

Priority Issues Benefitting our Community and Regional Economy

The Billings Chamber/CVB in partnership with the City of Billings, Yellowstone County, Big Sky EDA/EDC, and the local education community as well as with leadership throughout eastern Montana, developed the following key issues.

► Community Development

Community development encompasses infrastructure and quality of life issues that impact our economic future. Following are our key issues in this area:

Reappraisal cycle: Real property values need to be adjusted every two or three years instead of the current six year cycle.

Modification of the Resort Tax: Communities wishing to develop a local tax to support their needs should be allowed. The current population cap and the 10% tourism revenue requirement need to be removed from the existing Resort Tax legislation to open the opportunity for all communities, particularly in eastern Montana

Coal Impact Funds: The current level of funding at the \$5.0 million annual level needs to be maintained, not lowered as some have suggested.

► Education

Despite significant increases in students annually, funding is not correspondingly increased to meet the increased population. Modifications to the formula need to be made.

Basic Entitlements: There is no adjustment for large school districts with multiple locations. This entitlement needs to be modified to reflect size without harming small district entitlements.

Higher Education Facilities: Facilities bonding legislation affects all levels of higher education and needs to be reintroduced during the current session.

► Business Development

To be competitive, Montana needs to further improve its business climate.

Workforce Training: Workforce training dollars need to be reauthorized at or above their current levels.

Worker's Compensation: Montana's rates need to be regionally competitive. We will work to improve the process, programs and rates.

Business Equipment Tax: Montana needs to reduce or eliminate the tax rates and thresholds.

► State and Federal Energy Issues

Eastern Montana is enjoying a robust energy related economy, however it is volatile and subject to change. As part of this regional economy, Billings is directly impacted by these issues.

Production Tax Holiday: The 18 month production tax holiday needs to be maintained to encourage development & growth.

Energy Tax Incentives: Inequalities in energy tax credits need to be addressed to level the playing field.

Keystone XL Pipeline: This pipeline needs to be permitted and built. It will result in jobs and revenue.

Find more information on these and other Chamber/CVB public policy positions: PublicPolicy.BillingsChamber.com.

