



Pictured Above: Kentucky Chamber's Pension Task Force has been meeting for over a year, monitoring Kentucky's pension crisis and helping craft Chamber policies.

PENSION CRISIS CASTS SHADOW OVER *2018 Session*

As the state continues to struggle with how to tackle woefully underfunded pension systems, legislators face the daunting task of finding the resources to pay pension obligations while also crafting a sustainable budget during the 2018 session of the General Assembly that funds education, transportation, and other essential state government services.

The Kentucky Chamber has been a vocal proponent of pension reforms that keep the promises made to those in the system while also making changes to ensure the fiscal stability of the systems and the state. Because the pension problem is so significant, the upcoming legislative session is likely to see the pension crisis take much of the air out of the room for other needed legislation.

"The pension issue is the number one threat to the state's financial stability and must be addressed in

order to develop the state's biennial budget," Kentucky Chamber President and CEO Dave Adkisson said.

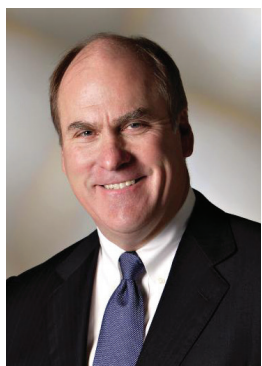
However, even with the pension crisis casting a shadow in 2018, progress must be made on many other fronts important to the business community.

The Kentucky Chamber has released its full legislative agenda highlighting many goals of the Commonwealth's business community.

The Chamber aligns its legislative priorities to the Four Pillars for Prosperity strategic plan, which focuses on issues that influence the state's economy and creating a more competitive Kentucky. The Chamber's legislative agenda is developed by several policy councils comprised of chamber members with final approval given by the Board of Directors.

[FIND A LIST OF THE CHAMBER'S 2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES, PAGE 2](#)

ALLIANCE RESOURCE CEO JOE CRAFT BEGINS *2018 Chairmanship*



JOE CRAFT
2018 BOARD CHAIR
Kentucky Chamber of Commerce
President and CEO,
Alliance Resource Partners LP

At the October meeting of the Kentucky Chamber Board of Directors, Bill Lear passed the leadership torch to Joe Craft, who will serve as chair for the 2018 Chamber year. Craft is President and Chief Executive Officer of Alliance Resource Partners LP.

Craft has dedicated his career to civic and industry leadership, currently serving as a Member of the Board of Directors for the BOK Financial Corporation, as a Director and Executive Committee member of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and is immediate past Chairman of the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity.

“It is an honor to lead Kentucky's **most important** pro-business organization.”

— Joe Craft, CEO, Alliance Resource Partners LP

"I think Joe Craft is a brilliant business leader whose track record, both in business and in politics, is virtually unequalled. I think he will be a strong leader for the Chamber and an influential voice in government circles on behalf of Kentucky's business interests," outgoing Chamber Board Chair Bill Lear said.

He is married to Kelly Craft, who was named the U.S. Ambassador to Canada by President Donald Trump. The Crafts engage in numerous charitable endeavors including founding and funding the Craft Academy at Morehead State University and the recent establishment of a

scholarship program for those graduates. In addition, the Crafts are major supporters of the University of Kentucky and its athletic programs.

"It is an honor to lead Kentucky's most important pro-business organization," Craft said. "The Chamber has a long and proud history of advocating for its members and for pro-growth policies that allow for job creation and greater opportunity for all Kentuckians. We will continue this legacy on my watch, and I look forward to using the Chamber's influence to help make Kentucky the best version of itself."

Paul Thompson, President and Chief Operating Officer of LG&E and KU Energy, has been named chair-elect for the coming year.

[VIEW THE FULL BOARD LISTING, INCLUDING NEW BOARD MEMBERS, ON PAGES 4 AND 5.](#)

CHAMBER WINS NATIONAL HONOR UNDER

Lear's Leadership

As the year comes to a close, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce Board Chairman Bill Lear says 2017 has been a whirlwind year that has shown the strength of the state's largest business organization through advocacy and initiatives to further advance the Commonwealth.

Lear, chairman emeritus at Stoll Keenon Ogden, PLLC, was named Chairman of the Board of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce in October 2016, succeeding Kevin Canafax, vice president of Fidelity Investments' Midwest Region.



Bill Lear
2017 BOARD CHAIR
Kentucky Chamber of Commerce
Chairman Emeritus,
Stoll Keenon Ogden, PLLC | Lexington

[SEE LEAR'S LEADERSHIP, PAGE 3](#)



Paul Thompson
2019 BOARD CHAIR-ELECT
Kentucky Chamber of Commerce
President and Chief Operating Officer,
LG&E and KU Energy

2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

BOLD STEPS FORWARD

In 2015 the Kentucky Chamber published its strategic plan, *"Four Pillars for Prosperity,"* with a focus on the state's economy and job creation. In the 2017 legislative session we saw a historic year for business policy, but there is still work to be done.

The Kentucky Chamber's 2018 Legislative Priorities outlines the bold steps needed to move Kentucky forward to become more competitive, prosperous, and business-friendly. These priorities were determined by our members through survey, research and discussion and ultimately voted on by our five policy councils and Board of Directors. These priorities serve as the plan of work for our public affairs team as they advocate on behalf of our membership during the 2018 session of the Kentucky General Assembly.

4 Pillars
Prosperity

PILLAR I: A HEALTHY, SKILLED WORKFORCE

Workforce

ADOPT ESSENTIAL SKILLS

The Chamber supports incorporating **key essential skills such as attendance, work ethic, and interpersonal skills into the state's K-12 education** accountability system to help students develop characteristics that will improve their prospect for success in both postsecondary education and the workplace.



ENACT STATEWIDE SMOKE-FREE LAW

Kentucky has the highest rate of adult smokers in the United States. **Smoking-attributable health expenditures are estimated at more than \$1.5 billion annually in Kentucky**, including over \$700 million in Medicaid taxpayer dollars, while smoking-attributable economic productivity loss is estimated at more than \$2.3 billion each year in Kentucky alone. The Chamber supports enacting a comprehensive statewide smoking law that prohibits smoking in indoor workplaces and public places, including restaurants, bars, and hotels.



INCREASE THE CIGARETTE TAX

Regular surveys of business leaders show that health care is the No. 1 cost driver for businesses. At 60 cents per pack, **Kentucky's cigarette tax ranks 43rd lowest among the states and is only 35% of the national average of \$1.69 per pack.**



As a meaningful step to improve the overall public health of Kentucky's citizens, the General Assembly **should increase Kentucky's excise tax on cigarettes by \$1.00 per pack.**

PILLAR II: SUSTAINABLE STATE GOVERNMENT

Government

PRIORITIZE GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCIES

The Kentucky Chamber supports a research-based top-to-bottom review of government expenditures and programs to improve efficiencies within state government, much like a private-sector company would pursue. **Inefficient spending programs should not consume tax dollars**, which could be invested in public priorities such as education and economic development.



CONTINUE JUSTICE CODE MODERNIZATION

Since 2011 Kentucky has made important progress in justice reform, however, more must be done to **address growing workforce needs and save taxpayer dollars.** The Chamber encourages the General Assembly to enact reforms to find alternatives to incarceration for low-level, non-violent crimes (focusing on jail time for more serious offenses) to help get first-time offenders back to work and contributing to our Commonwealth.



MODERNIZE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

The Chamber supports reforms to Kentucky's unemployment insurance benefit structure to **help employees return to work and gain access to training and career counseling.** This will help control costs, keep Kentucky competitive and increase workforce participation.



PILLAR III: 21ST CENTURY INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure

ENSURE AFFORDABLE ENERGY RESOURCES

The Chamber advocates for modern energy policies that support and maintain infrastructure investment and **ensure energy infrastructure costs are allocated fairly** among all users of the system.



DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE

Kentucky must take full advantage of its favorable geographic location—we are **within 600 miles of 65% of the nation's population.** To improve the ability of Kentucky companies to compete, we must place a greater emphasis on building and maintaining our state's infrastructure. Our focus must include energy, water, sewer, broadband and transportation systems like roads and bridges. The Chamber released The Citizens Guide to Kentucky Infrastructure in 2017 to highlight the various infrastructure needs of the Commonwealth.



The Chamber supports restoring the motor fuels variable fee to its 2015 level of 32.5 cents per gallon, an increase of 6.5 cents, which will provide \$100 million to the state road fund/\$95 million to local government. We also support increasing the fixed supplemental fee, adjusting various fees and creating a multi-modal transportation fund from General Fund dollars to provide additional funding.

PILLAR IV: AGGRESSIVE JOB CREATION

Jobs

CREATE A COMPETITIVE TAX CLIMATE

For Kentucky to compete, our tax code must be improved—the tax system is **too complex and compliance is too costly.** Currently, our code creates a competitive disadvantage by punishing economic productivity. Kentucky should shift from income-based taxes to consumption-based taxes, and avoid taxes on business-to-business services that effectively add a layer of cost for job creation.



IMPROVE WORKERS' COMPENSATION SYSTEM

The Chamber supports legislative and regulatory reforms to **control the rising medical and prescription drug costs** of the workers' comp system while also eradicating prescription drug abuse related to workers' compensation claims. Legislation should address unfair subrogation practices to protect employers from being penalized for the negligence of third parties that cause injuries to workers. Reforms are needed to update statutes that have been found unconstitutional by courts and clarify legislative intent. For Kentucky to compete **the system should be fair to the employee as well as the employer and should return the employee to work** as soon as medically appropriate.



IMPROVE LEGAL LIABILITY CLIMATE

The rising costs associated with medical malpractice liability creates increased costs for consumers and the inability to attract and retain sufficient numbers of physicians in all regions of the Commonwealth. The Chamber supports allowing voters to consider a **constitutional amendment to allow comprehensive tort reform.** State lawmakers should pass reasonable limits on damages and require alternative dispute resolution to help reduce escalating malpractice insurance premiums as these costs are passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices, fewer health care providers and fewer choices.



The Chamber also supports peer review legislation, which would increase protection for medical providers to effectively review their own performance in a frank and open manner without the threat of a lawsuit. **Kentucky is the only state in the U.S. that does not allow for confidential peer review**, which could lead to better health outcomes.

WANT TO READ MORE?

You can read more about these and other priorities in the full **2018 Legislative Agenda** at kychamber.com.



FROM THE FRONT

Lear's Leadership

In an interview with The Bottom Line about his year as chairman, Lear pointed to the number of significant issues tackled and achievements seen by the Chamber in 2017, which have received national recognition.

"This year has really underscored my opinion of just how strong the leadership of the Chamber is," Lear said. "And the pinnacle, the crowning touch, of all that work was the Chamber being named the number one state Chamber in the United States." Lear referenced the many legislative victories for the business community seen during the 2017 session with the help of the Kentucky Chamber's advocacy efforts. Lear, a former legislator, credited the General Assembly with the passage of critical pro-business legislation that has been part of the Chamber's agenda for many years.

"I do think there will be plenty of work to do going forward, which the Kentucky Chamber will be a very big part of," Lear said.

Discussing why the Chamber is valuable to businesses across the state, the outgoing chair said that while there are many benefits to membership with the organization, the advocacy efforts on behalf of the business community and network provided to members is immeasurable.

"The Chamber is the leading advocate for business in governmental circles, both in Frankfort and in Washington, D.C. Second, it is an organization which helps member businesses be better, both by exposing them to the best in new workforce programs




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and other matters of interest to their business, and in simply linking them together in a network of outstanding corporate citizens in Kentucky. And that applies to the biggest companies we have down to much smaller enterprises across the state," Lear said.

Lear noted the work of the Chamber on other fronts as well including the creation of a Workforce Center to bring the voice of business to the table as employers struggle to meet their hiring needs, the exclusive news and information members receive through their involvement, and much more as reasons the Chamber stands out as an organization of which he feels businesses need to be a part.

"If you are a member, you ought to stay. If you aren't a member, you ought to be. Because what the Chamber is all about is making Kentucky's business climate better, making Kentucky's economy stronger, and increasing wealth across the board for Kentucky's citizens," Lear said.



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2018 Kentucky Chamber

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Board Chair	Chair-Elect	Immediate Past Chair	Vice Chair, Administration	Vice Chair, Business Education	Vice Chair, Membership & Marketing	Vice Chair, Public Affairs	Treasurer
							
Joseph Craft III President/CEO Alliance Resource Partners, LP and Alliance Coal LLC Lexington	Paul Thompson President/COO LG&E and KU Energy LLC Louisville	Bill Lear Chairman Emeritus Stoll Keenon Ogden, PLLC Lexington	Nick Rowe SVP, Southeast Division President Kentucky American Water Lexington	Hood Harris President AT&T Kentucky Louisville	Rusty Chevront VP, State and Local Government Relations Brown-Forman Corporation Louisville	Nick D'Andrea VP, Public Affairs UPS Louisville	Winston Griffin Chairman of the Board/CEO Laurel Grocery Company London
Small Business Representative	At-Large Member	At-Large Member	At-Large Member	At-Large Member	Chair, Kentucky Chamber Foundation	President & CEO	
							
Don Bloomer President/CEO Citizens National Bank Somerset	Mike Castle CEO - Feed Division Alltech, Inc. Nicholasville	Candace McGraw CEO Cincinnati/Northern KY International Airport Hebron	Helen Sims Administrator/Owner Superior Care Home, Inc. Paducah	Kevin Smith VP, Kentucky Beam Bourbon Affairs Beam Suntory Clermont	Janet Jakubowicz Chair, Partnership Board Bingham, Greenebaum, Doll, LLP Louisville	Dave Adkisson President/CEO Kentucky Chamber of Commerce Frankfort	

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Pictured Above: Joe Steier and Tonya York Dees



Pictured Above: Doug Cobb



Pictured Above: Kimberly Knopf, Karrie and Kristin Knopf

CHAMBER CENTER LAUNCHES *Statewide Workforce Network*

A new online network created by the Kentucky Chamber Workforce Center will engage businesses, educators, policymakers and providers in one statewide conversation on issues and opportunities related to building and enhancing the state's workforce.

As employers continue to struggle to find qualified individuals to fill the jobs they have available, the Kentucky Chamber Workforce Center's goal is to help ensure that the needs of businesses are met as Kentucky works to strengthen the workforce.

The state's first workforce network developed by the business community is designed specifically for people interested and involved in workforce improvement efforts. It will provide information on best practices, program developments, resources, challenges, and creative ideas to spur progress in aligning talent and workplace needs.

MORE INFO

More information about the Workforce Center and a link to join the network can be found at kychamber.com/workforcecenter or by contacting workforcecenter@kychamber.com.

THREE INDUCTED INTO KENTUCKY ENTREPRENEUR *Hall of Fame*

The Kentucky Entrepreneur Hall of Fame honored three of the commonwealth's most accomplished entrepreneurs at a ceremony in partnership with the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.

The Kentucky Entrepreneur Hall of Fame celebrates the stories of Kentucky's most successful entrepreneurs, with a mission to raise awareness around the impact entrepreneurship has made in the Commonwealth, and to encourage others to pursue similar ambitious endeavors.



The 2017 Kentucky Entrepreneur Hall of Fame Induction Celebration, *presented by Delta Dental*, acknowledged three of Kentucky's most successful entrepreneurs including:

- **Doug Cobb**, *Founder, The Cobb Group and Chrysalis Ventures*
- **Kimberly Knopf**, *Founder, Innovative Mattress Solutions*
- **Joe Steier**, *Founder, Professional Healthcare Services and Signature HealthCare*

The induction celebration honored the Emerging Entrepreneurs Class of 2017 which includes:

- **Twyman Clements**, *Cofounder and CEO, Space Tango Inc.*
- **Stacy Griggs**, *President and CEO, El Toro*

In addition, Bryce Butler, Founder & Managing Partner of Access Ventures was recognized as Investor of the Year and Elizabeth Rounsavall, Consultant and Angel Investor, Rounsavall Investments was recognized as Mentor of the Year.

The Kentucky Chamber of Commerce partners with *Awesome Inc* and *Sustainable Business Ventures* on the Kentucky Entrepreneur Hall of Fame (KEHOF).

For more information about the Kentucky Entrepreneur Hall of Fame, visit entrepreneurhof.com.

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WORKFORCE CENTER RECEIVES \$100,000 Grant

A \$100,000 grant from the JP Morgan Chase Foundation will be used to support the Kentucky Chamber Workforce Center's efforts to help school students develop the essential skills they need to succeed in life and the workplace.

Employers across Kentucky frequently cite the lack of essential skills – basic self-management characteristics like punctuality, getting along with others, communicating effectively and maintaining a drug-free lifestyle – as a critical problem among their employers. The Chamber Workforce Center is focused on elevating these skills among the workforce – beginning in the state's classrooms – as one of its key objectives.

The efforts will include strengthening the state's accountability system that tracks school performance by incorporating opportunities for students to develop essential skills from the time they begin school until they graduate. The Kentucky Chamber is also spearheading work to address the need for improving essential skills through legislation that the 2018 General Assembly is expected to consider.

"Workforce is a critical issue across Kentucky, and essential skills are key to workplace success," noted Beth Davisson, Executive Director of the Kentucky Chamber Workforce Center. "Businesses throughout the Commonwealth are unable to grow without the right talent in place, and the efforts of our Workforce Center demonstrate our dedication to preparing Kentucky's workforce and to building a thriving economy."

The Kentucky Chamber extends a special thank you to board member Paul Costel, President of Chase Kentucky, for this important support for the Workforce Center.



Paul Costel
PRESIDENT
Chase Kentucky



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CHAMBER TRAVELS STATE WITH 2018 Priorities



Kentucky Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Dave Adkisson has traveled around the state to present the 2018 Legislative Agenda, containing the top priorities of the business community. The tour of briefings features discussion about the biggest issues facing the legislature in 2018 and how they fit into the Chamber's **Four Pillars for Prosperity** report.

The statewide briefing tour is aimed at familiarizing members of more than 15 local chambers of commerce with the priorities of the Kentucky Chamber. Issues the Chamber places significant emphasis on include pension reforms, a responsible state budget, tax reform, essential skills legislation, and more.

FIND A LIST OF THE CHAMBER'S 2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES, PAGE 2

Thank you for your investment.

The following is a list of new members of the Kentucky Chamber. Please help us thank these companies for investing in the Chamber's mission by giving them your business.

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- Southeastern Kentucky Rehabilitation Industries
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Kentucky Chamber News is published six times per year by the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.

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**BOLD STEPS FORWARD:
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