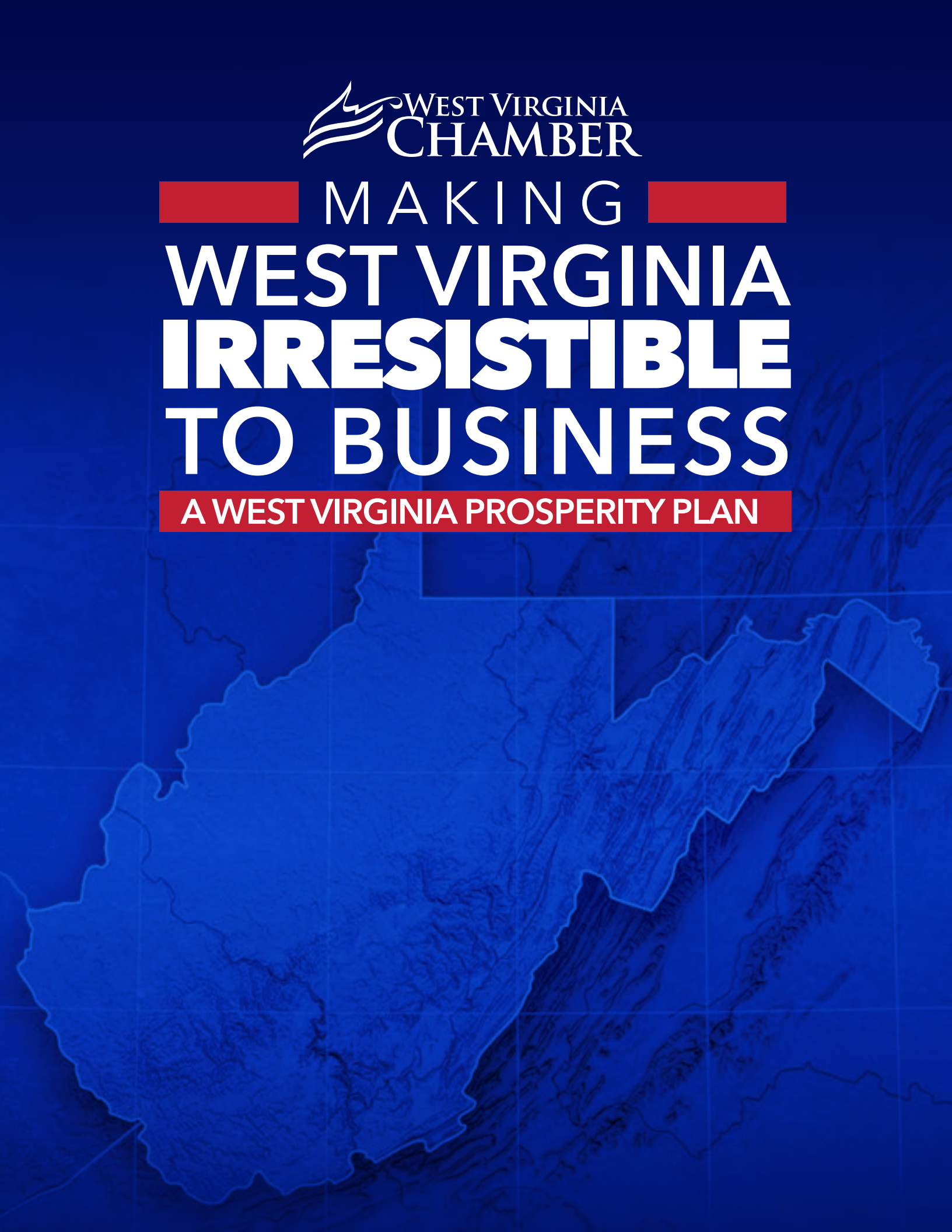




MAKING  
**WEST VIRGINIA  
IRRESISTIBLE  
TO BUSINESS**

A WEST VIRGINIA PROSPERITY PLAN







The West Virginia Chamber  
of Commerce has spoken  
for business for more than  
**85 years**







West Virginia Chamber of Commerce members believe West Virginia must focus on policies that improve our state and the lives of its citizens. Members are located across West Virginia and employ more than half of the state's workforce. Most are small businesses who want a healthier, more prosperous Mountain State. Their vision is to ***make West Virginia irresistible to business***. To do this we must:

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- Create a tax structure that encourages job growth and capital formation.
- Provide every child a world-class education.
- Develop infrastructure that allows for ease of transportation and high-speed broadband access for all areas of West Virginia.
- Ensure fairness and stability in West Virginia's courts.
- Use West Virginia's vast natural resources responsibly.
- Improve the health and quality of life for all citizens.
- Implement best business practices in government to guarantee efficiency and optimal effect.
- Initiate a talent pipeline to assure a skilled workforce for all employees.

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These are the overarching goals of the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce. In this publication, you can find out more about what steps can be taken on each item.



## EDUCATION REFORM AND WORKFORCE READINESS

### WHAT CAN BE DONE IMMEDIATELY:

- **Evaluate West Virginia's education progress** by utilizing nationally accepted metrics.
- **Allow school calendar flexibility** to meet individual community needs.
- Continue **increasing school personnel pay** to competitive levels.
- **Allow teacher pay flexibility at a local level.**
- **Evaluate schools** to help students, parents, policymakers, and the general public easily understand how schools and school districts are performing.
- **Modernize personnel management** throughout the K-12 education system.
- Put measures in place that **encourage accountability** from students, parents, administrators and teachers.
- **Increase transparency** in education spending and hiring practices.
- **Accelerate the hiring process** within the K-12 system.
- **Set high standards and give individual schools and teachers the flexibility** to utilize curriculum that best achieves goals.
- **Develop additional means to provide nutrition for students** in need during off-school times.
- **Support the creation of magnet schools / schools of excellence.**
- **Conduct a new independent audit** of West Virginia's K-12 public education system.
- **Ensure continued focus on meeting students' emotional needs**, especially those dealing with family challenges such as drug abuse, homelessness or unemployment.

### A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL SYSTEM WILL:

- **Ensure students have a pathway for success** and place a focus on achievement.
- **Develop a high school job readiness initiative.**
- **Provide teachers the resources** they need to ensure their students can learn and succeed.
- **Strive to build a talent pipeline** that coordinates educational outcomes with the job skills of the future.
- **Encourage apprenticeship programs.**
- **Support job training assistance initiatives.**
- **Coordinate with employers on what skills are needed** and better link community and technical colleges with local employers.
- **Provide a leadership pathway** for high-performing teachers.
- **Ensure transparency in education results.**
- **Seek out best practices in educational achievement** from a global perspective.





## FAIR, INDEPENDENT, IMPARTIAL JUDICIARY

### WHAT CAN BE DONE IMMEDIATELY:

- **Require implementation of statewide online case management System** to modernize records and ease access to important legal documents.
- **Pass Fair Mediation legislation** that stipulates mediation should be conducted by someone other than the presiding trial judge
- **Repeal the Collateral Source Rule** to address “double-dipping” by allowing juries to have information on damages that have already been paid by other sources.
- **Phantom Damages reform** to prevent plaintiffs receiving a “wind fall” by being awarded damages for the full “sticker price” of medical services incurred, rather than the discounted rate that was actually paid by the health insurer.
- **Ensure that teachers and public employees have adequate liability protection** when operating in the course of their duties.



## TAX

### WHAT CAN BE DONE IMMEDIATELY:

- **Set the Corporate Net Income Tax Rate** to give West Virginia a competitive advantage over other states.
- **Streamline B&O tax collection** when multiple municipalities are involved.
- **Expand the Economic Opportunity Tax Credit.**
- **Review insurance taxes** with a goal of being competitive in the national marketplace.
- **Reduce the tax rates paid by all employers for unemployment compensation.**



## MANUFACTURING AND ENERGY

### WHAT CAN BE DONE IMMEDIATELY:

- **Ensure statutes and rules are continuously updated and modernized** to encourage further production from the Marcellus and Utica Shales.
- **Maintain parity with neighboring states' water quality standards.**
- **Support vital pipeline construction projects** that will provide vast economic opportunity throughout the state.
- **Continue welcoming and attracting renewable energy investments.**
- **Add a business representative to the Environmental Quality Board.**
- **Continuously seek input from manufacturers to be aware of emerging issues.**

### LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES:

- **Ensure West Virginia's severance taxes remain competitive** and do not hinder development.
- **Support and provide growth opportunities for chemical manufacturing.**
- **Continue upgrading existing electrical, water and sewer infrastructure** to modernize systems for today's economy.
- **Reduce or eliminate tax paid on inventory and equipment used in manufacturing.**
- Send the clear message that **West Virginia is welcome to all forms of energy development.**
- **Train and grow the manufacturing workforce.**



## INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

### LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES:

- Continue pushing for **100% high-speed internet connectivity throughout West Virginia.**
- **Continue monitoring the deployment of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund** to ensure bid-winners are meeting obligations.
- Continuously work to **add and improve passenger and commercial air service.**
- Find ways to **improve and modernize our aging sewer infrastructure.**
- **Identify and target for improvement** those areas/communities that are underserved for **high speed, reliable, affordable internet.**



## GOOD GOVERNMENT

### WHAT CAN BE DONE IMMEDIATELY:

- **Review personnel practices within state and local government bodies** to reward merit and performance.
- **Conduct a thorough review of the size and scope of state government** to find efficiencies and cost savings.
- **Make adequate use of Jobs Impact Analysis.**
- **Make data/scientific/best practice-based decisions.**

### LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES:

- **Continue monitoring the costs of PEIA** and how it is affecting healthcare costs in West Virginia.
- **Establish a commission to establish political subdivisions in the state** to identify opportunities for shared services and cost savings.
- **Undertake an analysis of the length of judicial terms in West Virginia** to make sure they conform to national norms.
- **Review all aspects of appointed boards and commissions** to ensure that they are still serving an appropriate purpose.



## HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

### WHAT CAN BE DONE IMMEDIATELY:

- **Support neighborhood recreation efforts.**
- **Conduct a top-to-bottom review of our corrections system.**
- **Provide additional support for police and first responders.**
- **Support ongoing infrastructure needs to roads, bridges, etc.**

### LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES:

- **Measure and support better health outcomes.**
- **Increase access to medical, dental, and mental health services.**





## COMPETITIVE BUSINESS CLIMATE AND TOURISM

### WHAT CAN BE DONE IMMEDIATELY:

- **Enhance support for the activities** of the West Virginia Department of Economic Development.
- **Ensure the West Virginia Division of Tourism has the resources to market West Virginia to the world.**
- **Create and fund stand-alone business attraction and retention program.**
- **Fund regional economic development satellite offices.**
- **Enhance West Virginia's site-readiness plan.**

### LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES:

- **Recognize that social responsibility is expected** by today's business community.
- **Protect our state's image** and send the message that West Virginia is welcoming and inclusive of all citizens.



## CONCLUSION

Action on each of these topics is needed to demonstrate that West Virginia is serious about being irresistible to companies investing in jobs.

The West Virginia Chamber of Commerce is committed to bringing positive change to our state.

Addressing these issues will show that our state is aggressively working to enrich the lives of those who live here as well as those who are exploring the possibility of relocating to the Mountain State.







## Get To Know Us



We're widely recognized as **the voice of business in the Mountain State.**

**Our members employ over half of the state's workforce** and are found throughout the state.

**Members range from small business enterprises to mid-size manufacturers to tourism destinations to energy companies to Fortune 500 corporations.**

**Jobs For West Virginia's Graduates**, operated under the West Virginia Chamber Foundation, provides career and post-secondary support and guidance to high school students.

**Jobs for West Virginia's Graduates** uses the proven Job's for America's Graduates model - which has a **96% graduation rate** - to provide life-changing results.

We created the nationally recognized **"CourtWatch,"** which **analyzes important decisions of the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals.**

**More than 1,300 leaders have graduated from Leadership WV**, a program created by the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce.

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### Join us at our Signature Events:

- Annual Meeting and Business Summit
  - Environmental & Energy Conference
  - EPA Region III Fly-In
  - Women's Leadership Summit
  - Legislative Conference
  - Washington D.C. Fly-In
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# WEST VIRGINIA CHAMBER Resources



**Legislative Scorecard:** Following each legislative session, the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce releases a legislative scorecard, giving each lawmaker a grade based on business-friendly bill votes, business engagement and leadership qualities.



**Local Chamber Network:** Leading a network of more than 50 local chambers of commerce located in all corners of the state allows the West Virginia Chamber to reach more than 5,000 employers.



**Business Academy:** The West Virginia Chamber is the village green for businesses and a hub of connectivity. We are pleased to offer the Business Academy through partnerships with legal experts, legislative representatives, industry specialists and others to bring educational and certification tools through webinars and content.



**Substance Misuse Toolkit:** A drug-responsible workplace benefits your business, your employees and West Virginia communities. In this free, online toolkit, we provide education and resources to equip your business to prevent and respond to substance misuse and support employees in recovery.



**Design For Prosperity:** Strengthening West Virginia's ability to attract, retain and grow jobs for our state's workforce is the Chamber's focus. This publication outlines a foundation of growth as we work to create a vibrant state for West Virginians and their families.





**Jobs For West Virginia's Graduates:** West Virginia students are our future and greatest asset. JWVG helps students who are facing challenges realize their potential and reach their goals. This is achieved by placing a caring adult in their lives to help guide them toward high school graduation and equip them with the personal and professional skills to transition into higher education, the workforce or the military.



**Chamber Magazine:** The West Virginia Chamber of Commerce serves as the unified voice of business for its members. We publish a quarterly magazine that highlights business news in the Mountain State, including a Legislative Outlook outlining priorities of incoming legislators.



**West Virginia Chamber Foundation:** A 501c3 organization that is designed to educate and provide innovative policy change to improve academic achievement of West Virginia students and economic development opportunities throughout West Virginia.



**Welcoming and Accepting:** Businesses For Diversity & Inclusion: The business case for diversity and inclusion is real. Diversity in the workplace is beneficial. People with different backgrounds bring different perspectives and create a more robust, stimulating, and vibrant environment from which everyone can learn and grow.



**Leadership West Virginia:** The cultivation of new leadership is of utmost importance to West Virginia's future prosperity and progress. Leadership West Virginia works to develop and motivate a cross-section of leaders who will use their talent and abilities to inspire others and to foster a new spirit of energy, enthusiasm and vitality throughout the state.

HELPING BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS SUCCEED

# RESULTS DELIVERED:

## POLICY CHANGES:



**WORKFORCE**



**FAIR AND PREDICTABLE  
LEGAL CLIMATE**



**EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT**



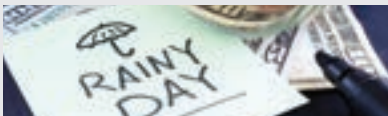
**WORKERS' COMPENSATION  
REFORMS**



**LOWER TAXES**



**REDUCING DEBT**



**RAINY DAY FUND**



**GOOD GOVERNMENT  
REFORMS**

## RESULTS:



**LOWEST UNEMPLOYMENT RATE**  
in over 40 Years (4%)



**STRONG JOB GROWTH**  
That is Nearly Back to  
Pre-Pandemic Levels



**\$1.7+ BILLION**  
**GENERAL REVENUE** On Track to  
Exceed Estimates by over \$1.7 Billion



**RAINY DAY FUND FULL**  
**\$1 BILLION**

## RECENT REVENUE COLLECTIONS:

**PERSONAL INCOME TAX**  
**\$730 MILLION** Over Estimates

**SEVERANCE TAX**  
**\$433 MILLION** Over Estimates

**CONSUMER SALES TAX**  
**\$104 MILLION** Over Estimates



Uniting Business • Advancing West Virginia