

2017 Legislative and Policy Priorities

Tax / Spending Lid

REAP supports correcting the unworkable procedures in the 2016 tax lid legislation on local governments as it will have a stifling effect on the ability to support infrastructure necessary for high quality of life and strong economic growth.

WATC/WSU AGGREGATION

REAP supports legislation to affiliate Wichita Area Technical College and Wichita State University. This will increase educational opportunities, help fulfill the workforce needs of south central Kansas and create a stronger partnership between higher education and industry.

Medicaid Expansion

REAP supports expansion of the Kansas Medicaid program to extend healthcare coverage for at-risk Kansans (over 150,000) and to complement the efforts in public health, providing vital revenues to local hospitals and stimulate the economy by creating thousands of jobs.

Funding for Transportation Infrastructure

REAP supports dedicated and secure state revenue that cannot be used for other purposes and opposes any further use of transportation dollars to balance the State's general fund; and emphasizes the need for adequate funding to build and preserve the transportation infrastructure in Kansas.

Passenger Rail Service

REAP supports state funding for expansion of passenger rail in Kansas, specifically passenger rail connecting Dallas/Fort Worth and Oklahoma City through Wichita to the Southwest Chief in Newton.

Water and Energy Resources

REAP supports policies and strategies to recognize the protection of water resources critical to the economy of South Central Kansas, including of the protection of the Equus Beds Aquifer that supplies water for 20% of the Kansas population.

REAP recognizes the importance of energy to the regional economy and supports access to, and production of, a variety of energy sources from oil and natural gas to renewable resources, such as wind and solar power.

Regional Economic Development Strategies

REAP supports regional collaborative sector strategies to create jobs and grow business in the region.

• Blueprint for Regional Economic Growth (BREG)

REAP supports BREG, the sector based, regional economic development strategy designed to grow business and create jobs by focusing resources for eight wealth generating industries in South Central Kansas.

• South Central Kansas Regional Export Plan

The economic wellbeing of the REAP area and the State of Kansas is dependent on the ability to participate in the international marketplace. State policy should recognize that exports are a major component of the state and regional economies, and expanded exports are essential to economic growth.

• Innovation Campus

REAP supports legislation that helps grow the Kansas economy and provides additional educational opportunities to students at WSU through development of the Innovation Campus.