



COLUMBIA
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

May 5, 2009

Presiding Commissioner Ken Pearson
Boone County Commission
801 E. Walnut
Columbia, MO 65201

Dear Commissioner Pearson:

On Friday, April 17, 2009, the Columbia Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors discussed a possible county-wide sales tax for economic development. While much is currently being done to improve our economic development efforts, the committee identified the following deficiencies.

- We do not have shovel ready sites to offer.
- We need improved infrastructure to make these sites viable.
- We need to pursue incentives other than Chapter 100 – such as land, rent, travel and relocation costs.
- REDI has an \$89,000 marketing budget which is much lower than most communities our size.
- We need to continue pursuing better air service and necessary terminal improvements.
- We need to be forging more strategic partnerships with other organizations such as KCADC.
- We need a technical center for more specialized job training.
- We need to be cognizant of electrical rates and the future of our energy needs.

Therefore, the Columbia Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors unanimously approved the following resolution.

Resolved, the Columbia Chamber of Commerce hereby encourages the Boone County Commission to explore a ballot issue to adopt a county-wide sales tax to provide funds for economic development efforts in Boone County in accordance with section 67.1305 of the Missouri Revised Statutes. These funds would be used for providing jobs through investment in creating shovel ready sites, infrastructure to serve such sites, job training programs to prepare workers for advanced technologies and high skill jobs, marketing Boone County and other economic development related efforts as deemed appropriate by the County Commission. In addition, the Columbia Chamber of Commerce offers its support and assistance helping to formulate and pass such a ballot issue.

We hope that you will give this resolution strong consideration. Working together, this could be a very useful tool to move our county forward. If you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Larry Moore
Chair of the Board

THE NEXT STEP IS FUNDING

At its last meeting, the Emerging Issues Committee analyzed and discussed our overall efforts to create, attract and keep jobs in Boone County. While much is being done to improve our economic development efforts, the committee identified the following deficiencies:

- We do not have shovel ready sites to offer.
- We need improved infrastructure to make these sites viable.
- We need to pursue incentives other than Chapter 100—such as land, rent, travel and relocation costs.
- REDI has an \$89,000 marketing budget, which is much lower than most communities our size.
- We need to continue pursuing better air service and necessary terminal improvements.
- We need to be forging more strategic partnerships with other organizations such as Kansas City Area Development Corporation.
- We need a technical center for more specialized job training.
- We need to be cognizant of electrical rates and the future of our energy needs in order to be sure our rates are competitive.

Obviously, these deficiencies must be studied and discussed in much more detail on a county-wide basis, but it is our feeling that we must consider a sales tax to fund these efforts.

Accordingly, the Emerging Issues Committee has recommended and the Chamber Board of Directors has approved the following resolution:

Resolved, the Columbia Chamber of Commerce hereby encourages the Boone County Commission to explore a ballot issue to adopt a county-wide sales tax to provide funds for economic development efforts in Boone County in accordance with section 67.1305 of the Missouri Revised Statutes. These funds would be used for providing jobs through investment in creating shovel ready sites, infrastructure to serve such sites, job training

programs to prepare workers for advanced technologies and high skill jobs, marketing Boone County and other economic development related efforts as deemed appropriate by the County Commission. In addition, the Columbia Chamber of Commerce offers its support and assistance helping to formulate and pass such a ballot issue.

We recognize that there is never a good time to discuss new taxes. We also recognize that we are losing jobs in Boone County at an alarming rate, and that the economic impact of these job losses is being felt across our entire area. We see this tax as an investment in our future. Developing our infrastructure, attracting and growing good employers, and preparing our local workforce for new and better jobs are all investments that will yield high returns for us all.

Let's work together to put in place a funding package that makes sense for all of Boone County.