

Economic Development

Governor Kemp's initiative "Georgians First Commission" continues to make Georgia the best state in the nation to seek for small business in the nation, thus reducing business cost for small business. The Sumter County Chamber supports bills which will address licensure reform and reciprocity for small businesses and bureaucratic issues.

- **We Support** efforts to improve economic opportunities and quality of life for rural Georgia.
- **We Support** a reduction in the personal and corporate income tax rates.
- **We Support** current tax incentives which have proven to assist companies to invest and expand their footprint in Georgia.
- **We Support** ongoing examination of the current tax base, rates, tax incentives and compliance requirements to ensure Georgia's business environment is fair and competitive for existing businesses and businesses considering locating in Ga.
- **We Support** preservation of Georgia's employment-at-will doctrine and the state's right-to-work status.

Healthcare Innovation

Lt. Governor Duncan's "Blue-Ribbon" Panel on lowering the cost of healthcare has focused time on using technology to lower the cost of healthcare and lower cost to expand into rural Georgia. In Southwest Rural Georgia it is vital to focus the well-being of our citizens to have telemedicine, health information technology and claims data sharing.

- **We Support** a state-led approach to ensure the viability of Georgia's healthcare system by pursuing waivers from the Federal Government to help small businesses with premium assistance as well as increase the care to all Georgians.
- **We Support** cost control with respect to employer-sponsored health insurance.

Rural Broadband

Rural Georgia has yet to see the benefits of enhanced connectivity for businesses, education, health, and quality of life. It is Governor Kemp has stated publicly this is his #1 priority to get broadband to rural Georgia. Rural broadband will require lowering cost barriers for internet companies to expand their footprint, in unserved and underserved areas. This will continue to be challenge for Georgia, unless the state's overall funding for broadband in rural Georgia increases.

- **We Support** State and Federal funding to build a viable and strong broadband footprint in rural areas to increase its overall well-being, education tools for schools, universities, and colleges and to build the economic security and growth of rural Georgia.
- **We Support House Bill 23.** This bill authorizes electric membership corporations (EMC) to establish or partner with another entity to provide broadband services to its members independent from its electrical services. This bill will also allow for EMCs to apply for federal grants to supply broadband.

Transportation

Georgia must continue to put state transportation funding as a high priority for economic vitality and to further prepare for the necessary expansion and building of roads and bridges for the upcoming completion of the widening and deepening on the Savannah Port.

- **We Support** the completion of Georgia State Highway 280 in Georgia to be widened as a comprehensive four-lane road from Savannah to Fort Benning, and Columbus, Georgia to Fort Stewart, Augusta, Georgia. Power Alley, US 280 proposes to traverse the entire state from Columbus to Savannah. Completed projects for US 280 will supply 204 miles of four lanes of roadway. Currently 27 miles of this corridor are in active project development, from Sumter County to Crisp County. The completion of US 280 is necessary to supply better access for Fort Benning and Fort Stewart military bases. The agriculture and manufacturing industries will significantly increase the overall economic for Sumter County upon completion of this major project.
- *WE Support* local transit for rural Georgia

Agriculture

Agriculture is the largest and oldest industry in Georgia. Sumter County's number one industry is Agriculture. The County's agriculture is diversified in row crops, vegetable production, large dairy, winery, beef cows, poultry, pecans, timber, and turf. Total Farm Gate Value for 2018 was \$135,000,000 which was down from the previous year by \$9,000,000.

- **We Support** legislation that allows more than two axle groups for the agriculture industry. Studies have shown that increasing number of axles for multiple axle groups, are making these larger axle groups less damaging to the asphalt pavement when considering their economic impact.
- **We Support House Bill 545.** This legislation seeks to strengthen and protect farmers from loopholes in our states right to farm laws. This will clarify and clear up the language that is vague and could be interpreted in ways detrimental to agriculture producers.