

Preston Chamber Meets to Discuss 2022 Legislative Session

Kingwood, WV-November 2, 2022—On Monday, November 1st, The Preston County Chamber of Commerce Legislative Committee met with Senators Dave Sypolt and Randy Smith and Delegates Terri Funk-Sypolt and Buck Jennings to discuss issues to be considered for the 2022 Legislative Agenda.

According to Kristy Ash, Director of the Chamber, “The Chamber’s goal is to advocate for an environment that promotes the success of our members and of the local economy and the purpose of our Legislative Committee is to be “our voice” on local, state and federal issues that positively or adversely affect our members and the community.”

Items on the Chamber’s agenda included State and Federal Grant Matches, which require at least a 20% match. These matches are cost prohibitive for many businesses and organizations. The Chamber is asking legislators to consider developing a fund that would be used for these matches. This could leverage millions of dollars for WV businesses and organizations that would not otherwise be obtainable.

The Chamber also discussed educational concerns, stating that WV is one of the most heavily legislated states in the nation, when it comes to education. The Chamber would like to see a step-back on legislation and voiced concerns about hiring laws, educational content and the state aid funding formula.

Concerns about road conditions and redistricting were also on the agenda, as well as inadequate signage as it relates to road conditions in the County. Additional discussions included promotional signage on I-68 for businesses, tourist attractions and points of interest.

Ongoing concerns were conveyed to the Legislators as they relate to our workforce and included funding requests for business incubators and workforce development resources. Also, due to the lack of adequate childcare facilities in our area, there was a request for legislation to review and simplify the red tape/process associated with opening a child care business and tax credits and incentives for businesses to offer in-house childcare for their employees. The Committee also requested legislation that would address incentives to work, allowing those on assistance the opportunity to work while keeping their benefits for

a period of time. Giving them the opportunity to develop skills and contribute to our workforce.

Finally, there was a request for long-term funding for programs that aide in the fight against the drug epidemic like sober living/resident facilities in the County, treatment programs and transportation to rehabilitation.

The Chamber has planned a Legislative Session Kick Off event for Thursday, December 16, 2021 and the Preston and Mon County Day at the Legislature on February 3, 2022 in Charleston.