

GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: Mark Clasby - Haywood County EDC

**CeCe Hipps - Greater Haywood County Chamber of
Commerce**

**Dr. Laura Leatherwood - Haywood Community
College**

Bill Schaefer - Kids Voting Haywood County

Bill Jarrell - Jarrell Consulting

**Gavin Brown - Mayor, Town of Waynesville; Brown &
Patten**

David Stubbs - The Waynesville Inn

LaVoy Spooner - AT&T

Charles Umberger - Old Town Bank

Ron Reid - Andon-Reid Bed and Breakfast

Sara Sheppard - Brock Insurance



Serving Waynesville, Maggie Valley, Canton & Clyde

2010 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



The Haywood County Chamber of Commerce 2010 Legislative and Public Policy Agenda represents the Chamber's continued commitment to maintain and grow a strong business climate and exceptional quality of life for Haywood County.

The issues in this agenda are based on surveys and briefings from community partners. The Governmental Relations committee determines based upon information received if established criteria is met.

CRITERIA: Do the issues or the actions relate to the Chamber's Mission Statement?

The Greater Haywood County Chamber of Commerce represents the interests of business for the growth and prosperity of our members and community.

- Is it important to the membership?
- Will it attract leadership and membership support?
- Is it a duplication of effort?
- Can it be funded?
- Is it measurable?
- Has the issue been considered by chamber committees or board leadership?

The issues and priorities in this agenda were identified or updated by community stakeholders and the Chamber's membership. Committee members and staff provided expertise and perspectives to evaluate the issues and potential impact on businesses and the community. The 2010 Legislative Agenda was approved by the Board of Directors March 2010.

ECONOMY:

Economic Impact on Business

As the devastating economic crisis carries over into another year, many North Carolina businesses are now closed or struggling to survive. The Chamber strongly opposes tax increases that would disproportionately or unintentionally place undue burden on businesses, particularly small businesses. Because more than 80% of new jobs are created by small business, policies which encourage capital investment should be a priority to help create, retain or grow jobs in our area.

Local Capacity Growth

The national economic struggles continue to shift attention to local capacity. The Chamber strongly encourages local government and local government agencies to support and promote Haywood County businesses, including efforts to increase awareness and consideration by public and private consumers.

HEALTH CARE:

Healthcare Burden on Business

A healthy workforce is the backbone of a strong economy, but spiraling healthcare costs curb the competitiveness of U.S. businesses. The Chamber repeats its support of legislative initiatives, including the expansion of healthcare pools, which would allow small businesses to provide or enhance affordable healthcare for their employees. The effectiveness of meaningful pilot projects, or similar best practices, should be monitored.

Haywood Regional Medical Center

The Chamber maintains its position that funding of indigent health care costs (including psychiatric care) for Haywood County residents using the Haywood Regional Medical Center for treatment should remain a priority for local elected officials.

Funding for Medicaid Patients

Significant cuts to the Medicaid program (6% reduction in FY 2009) continue to threaten the viability of OB/GYN services and pediatric care in Haywood County, as well as the needed capital investments to ensure delivery of state-of-the-art medical services. The Chamber supports legislative initiatives that help provide hospital and physician reimbursements for Medicaid patients using Haywood Regional Medical Center.

EDUCATION:

Education Funding

Haywood Community College (HCC) is experiencing unprecedented full time enrollment growth of 14% in curriculum and 18% in continuing education, consistent with an increase

of more than 27,000 FTEs in the NC Community College System. The Chamber supports the additional funding required for HCC to support the increase in instruction and services.

Haywood Community College Educational Facilities

Recognizing that HCC plays a significant role to help prepare the area's workforce, to promote small business development and to assist with industry recruitment and retention, the Chamber encourages continued attention to protect the revenues dedicated for approved capital projects at HCC. The 1/4 cent local use sales tax approved in 2008 should not be used to supplant the annual capital improvement appropriation.

INFRASTRUCTURE:

Infrastructure Planning (Broadband)

The Chamber endorses a coordinated effort between government entities and respective agencies to address infrastructure planning for the county as a whole. A priority in 2010 is the continued need to expand and enhance broadband in our area.

Road Maintenance Funding

The Chamber repeats its solid opposition to shifting road maintenance to cities or towns without associated funding.

Workforce Housing

Ensuring acceptable and affordable living opportunities for the Haywood County workforce is critical to help to grow the long term wealth of residents, provide competitive opportunities and expand our local tax base. The Chamber encourages local officials to continue exploring and evaluating options that would transition qualified residents into home ownership, with the opportunity to build.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES:

Green Initiatives

The Chamber recognizes that protecting the environment is important to our community and supports relevant initiatives - especially those that help accelerate technologies to clean up and protect the environment. The Chamber supports effective training programs and related support that help transform or create green-collar jobs, that in turn can help rebuild a strong middle class, as well as to preserve and enhance environmental quality. Especially important are "green opportunities" for local business and workforce development.

Funding for National Interior Projects

The Chamber strongly supports Federal funding to help protect, preserve and maintain the Smoky Mountain National Park and Blue Ridge Parkway.