



## **Southwest Indiana-Northwest Kentucky-Southeastern Illinois**

### **Economic Leaders from Tri-State Region Join Forces in Washington, D.C.**

WASHINGTON, D.C.-- (March 10, 2010) - Economic development leaders from the Tri-State traveled this week to Washington, D.C. to discuss carbon legislation, more commonly known as cap and trade, as well as critical transportation issues, including the continued funding of I-69, with congressional leaders from Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois. Chamber of commerce and local economic development organization leaders from Northwest Kentucky, Southeastern Illinois and Southwest Indiana were part of the three-state delegation who met with Senators McConnell, Durbin and Lugar along with Representatives Ellsworth, Johnson, Shimkus, Whitfield and Guthrie.

“Cap and trade legislation imposes potentially significant tax burdens on local energy-intensive industries, especially the aluminum industry, which is highly concentrated in the Tri-State region,” stated Kevin Sheilley, CEO and President of Northwest Kentucky Forward.

"Members of Congress from Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois are working together to not only defeat cap and trade, but to keep the EPA from regulating CO2 emissions that would negatively impact local industries," said Nick Brake, President and CEO of the Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation"

The group also met with staffers from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce working on the cap and trade legislation. Regional transportation priorities discussed during the trip included the continued funding of I-69 in Indiana and Kentucky; and, the conversion of U.S. Highway 50 to four-lanes in Southeastern Illinois connecting to I-69 to I-57 in central Illinois.

"Continued progress for I-69 in both Kentucky and Indiana will require significant federal support," said Jody Wassmer, President of the Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce. Both Indiana and Kentucky have made significant strides on the project, and we heard strong support for I-69 from the Congressional delegation."

During the 2-day Capitol Hill visit, the group had meetings with members of Congress and staff, including Dick Durbin (IL) Senate Majority Leader, Mitch McConnell (KY), the Senate's top ranking Republican, and Richard Lugar, Indiana's senior Senator. Additionally, the group met with Representatives Brad Ellsworth (IN), Ed Whitfield (KY), Brett Guthrie (KY), John Shimkus (IL), and Tim Johnson (IL).

“All the legislators we visited were impressed by the cooperative nature of our Tri-State delegation,” said Brad Schneider, President of the Henderson/Henderson County Chamber of Commerce. “Regionalism definitely registers on Capitol Hill.”

"We delivered a powerful message about how our region works together," said Matt Meadors, President and CEO of the Southwest Indiana Chamber of Commerce.

Added Greg Wathen, President & CEO of the Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana, “We achieved our goal of addressing regional issues with a unified voice but much work lies ahead for each of us as both legislators and their staffs made it clear that key legislation was on hold until the healthcare debate is settled.”

Members of the Tri-State delegation included: Matt Meadors, President & CEO of the Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana; Greg Wathen, President and CEO of the Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana; Kevin Sheilley, President and CEO of Northwest Kentucky Forward; Brad Schneider, Executive Director of the Henderson/ Henderson County Chamber of Commerce; Nick Brake, President and CEO of the Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation; Jody Wassmer, President of the Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce; Brandi Stennent, Executive Director of the Richland County, Illinois Development Corporation; and Chuck Hartke from the *U.S. Highway 50 Coalition* in Illinois.

The visit to Washington by the Tri-State delegation is an outgrowth of the partnership created with the *Regional Economic Summit*, a gathering of economic leaders from a 26-county region of Southwest Indiana, Southeastern Illinois and Northwest Kentucky held in November 2008.

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