The Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce is the region’s largest business advocacy organization representing approximately 1,000 businesses and an estimated 30,000 employees. As an investor-driven organization, the Chamber serves as the VOICE of the business community and presents a united effort on our community’s behalf.
Department of Transportation
The Paducah Chamber supports the community’s BUILD grant application through the Department of Transportation. We urge DOT to give full consideration and a favorable awarding. The Paducah area, with support from federal, state and private investments, has put a tremendous amount of resources into the growth and development of transportation-related activities.

Paducah Riverfront Infrastructure Improvement Project - BUILD
Located at the confluence of the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers, the City of Paducah is positioned to play an important role in the future of the American inland waterway system both for goods movement and people movement. To support economic activity and development related to container-on-barge service and improvements to the riverfront, the City in partnership with the Paducah-McCracken County Riverport Authority is applying for a BUILD grant.

The project is made up of two components that are located along the city’s waterfront: Riverfront Commons and the Riverport Container Transfer Yard. The Riverfront Commons is located in the heart of an Opportunity Zone and a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district for Downtown Paducah.

Riverfront Commons focuses on improving the accessibility and safety of the riverfront area for all modes, ages and abilities. Proposed improvements include:

 ✓ Excursion Pier and Plaza
 ✓ Transient Dock Landing
 ✓ Four intersection improvements and a multi-use pathway.

Riverport focuses on the continued development of container-on-barge service.

Project Cost and Funding: The request is for $4.28 million for the Transient Dock, $7.2 million for the Excursion Pier and $5.3 million for the Riverport. The City has committed $1.25 million for the Riverfront and $250,000 for the Riverport.

As the applicant, the City has worked to meet US DOT’s goal that rural applicants “partner with state, local and private entities for the completion and operation of transportation infrastructure.” The City also collaborated with “neighboring or regional jurisdictions to achieve local and regional benefits.”
New Terminal for Barkley Regional Airport

The Paducah Chamber supports new construction to replace the airport’s outdated terminal. The current terminal building is functionally, economically, and spatially obsolete. Built in 1953, it suffers from many issues related to materials and methods used in construction during this period.

The structure's layout inhibits the implementation of many modern conveniences and prevents the use of a wider array of security protocols and equipment TSA currently has available. The space limitations of the building inhibit further growth, be it additional airlines, larger aircraft, additional revenue generating opportunities to help the airport become more self-sufficient, and even a potential need for U.S. Customs operations in the future. The terminal does not allow airport staff to fully provide customers an optimal and fully efficient travel experience.

Barkley Regional Airport is an economic development engine for the entire region. The airport has an economic impact of over $43 million for our region and is a key component for any future economic growth in our area. The current terminal is not an accurate or presentable "front door" to the region and does not exemplify or represent the modern, forward thinking community(ies) for which it makes the first impression, nor does it illustrate what the area has to offer to prospective companies and their employees.

Currently, the airport offers travelers 19 weekly United Express flights to Chicago O'Hare and one-stop connectivity to over 200 cities worldwide. In 2018 the airport served 41,835 passengers. Since the United Express service began in 2010, the airport has seen the emergence of an international travel market that now accounts for 6-8 percent of its total annual passenger traffic. With increased foreign investment in our region, this number is expected to grow. The airport currently serves passengers from a 100-mile radius from Kentucky, Illinois, Tennessee and Missouri.

The Barkley Regional Airport Authority Board has taken important steps to advance efforts toward receiving funding from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to build a new terminal. The total cost of the project will be determined when design work is completed. Currently the FAA will fund at a 95% rate all grant-eligible portions of the project from the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Trust Fund (monies collected from airline, passenger and cargo taxes). The remaining cost will need to be funded from local sources as well as state and other federal grants and/or sources. The process is expected to take several years to fully complete. The firm CHA was chosen by the Board for the civil engineering work and Allianze was chosen for the architecture design.

"A new terminal will provide a return on investment...you get something out of this airport if you never set foot in the airport...,” Col. Steve Parker, retired Kentucky Commissioner of Aviation, recently told a Paducah Chamber breakfast audience. The Paducah Sun, 8/2/19

Essential Air Service (EAS) Funding: Supports continued EAS Funding that is vital to the future of Barkley Regional Airport. Demonstrating the success of air carrier activity at Barkley, the EAS subsidy is the 8th lowest in the country.

Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Grants: Supports the continuation of funding for these grants. Paducah has utilized about $36 million in Entitlement and Discretionary AIP. The vast majority of these improvements would not have occurred without the AIP program.
To advance the cleanup of the Paducah (KY) DOE site, an increase in funding is requested of $30 million annually for a total of $300 million. This additional funding is to allow for specific steps needed to accelerate the site’s cleanup. As Environmental Management (EM) strives to shift to higher value work, the removal of R-114 (refrigerant) would propel the cleanup mission for the Paducah site forward quicker. Paducah is home of one of the world’s largest concentrations of R-114, which is an ozone depleting product. There are 8.5 million pounds at the Paducah site causing it to be one of DOE’s largest environmental risks.

This multi-year removal project would open the path for the next steps needed that include the removal of equipment in the buildings and ultimately the demolition of the buildings. This additional funding would reduce this environmental risk, a goal of EM and a goal of the local community.

In addition to the R-114 removal, additional work would be completed to remove the large components from the enrichment buildings. This work would include the removal of motors, compressors and convertors. Removing these components and shipping offsite for direct disposal would reduce the surveillance and maintenance costs of these structures and reduce a large risk and hazard at the site. The Deactivation and Remediation contractor is currently piloting this disposal effort in 2019 for the large components so that additional shipments will be ready for 2020.

The R-114 and equipment in the buildings have to be removed before the four major process buildings, covering approximately 75 acres on the site, can be prepared at a faster pace for demolition. This would reduce the lifecycle costs and limit additional environmental degradation.

Overall the completion of these projects would reduce the site inventory, show visible progress, reduce hazards and risks, lessen the government’s future liability, and position the site for clean up faster, all of which will save the government money in the long run by reducing the duration of the cleanup. Cleanup is now projected for 2065. Our community is interested in seeing completion before this date.

The local community is appreciative of the work completed since the deactivation began in 2014. Our local community leaders have worked closely with our congressional delegation and DOE to ensure stable funding. We know EM is taking steps to get the best value out of every dollar. This modest additional investment for the Paducah site will allow for more actual cleanup work to move forward and yield impactful results.

Agency Request: U.S. Department of Energy > Office of Science > Environmental Management > Uranium Enrichment Decontamination and Decommissioning Fund

Requested Amount: $300 million for Paducah DOE site, located in McCracken County, an increase of $30 million above the 2015 DOE baseline for Paducah site

The Paducah/McCracken County community was honored in 2016 to be invited to have a permanent display in the Forrestal Building of the DOE Headquarters in Washington.
Education and Workforce

Center of Excellence Designation for West Kentucky Community and Technical College: Supports a Center of Excellence designation at West Kentucky Community and Technical College (WKCTC) through the NDAA Section 3507. This authorization allows the Secretary of Transportation to designate as a Center of Excellence for domestic maritime workforce training and education, a covered training entity located in a state that borders the Mississippi River System.

WKCTC meets all eligibility requirements under the statute and offers academic degrees and training in Marine Technology through its Inland Logistics and Marine Institute and Workforce Solutions. To have this important designation is a vital addition to Paducah’s long history as a leader in the marine industry and will have significant impact on our community.

WKCTC is one of sixteen colleges of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS), the largest provider of postsecondary education in the Commonwealth. Approximately 38% of the state’s undergraduate population attend one of its sixteen colleges. KCTCS is also the largest provider of dual credit, online education, and workforce education. Additionally, KCTCS is the only higher education institution statutorily mandated by the General Assembly to provide workforce education and training. As such, KCTCS serves over 5,000 businesses annually.

Higher Education Act: Supports federal legislation, including reauthorization of the Higher Education Act to:
• Maintain funding levels and modernize Pell Grants to better serve today’s non-traditional, low income students and incentivize completion.
• Improve college access and affordability for all students.
• Increase accountability and transparency over federal financial aid and student loan programs.

STEM/STEAM Funding: Supports preparing the next generation to enter a globalized workforce that has an increased focus on science, technology, engineering, and math, together with art, that are critical to connecting businesses with qualified workers. Education and workforce programs are vital to filling open positions.

Workforce Development Programs: Supports continued investments in workforce development and reform efforts aimed at improving alignment, flexibility and collaboration among public and private sector leaders to meet employer needs, including support for the Department of Labor’s proposal to create an industry-led apprenticeship program and provide more flexibility and support to employers for skills training.

Creative Entrepreneurs: S. 650 / H. R. 1519 CREATE Act (Comprehensive Resources for Entrepreneurs in the Arts to Transform the Economy): Supports this legislation to more thoroughly serve the people, places and programs that make our nation’s creative economy prosper in all its cultural, social, and commercial forms. Through minor adjustments to federal programs and funding, the CREATE Act takes steps to better invest in our country’s workforce and creative industries, while empowering the entrepreneurial spirit of artists and supporting their role as contributors to the small business sector.

Arts Funding: Supports the continuation of grants funding that provides assistance to local cultural organizations. Grants in our community from the National Endowment for the Arts have been awarded to West Kentucky Community & Technical College – School of Art and Design, the City of Paducah and the Market House Theatre. These grants also help our community to increase local support for community projects. As a UNESCO Creative City, Paducah recognizes the value of arts and culture as an economic driver and leverages creativity for a sustainable future in the arts, business and education.
Infrastructure Investments – Inland Waterways

Inland waterways play a key role in international and domestic trade and in the economy of Paducah-McCracken County and the surrounding area. Full federal funding to support critical water infrastructure improvements is necessary to promote inland waterway commerce.

Kentucky Lock: Supports FY 2020 designation of $66.1 million for Kentucky Lock and Dam which will allow the award of the project’s largest construction contract—the Downstream Lock Monoliths.

Additional Fees: Opposes additional taxation, tolling, lockage fees or other changes for the users of the inland waterways system; supports Operations and Maintenance of the Inland Waterways Transportation System remain a fully Federal responsibility.

FY 2020 Energy and Water Appropriations: Supports appropriation of the full amount supportable by the diesel fuel tax receipts deposited into the Inland Waterways Trust Fund.

Inland Waterways Transportation Fund (IWTF) Construction Projects: Supports conforming the cost-sharing for IWTF-financed construction projects to require 25% of the project cost to be derived from the IWTF and the remaining 75% from General Revenues--the same formula used for Deep Draft navigation projects.

Asian Carp Funding: Supports funding to combat the serious threat of Asian Carp in Kentucky Lake, Lake Barkley and the Ohio and Mississippi River basins. This provision also provides $11 million for the Fish and Wildlife Service to control Asian Carp in both lakes and the larger river basins. Fishing is a multi-billion dollar industry in Kentucky providing an estimated $1.2 billion in revenues to the western Kentucky economy.

Paducah-McCracken County Riverport

American Marine Highway Projects Grants: Requests that the matching fund requirement for American Marine Highway Projects grants be adjusted for small communities (same as the BUILD grant) to even the playing field between small communities and metropolitan communities. The current matching fund requirement is unfair to small communities.

Grant Funding for Bulk Cargoes: Requests that the Maritime Administration consider expanding grant funding for bulk cargoes, such as conveyor belts, dry storage buildings, and material handlers, for inland ports, possibly mirroring the small shipyard grants.

Railroad

Supports increased federal funding for maintaining and improving the safety of railroad infrastructure. Dedicated resources for short line tracks and regional railroads are critical for the sustainability and improvement of multi-modal freight transportation in the greater Paducah area.

Supports short line railroads by making the “45G” short line tax credit permanent. The credit incentivizes railroads to increase their investments, rehabilitate their tracks, and expand capacity, which ultimately allows short lines to safely and efficiently serve their customers.
Infrastructure Investments

Transportation Investments: Urges the Kentucky federal delegation to support reauthorization bills that continue long-term funding solutions to strengthen all transportation systems and additional investment packages in critical infrastructure for economic development, public safety and workforce development. A necessary component in developing a healthy economy is availability of adequate and reliable transportation, including air, roads, bridges, railways, waterways, public transit systems and broadband.

Interstate Highway I-69: Encourages continued expansion of the interstate highway system to meet the transportation needs of this century, including I-69, to provide safe, affordable and reliable highway transportation which is critical to economic growth. We respectively request the full inclusion of I-69 in the National Highway Freight Network.

Supports:
• Modernizing the Federal Fuels User Fee that has not been updated since the 1990s and has failed to keep up with inflation.
• Secure passage of major infrastructure legislation to ensure long-term economic growth.
• Securing full funding for transportation programs in appropriations bills.

Public Transit: Encourages the Department of Transportation to reconsider the 20% match required by local and state agencies on all capital projects. With the state having exhausted all of its Toll Credits that have previously been used for the matching funds, this will put a greater burden on local agencies to match any future Federal Capital grant requests.

Business and Commerce

Industrial Hemp: Supports finding a solution to ensure the safe transportation of hemp shipments across state lines and to assist officials with distinguishing industrial hemp; and supports efforts that clarify the legality of financial transactions in hemp commerce and that promote fair and expeditious regulations of hemp products like cannabidiol (CBD) by the Food and Drug Administration. Kentucky is one of the leading producers of industrial hemp with it becoming an important agricultural crop for farmers in western Kentucky.

International Travel: Supports promoting more secure and efficient travel process for international visitors and business travelers, including increasing the use of the Trusted Traveler and Visa Waiver Programs, improving visa processing, and encouraging visa reform. Long delays and wait times for visitors and business travelers at customs and entry points can discourage international travel to the U. S. and economic development opportunities. Because of the International Quilt Shows hosted by the American Quilter’s Society in Paducah, the recent acquiring of a local paper mill by a Chinese firm and other internationally-owned companies in our area, it is very important that international travel to our country and our community be an easy process.

International Trade: Supports fair and free trade policies that open markets abroad to Kentucky businesses and remove barriers that shut U.S. exports out of foreign markets.

Banking Regulations: Urges Congress to review and repeal overly burdensome banking regulations that stifle lending to businesses, increase costs and prevent investment. Regulations for banks should take a tailored approach and include risk rather than just asset size.
Small Business

Small Business Development Centers: Encourages full federal funding for Small Business Development Centers, which support entrepreneurs and small businesses with technical assistance, capacity building, and numerous other key services.

Reduce Barriers to Utilization of SBA 7 (a) Loan Program: Supports reviewing changes made to the SBA 7 (a) loan program that made it more difficult for small businesses to utilize this loan program; eliminating the standardization of criteria—the “one size fits all” policy; and allowing local-decision making by the financial institution.

Our philosophy is: “We never want it to be said in our state or national capitol that we are only noticed by our absence. We will be noted for our presence.”

The Annual DC Fly In, coordinated by the Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce, involves approximately 50 local citizens from several West Kentucky counties.