



Why we need to Advocate for our Community

By Mike McDorman, President & CEO

The Greater Springfield Partnership

I am a BIG believer in the importance of the advocacy work that Chambers of Commerce do on behalf of their business members and respective communities throughout Ohio. That is why I am participating on a committee formed by the Chambers of Commerce Executives of Ohio to help foster advocacy efforts for its members located across the state of Ohio through awareness, training, and engagement activities. The Springfield community has benefitted greatly from the advocacy work The Greater Springfield Partnership (GSP) is doing to help implement sound policy and priority funding strategies and continues to move forward because of our advocacy efforts.

Over a decade ago, the GSP formed a legislative committee to begin to track federal, state, and local issues affecting our businesses, as well as the greater Springfield community. We developed an annual legislative agenda and continue to work on the key issues affecting our city and county.

The GSP also helps lead the community's Greater Springfield Moving Forward Vision Plan with its four pillar committees, as well as the Priority Development Advocacy Committee which helps identify funding opportunities for important public projects via the state's capital bill process along with various funding opportunities available at the federal level. Since the formation of these groups, The GSP and the associated committees have collectively advocated for more than \$70 million for important projects like: construction of PrimeOhio II; formation of a Convention Facilities Authority; formation of a Career ConnectEd Center/STEM school; addition of a downtown park; addition of a downtown parking garage; adaptation of old and construction of new downtown buildings with mixed use spaces; and are presently working to upgrade the community's

premiere South Limestone gateway interchange leading into the City of Springfield.

Although we have accomplished much in a short amount of time as a community, we cannot ultimately be successful without the help of our regional partners. That is why The GSP serves as a co-sponsor of the Dayton Region's Washington DC Fly-in which occurs every spring minus COVID-19. It helps bring together more than 150 leaders from throughout the region to advocate with one voice at the federal level for the key assets and aspirations of our region. It has also helped serve to pull our local leadership team together with approximately ten local leaders and politicians attending from Clark County.

The relationships that have been fostered over many years on that annual trip have really paid off as our community continues to pursue funding for many of the important projects coming to fruition during this time.

Recently, we needed congressional help in working with the Department of Energy on a complicated issue related to their asset located in Springfield. We connected with Congressman Davidson on what we needed to accomplish, and he and his team began working on the issue. However, it ultimately took Congressman Davidson soliciting the help of our entire regional congressional delegation to finally get what is now known as the Power Act approved by Congress and signed by the President before the end of last year. What seemed impossible a few short months ago was accomplished through the strong support and advocacy of the Dayton Development Coalition and our congressional representatives. We are now in possession of that important asset and marketing it as a 40,000 square foot Class A office opportunity to grow high paying jobs in our community.

We hope you now have a better understanding of why it is so important for The GSP to work with local and regional partners to advocate for our community. Our community is moving forward because we are all advocating together for the progressive policies and funding opportunities that are stimulating a local economy that has been dormant for a long time. We are waking up and now have growing momentum that will help propel us into a brighter future!

