



2007 Public Policy Agenda Business Development and Entrepreneurship

Public Policy Agenda Executive Summary

The Greater Akron Region is poised to realize economic growth and investment over the coming years, and the Greater Akron Chamber is ready to spearhead the charge for business and job growth for the area. As a leading economic development organization, the Chamber is dedicated to creating a political climate that encourages business attraction and retention, job creation, entrepreneurship, workforce development, and infrastructure support, making the Greater Akron Region a superior choice for business location and providing a high quality of life for the people of the region.

The 2007 Public Policy Agenda outlines the issues that our business leadership believes will promote investment in our region. The Chamber will proactively work with our decision makers at the local, state, and federal levels to impact decisions that will positively affect the business climate of Northeast Ohio. With the help of our members and partners, we know that we can provide a framework for guiding responsible public policy decisions that foster economic growth, job creation, and a strong quality of life for our communities.

Business Development and Entrepreneurship

The Greater Akron Chamber encourages bipartisanship and collaboration among business, government, and other economic development organizations to advance our regional ability to retain and expand current businesses and to improve our competitive edge in attracting new businesses and venture capital opportunities. Our agenda for business development and entrepreneurship is focused on:

- **Fast Track Permitting** – the Chamber's commissioned study asked business owners for their feedback on permitting challenges and focused on fast-track permitting models to find solutions for making building permitting less cumbersome. With the use of modern technologies and regional cooperation, more projects can be implemented and more businesses will be attracted to the region. The Chamber will advocate for fast-track permitting to be implemented for enhanced business development.
- The Greater Akron Chamber will work with our regional partners to attract state and federal funding for expansion of venture capital opportunities. We will continue to advocate for Third Frontier funding for our region. The Chamber will pursue funding opportunities for entrepreneurial ventures and innovation.
- Bipartisanship will be a key contributor to the economic future of the region. We must concentrate on policies that are good for sustainable growth and quality of life. The

Chamber will continue to encourage our leaders to work in a non-partisan manner to foster development to meet the challenges of our regional economy.

Our region is fortunate to have two world-class universities in close proximity. Not only are institutions of higher education instrumental in training our workforce to meet the challenges of a global economy, they are also economic drivers. The University of Akron, Kent State University, and the Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine and College of Pharmacy bolster our economy through applied research and technology transfer. Our universities are our best resources for incubation and innovation. The high-tech, high-growth businesses of tomorrow begin in our universities today.

- The conversion of applied research to start-up businesses is imperative for competing in the global economy. We must be able to transfer our innovative ideas to practical application if we are to meet the challenges of a high-tech world. **The Greater Akron Chamber will work with Kent State University, Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine and College of Pharmacy, and The University of Akron to support technology transfer programs that create businesses.**

The Greater Akron Chamber, in collaboration with Team NEO, has identified industries that will have the greatest impact on the economic future of our region.

- Advanced Materials Polymers
- Clinical Medicine & Medical Devices
- Financial services, insurance, and real estate
- Manufacturing, metals, and automotive.
- Information Technology.

The Greater Akron Chamber will work to promote public policies that enhance expansion and retention of the identified clusters as an integral part of our economic growth strategy. The Chamber will advocate for Third Frontier Funding for regional economic development, technology transfer and entrepreneurial programs that are significant to the clusters.