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Kentucky Chamber's chief lobbyist to form public affairs firm in Frankfort



Frankfort, Ky. (June 9, 2009) - Mike Ridenour, the vice president of public affairs of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce has announced that he is establishing his own public affairs firm after nearly four years as the Kentucky Chamber's chief lobbyist. According to President and CEO Dave Adkisson, the Kentucky Chamber will be the first client of Ridenour's new firm when he opens the doors on July 1.

"Mike has done a terrific job helping the Chamber rebuild its public affairs division during the past four years. While we hate to lose his talent as our chief in-house lobbyist, we are proud to be Mike's first client and we are glad he will be actively representing us during the coming year," Adkisson said.

Ridenour, a native of Ashland, worked for the Kentucky Chamber in the 1990s, later served as vice president of public affairs for Commerce Lexington and served two years as chief lobbyist for Columbia Gas of Kentucky in Lexington. Adkisson recruited him from among dozens of candidates back to the Kentucky Chamber in 2005.

During his tenure with the Kentucky Chamber, the public affairs division has expanded and monitors hundreds of pieces of proposed legislation for the business community each year. The Chamber has grown dramatically and now employs 28 staff members in Frankfort. Currently the Chamber is expanding its headquarters by 70 percent, adding new offices and meeting rooms.

"When I came back to the chamber, I laid out a series of goals designed to help Dave and the Board reinvigorate the organization. What I thought might take five years to accomplish I'm proud to say actually took three. While I'm honored to have played a role, I credit Dave, an outstanding staff, and excellent volunteer leadership for this rapid turnaround. The chamber is now strong and poised to accomplish its work on behalf of the business community like never before," Ridenour said.

Adkisson announced that he has placed Bryan Sunderland, the Chamber's director of public affairs, in charge of the public affairs division. "Mike recruited and trained Bryan in public affairs and we won't miss a beat with Bryan in charge of the day-to-day activities of the division. He's a brilliant policy strategist and will provide great leadership during this transition," according to Adkisson.

The division includes public affairs managers Allyson Hamilton-McIntire, Tyler Campbell and Beverly Standifer, and is supported by policy consultants Diana Taylor, Bob Gray and John Cubine.

According to Adkisson, he does not plan to conduct a search to replace Ridenour at this time. "We have an outstanding team in place and Mike will still be an integral part of that team. We're in the business of uniting Kentucky's business community and advancing the Commonwealth."

During his tenure as a lead voice for the business community in Frankfort, Ridenour has been involved in nearly every major public policy debate since the early 1990's. Ridenour knows the policy makers and key staff throughout government and has broad experience with complex issues including business taxation, workers' compensation, energy, health care and insurance, environmental policy, and education and workforce development.

Ridenour's firm, Ridenour and Associates, will utilize his 17 years of experience in government relations, political analysis, and policy development to assist clients with their legislative and regulatory issues at all levels of government.

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About the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce

From its beginnings in 1946 as a bipartisan voice for business at the state Capitol, the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce has evolved into the premier business association in the state. Today the Chamber represents 2,700 member businesses – from Fortune 500 companies to family-owned shops – that employ over half of the Commonwealth's workforce. Kentucky Chamber members benefit from a broad range of services: year-round lobbying, timely communications on business issues, publications and seminars on evolving regulations and policies, and a variety of other member benefits.

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