

2020 Legislative and Policy Priorities

REAP's purpose is to provide a unified voice for the region at the state and national levels, advance greater economic prosperity from regional cooperation and address issues that cross political boundaries. The following issues have been identified by the members of REAP as policy and Legislative priorities for South Central Kansas.



REGIONAL JOB GROWTH & BUSINESS EXPANSION

Workforce

- REAP supports policies and investments targeting workforce recruitment strategies and skills training in high-demand areas that generate high wage career opportunities vital to economic development in South Central Kansas such as manufacturing, healthcare, and information technology.

Education

- REAP encourage policymakers and post-secondary institutions to adopt innovative and cutting edge programs and/or practices in order to meet business needs to ensure an abundant and skilled workforce.

Economic Development

- REAP supports continued availability and expansion of economic development incentives, programs, and tools to keep the state competitive.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE

- REAP encourages the legislature and administration to consider additional investments designed to address the treatment of mental health in south central Kansas.
- REAP supports additional and innovative solutions to combat, treat and prevent addiction to opioids and other drugs.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Funding for Transportation Priorities

- REAP recognizes the need for adequate funding to build and preserve the transportation infrastructure in South Central Kansas, specifically projects / investments with that are vital to business and industry.

Rail Service

- REAP supports state funding for existing freight rail service and expansion of passenger rail in Kansas, specifically passenger rail service expanding the Heartland Flyer from Dallas/Ft Worth and Oklahoma City connecting through Wichita to Newton and the Southwest Chief, providing our state with service to Oklahoma and Texas.

Water Protection

- REAP supports policies and strategies to protect 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.

Energy Resources

- 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.

FEDERAL ISSUES

- REAP supports efforts to boost investments in infrastructure and monitor implementation of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.
- REAP supports full funding for employment and training systems driven by the needs of business and industry by leveraging opportunities under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to enhance sector-based partnerships that are employer led and advocate for demand-driven workforce and training programs.
- REAP supports the expansion of Pell Grants to include short term trainings resulting in credentials recognized by employers and in high demand occupations.