, sewers, electrical grids, and access to quality broadband internet will improve the lives of our citizens. These structures support the movement of goods, services, and ideas among our customers, companies, and marketplaces.

The American Society of Civil Engineers ranked Illinois's roads and bridges with D's and C's, respectively, with 18% of roads in poor condition costing the average motorist \$566 per year.

The Chamber advocates for a capital plan so the maintenance, improvement, and continued creation of infrastructure and transportation assets can further develop our region's position as a premier transportation and distribution hub.

### Action Items:

- [Fully fund IDOT's capital bill requests](#) — (\$13-\$15 billion over 10 years, add'l \$30 billion in upgrades)
- [Pass capital bill before end of session](#)
- [SB 2005/SB 2006 \(Sandoval\)](#) — Increases RTA and CTA bond authority
- [HB 3823 \(Thapedi\)](#) — Increases gasoline tax and motor vehicle registration fees

## Support, Preserve, Enhance Key Military Installations

The Chamber supports Scott Air Force Base's (Scott) growth and status as a transportation and cyber security center of excellence. The Chamber plans to continue advocacy efforts to ensure this critical regional employer remains competitive, allowing acquisition of new squadrons and missions.

Scott Air Force Base generates more than \$3 billion in direct and indirect economic activity each year. We recognize Scott Air Force Base as a critical economic driver for the St. Louis bi-state region. Scott's total economic impact increased significantly from \$2.1 billion in 2001 to \$3.2 billion in 2011, demonstrating an ability for the base to grow economically.

The Chamber hopes to maintain and improve Scott's squadron and mission growth with advantageous future policies. Scott Air Force Base employs over 13,000 civilian and military personnel, producing an annual payroll in excess of \$1.3 billion. This collection of highly-skilled employees makes Scott the fifth-largest employer in the region. Scott Air Force Base additionally contributes an additional 25,000 jobs to local businesses that support base operations. Both Missouri and Illinois share a vested interest in the success of the base.

Two-thirds of Scott Air Force Base employees reside in Illinois, while one-third reside in Missouri. Given Scott's significant impact on the entire St. Louis region, the Chamber places a high emphasis on working with the Illinois government to achieve common gains.

### Action Items:

- [HB 1652 \(Greenwood/Hoffman\)](#) — Reduces occupational licensing barriers for military members and their spouses

## Regional Unity

Since the city of St. Louis and the Chamber are geographically located within the Missouri border, it can be easy to overlook the impact Illinois has on our region. However, the Chamber recognizes this pitfall and plans to avoid making that mistake in the future. The Mississippi river may divide us, but both sides commute across it each day, both sides benefit from the shipments that travel up the river, and ultimately, both sides are united by one metro rail system. Moving forward, the Chamber will be increasingly receptive to Illinois's concerns and encourages the governments on both sides of the river to work together towards building one of the nation's top economic regions.

