



For Immediate Release:
Friday, November 30, 2018

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***Best States for Business* Report shows much work remains to be done in W.Va.**

Charleston, W.Va. – Forbes Magazine’s recently-released *Best States for Business* report highlights that West Virginia still has much work to do to become more competitive with other states, according to West Virginia Chamber President Steve Roberts. Roberts stated, “We have seen a lot of good news in West Virginia lately, but the state’s rank of 49th in Forbes *Best States for Business* shows we still have much to do.”

West Virginia’s overall ranking of 49th was based on rankings in six categories:

- Business Costs – 18th
- Labor Supply – 50th
- Regulatory Environment – 49th
- Economic Climate – 48th
- Growth Prospects – 47th
- Quality of Life – 46th

Roberts continued, “According to Forbes, West Virginia’s population growth, only 20% of residents over 25 possessing a post-secondary degree, overall education attainment, and the state’s legal climate contributed to the poor ranking. Forbes positively noted the corporate net income tax rate dropping from 2007 to 2014, and the fact that West Virginia is now a Right-to-Work state.”

Information from Forbes shows that education plays a key role in the rankings for both Labor Supply and Quality of Life. The Labor Supply category measures college and high school attainment figures from the U.S. Census Bureau, and the Quality of Life category measures school test performance via the U.S. Department of Education. Roberts added, “Improving West Virginia’s standing in either of these categories will take significant focus on education and workforce preparedness.”

The West Virginia Chamber has created a Vision for West Virginia’s Future to address many of the areas in which our state remains an outlier. Roberts concluded, “Our Legislature and Governor are on the right path to make West Virginia more attractive to outside investment. The fact is that we started in a pretty deep hole and have been working hard to dig ourselves out. Maintaining a laser-like focus on policies to better education outcomes and workforce preparedness, enacting reasonable and fair regulations, improving fairness and transparency in the judiciary, and continuing tackling the opioid drug crisis should be the focus of West Virginia Legislature in the coming session. The West Virginia Chamber and its membership stand ready and willing to assist in any way.

Members of the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce are your small business neighbors. Chamber members employ over half of our state’s workforce and are found in every county and region of our state.

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