



UTAH VALLEY CHAMBER 2020 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Utah Valley is frequently identified as being among the best places in the country to do business. These rankings do not come by accident. In fact, a primary reason for these accolades is the business-friendly ordinances and laws passed by our local officials and state legislature.

The Utah Valley Chamber of Commerce is committed to promoting legislation at all levels of government that strengthens and facilitates business growth and a prosperous community. We strive for a principles-based approach to policy. We believe in a low tax rate with a strong economic base; effective regulation; top-notch infrastructure; a talented, diverse workforce; well-managed and limited government (at all levels); and a high quality of life for our families to live, learn, work and play. We know that free enterprise has done more to empower people and raise living standards than any government policy or program. We support the free market, and value the job creators everywhere.

By 2065, Utah County will add one million people to its population, 85% from internal growth. To plan for that growth, the Utah County business community-initiated Valley Visioning, a process that explores potential growth decisions and their impacts by creating a countywide vision. The vision will act as a voluntary yet powerful framework to underpin future planning and implementation in the county. This framework will benefit from strong momentum and broad, demonstrated support as it is implemented through public, private, nonprofit and partnership activities. We are planning for healthy and meaningful places for our kids to have places to work, live, learn, and play. Many of our legislative priorities came from the initial phases of the Valley Visioning process.

Multiple levels of the business community have been engaged in the development of our legislative priorities for 2020. From Valley Visioning, the priorities were then developed further by the Chamber's Public Policy Committee. The Utah Valley Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors ratified this policy guide. We encourage Chamber members and others in the business community to contact their legislators and local officials to push for support of these priorities, which are outlined herein. We also encourage legislators and local officials to exert their influence to promote the passage of ordinances and legislation in support of these priorities.

The Utah Valley Chamber is proud to be the voice of business in Utah County. We are actively engaged in policy issues to represent the thousands of businesses located in our growing and prosperous region. With the help of legislators, we will continue to be the best place in the country to live, learn, work and play.

2020 Legislative Priorities:

1. Align education outcomes with workforce needs

Utah Valley's economy ranks among the best in the country and is the heartbeat of our state's economy. Attracting, training, and keeping qualified employees remain as one of the main challenges facing Utah County companies.

The economic prosperity of our region is dependent upon the access to and development of a workforce talent-pipeline that can create new and accelerate existing businesses. Alignment of education programs with the labor needs and expectation of industry that feed the talent pipeline is critical. Yet, according to the Association of American Colleges and Universities, less than one third of employers feel that recent college graduates are ready for the workplace. Business, education and government must work collaboratively to ensure Utah's students are college and career ready.

Improved alignment of talent development strategies with workforce demands is critical to our future economic prosperity.

We recognize that competency-based learning and hiring benefit individuals and employers. We support policies and programs that strengthen Utah's workforce and talent pipeline. Additionally, we recognize that criminal justice reform is a part of the workforce discussion. Therefore, we support efforts to explore alternative talent pipelines through criminal justice reform.

2. Advocate for proper transportation and infrastructure appropriations to support expected valley growth

Utah Valley is one of the fastest-growing regions in the United States. Our population is expected to double in the next couple of decades. With the population explosion come considerable transportation issues. Utah's infrastructure needs over the next 20 years exceed \$60 billion to both maintain and provide infrastructure for growing areas.

The Utah Valley Chamber strives to be involved in critical discussions and contribute to solutions affecting the future of transportation in Utah County, including increased use of public transit, funding of transportation projects, issues related to the Provo Airport and the future of the Point of the Mountain. The cities of Utah County have varying needs based on the tax base of each community. We support legislation that allows for individual communities to determine the use of their transportation funds according to their needs.

3. Support housing affordability solutions

By 2065, Utah County will add one million people to its population, 85% from internal growth. With this growth, we have already seen serious problems with housing affordability in the county and across the state. Our state's current home prices are 20% higher than comparable cities such as Boise, Las Vegas and Phoenix. These are some of our top competitors in attracting new jobs and businesses. We support efforts to address housing affordability in Utah County that respect the personal property rights of individuals and businesses.

4. Support and encourage measures to improve air quality

Utah County's quality of life is the envy of many. It attracts businesses, helps employers hire top notch talent, and benefits us all. Unfortunately, one factor that negatively affects our quality of life is poor air quality. While air pollution has a real impact on a company's ability to attract and retain new employees, it can also increase health care costs, place regulatory burdens on businesses, and even put Utah's federal highway funding at risk.

While we can't do much about our geography, we can control the choices we make to help decrease the emissions that cause air pollution. The Utah Valley Chamber supports efforts to address air quality issues while minimizing the cost to businesses and, ultimately, consumers. We support efforts to speed up the process of transitioning to tier three fuels. We also support increased transportation funding to improve our transit systems, active transportation infrastructure and last-mile options to reduce mobile emissions and eliminate idling on Utah's roadways.

5. Advocate for wise use and conservation of water

Utah's society and economy were founded upon and continue to depend upon a reliable, safe water supply. Residents have come to expect clean, pure water in enough quantity and quality to sustain their lives and grow their economies. Water sources, water rights, and the related infrastructure must be carefully planned, protected, constructed, maintained and operated to provide the necessary water for expected growth.

The Utah Valley Chamber recognizes the importance of the wise use and conservation of existing water, the replacement and repair of aging water infrastructure, and the ability to plan and fund new water projects to ensure adequate water for the future. We urge the legislature to encourage water conservation, long-range planning, and to provide the tools and policies to permit adequate repair and replacement of water infrastructure.

Utah Lake plays a vital role in Utah County and has the potential to be a crowning jewel in our community. We support efforts to clean up Utah Lake and make it an attractive destination for all.

6. Respect property rights and preserve prime agricultural and open spaces

Agriculture is a significant part of Utah County's heritage. As Utah County continues to grow, it will be ever more difficult to provide sources of local food that are enough to feed even a fraction of Utah County's rapidly growing population. Certain fruits and vegetables can only be grown in areas where the microclimate is favorable—in Utah, many of these areas are in Utah County.

We support efforts that respect personal property rights and preserve prime agricultural lands in Utah County. We urge the legislature to look for ways to support our farmers and ranchers in preserving agricultural land and open space.

7. Protect economic prosperity, expand Utah's export base and encourage pioneering employee recruitment and retention practices

The Utah Valley Chamber supports America's free enterprise system as the best way to grow the economy, stimulate innovation and create jobs. This includes championing Utah County's enviable quality of life and commitment to the greater good. We support efforts to strengthen Utah's economic capacity to endure local, national and international economic changes and significant disasters.

Given the state's overwhelming economic prosperity, especially along the Wasatch Front, we believe that economic development should be strategic and targeted. We support efforts to reform Utah's incentives programs. We also support efforts to bring more people into the workforce through family-friendly business policies. Given the importance of international trade to many businesses in Utah County, we support efforts to grow Utah's export base and attract foreign investment dollars through key partnerships, trade missions, the hosting of dignitaries and training on international trade opening markets.

8. Support the modernization of tax policies including incentives

Utah County's economy is one of Utah's most diverse and highest performing. The business climate in Utah and Utah County is the foundation of our prosperity and, for Utah to remain strong in this time of growth, legislators must reevaluate and modernize policies that are critical to the business community's long-term success. It's time to advance a bold, action-oriented strategy that will modernize our tax code, develop our workforce and improve economic development.

9. Advocate for private sector innovative solutions to reduce healthcare costs

In many ways, U.S. healthcare is the envy of the world—it has helped us live longer and enjoy a better quality of life. However, we face the challenge of making quality health care more affordable, more accessible, and more reliable for all Americans.

The Utah Valley Chamber is focused on promoting effective private sector solutions to our healthcare challenges that will help control costs, expand access, and improve the quality of care.