



COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

November 2009

Please save this newsletter as a reference to subcommittee meetings and activities for the month of November.

Greetings,

You are receiving this email because you expressed an interest in Governmental Affairs when you became a member of the WS Chamber. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please unsubscribe at the bottom of this page.

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WINSTON-SALEM VOICE



UPDATED - Take Action Now to Protect Democracy in the Workplace!

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



As you are well aware of by now, Election Day is near. On November 3, 2009, voters will go to the polls and cast their ballots for Winston-Salem City Council. This is a very important process and one that we take very seriously. Recently, your WS Chamber of Commerce, the WS Regional Association of REALTORS and the WS Homebuilders

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www.WinstonSalemVoice.com**

Questions or Comments?
Please contact us.

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Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools

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Association held a candidate forum. It was very well attended and the candidates did a great job in telling the audience why a member of the business community should vote for them. From regulations and ordinances to job creation and incentives, the candidates gave us their positions on these issues and why they believe what they are proposing as solutions to the problems we face are best for Winston-Salem. You can read more about the event [here](#).

Thanks to all who came to the candidate forum. Please make sure to vote on Tuesday, November 3. If that day is not good for you, you can [vote early!](#) If you need precinct information, you can find it [here](#).

Happy voting!

Glenn Cobb
Chair, WS Chamber Government Affairs Committee
Chief Staff Executive, WSRAR

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

In addition to the candidate forum, we also sent the candidates and mayor a candidate questionnaire. We asked them five questions:

-What are the most important activities the city engages in and what are your top priorities to address these?

-What would you do and how do you foresee working with the chamber and other organizations in order to attract jobs and grow our local economy?

-What are the most important transportation needs in the city in order to grow the economy and what measures would you take to ensure transportation improvements are accomplished?

-What is an example of a principled stand you would take even if you knew it would cost you politically?

-How do you think taxes, local ordinances and regulation impact the quality of life and competitiveness in our community and how would you address any changes?

We received diverse answers of which you can find them [here](#) and click [here](#) to see pictures and a video of the candidate forum.

We want to thank Jimmy Flythe from Duke Energy who took the Environmental and Energy Committee on a fieldtrip to the Belews Creek Power Plant recently. It was a great learning experience and one that was very valuable and eye-opening to how we create electricity here in our area.



Your participation on our committees is crucial. Please let me know if you need a detailed explanation of the Council of Government Affairs and I will happy to meet with you and welcome the opportunity.

Thank you!

Jake Cashion
Director of Government Affairs
Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce

I welcome the opportunity to visit your business to learn how we can better serve you, especially if you have a government affairs issue. Please let me know and I would be happy to schedule a visit.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

TRANSPORTATION

On October 22 the Transportation Committee had a meeting on Transportation Reform that the state of NC is undertaking. This is important especially as they work on the Urban Loop Prioritization Process. We will be submitting our suggestions and recommendations to NCDOT about this [process](#). Please stay tuned for the final recommendations our committee submits.

Along the same lines, the United States Congress is debating a multi-year surface transportation bill called SAFETEA-LU. Because of the failing infrastructure in the US, the current network will be unable to serve the growing population and will keep the economy from getting back to growth.

Strategic capital investments are needed but how does this impact us here locally? Simple - many roads/highways receive federal dollars. Those dollars are used for construction of the roads, bridges and other infrastructure projects. It puts people to work, money flows into the economy and critical improvements are completed for the long term success of our region improving economic development opportunities. Without it, it is anticipated that thousands of additional jobs and millions of dollars for major road improvements will be lost just in NC alone.

We have several improvements in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County that could be impacted. The eastern leg of the Beltway, Highway 52 improvements and Business 40 in downtown. So it is easy to see why federal reauthorization or improvements to the program are critical. This is an important issue and one in which our Transportation Committee takes very seriously. To learn more, let me know and I will make sure to add you to this committee.

LOCAL

The Winston-Salem City Council is in the process of developing a Nonresidential Building Code ordinance. There are two parts to this. One is "vacant" property and the other

is "occupied" property. While it is important to mitigate "conditions that are dangerous and injurious to public health, safety, and welfare" in the city, we believe that the ordinance needs to address vacant properties only and that a task force is needed to address the many unintended consequences that will occur without definitive language addressing "occupied" businesses/buildings. City staff also agrees that a study is needed on the "occupied" piece according to the minutes of the October 13 CD/H/GG Committee meeting - ***"Staff recommends a process similar to the recent review of the Minimum Housing Code, through an established committee that will review the occupied non-residential portion of the Code and bring recommendations at a later date."*** We will inform you as to the outcome of this ordinance in the December Newsletter.

We also have Lunch with Leaders planned for December. Please see below for more details.

FISCAL AND REGULATORY

We will be attending the Interim Joint House and Senate Finance Committees Meetings on Tax Reform on November 3. This joint committee was authorized to meet during the interim to study and recommend legislation to reform North Carolina's sales and income tax structure in order to broaden the tax base and lower the State's tax rates. (S.L. 2009-451, Section 27A.7.) You can find more info [here](#).

HILL

As you know, the Healthcare Reform debate is still going on. While we do not have a position, it is important to know that we are watching this closely. It is an extremely important debate and we want to bring as much info to you as possible. Therefore, after a bill is passed, we will be having another event so the business community can have a better understanding of how we will be impacted.

So, what is happening with the Employee Free Choice Act, aka - Card Check?

While it looks like the Card Check bill has been pushed to the back burner due to healthcare, cap and trade and other legislative discussions, this extremely dangerous bill has not been forgotten. There are many reasons why the business community cannot dismiss this; however, three main reasons to be concerned include 1) the replacement of the late Senator Ted Kennedy giving the Senate 60 votes it needs, 2) unions are the largest special interest donors to the majority party and will be demanding a vote at some point and 3) any potential compromise will likely be worse than the original bill. For a deeper explanation, take a look at the following article: [More Twists and Turns in the EFCA Marathon](#).

DOCUMENTS ON DEMAND

[The Economic Effects of Legislation to Reduce Greenhouse-Gas Emissions](#)

[The Budget and Economic Outlook - September 2009](#)

[5 Year Work Program - NC Department of Transportation](#)

[Winston-Salem City Council Candidate Questionnaire - Responses](#)

[Election 2009 Information - November 3](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS & MEETINGS

A Perfect Storm: Legal, Economic and Political Changes Affecting Your Workplace

Thursday, November 5

8:00 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.

New laws, new regulations, a greater threat of union organizing, and a whole new environment are confronting employers today. The Chamber and CAI present the 2009 Employment Law Conference. We want to ensure that you and your organization are prepared to meet the challenges posed by this new legal, economic and political environment. Experienced attorneys from Constangy, Brooks and Smith, LLP will provide you with updates on state and federal employment laws and issues, including: FMLA; ADA; FLSA; E-Verify; I-9s; staff reductions; employee benefits; disciplining and discharging employees; off-duty conduct; and workplace policies. Chamber members will receive discounted registration--just enter the code ELC9 in the Discount box and click on Apply during the check out process. [Click here](#) for more information.

Local Issues Committee Meeting

Wednesday, November 11

4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

W-S Chamber Boardroom

Thinking about running for the School Board?

Monday, November 16

6:30 p.m.

WS/FC Schools Administrative Center

Find out all you to know by attending the prospective candidates seminar, sponsored by the Forsyth Education Partnership. Registration is required. For details contact Doug Pungner at dpungner@triad.rr.com or 728-9239.

HILL Committee Meeting

Tuesday, November 24

8:00 - 9:00 a.m.

W-S Chamber Boardroom

Fiscal & Regulatory Issues

Tuesday, December 1

4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

W-S Chamber Boardroom

Lunch with Leaders

Thursday, December 3

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

W-S Chamber Boardroom

More details to be sent at a later date.

Transportation Issues

Thursday, December 10

8:00 - 9:00 a.m.

W-S Chamber Boardroom

Environmental Issues

Wednesday, December 16

8:00 - 9:00 a.m.

W-S Chamber Boardroom

CHAMBER HAPPENINGS

Join the Chamber LinkedIn Group



A benefit for members only, the [Chamber LinkedIn group](#) is a way for you to network online with your peers. Ask questions, catch up on Chamber news, post your own news story and (discreetly) promote your own product or service. The LinkedIn group also has a [Governmental Affairs subgroup](#), designed to heighten awareness of and encourage discussion about legislative issues that affect YOU and your business. Looking forward to seeing you online!

Become a Fan of the Chamber on Facebook



Your Chamber also has a [Facebook 'fan page'](#) where you can view and RSVP for events, watch Chamber videos, see and comment on networking and other photos of Chamber happenings and start and respond to discussions.

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