



The Regional Business Council

Overview

The St. Louis Regional Business Council (RBC) is a new vehicle for engaging the civic energy and resources of the region's mid-cap companies. The RBC was incubated by the St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association (RCGA) and spun out as an independent organization in 2000. The impetus for creating RBC was the desire of mid-cap CEOs to have a unique voice and organization in civic affairs.

RBC is focused on uniting and engaging members to act on high-impact business, civic and philanthropic initiatives for the betterment of the St. Louis region. RBC's goals are to work closely with major business organizations on select high-impact issues to: develop a more networked and united regional business community; enhance the business climate in the region; improve the quality of life of the region; create an increased pool of business leaders involved in regional initiatives and civic projects; and increase the level of civic and philanthropic investment in those projects.

Regional Priorities

RBC is involved in several regional initiatives including governance, K-12 education, higher education, business diversity and arts and culture. In most cases, RBC works in partnership with other business and civic groups to accomplish regional objectives. For example, RBC is a collaborative partner in *Forward Metro St. Louis* with Civic Progress, St. Charles Partners for Progress, RCGA and the Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois. *Forward Metro St. Louis* is the business community's effort to unite on regional public policy. In 2003, its agenda included fostering regional cooperation and success, government accountability and fiscal stability, policies directed to job creation and economic growth and equity for the St. Louis region.

In terms of K-12 education, RBC has selected two very distinct programs that support disadvantaged youth. The Council is supporting three city elementary schools located in the Vashon Education Compact. The Regional Business Council will complete a substantial financial and volunteer commitment made to

ORGANIZATIONAL SNAPSHOT

Type of Organization

Exclusively led by companies or employers

Unit of Membership

Company/organization

Number of Members

2003: 95
1998: 50

Membership by Company Size

Small Companies: 0%
Mid-sized Companies: 70%
Large Companies: 30%

Dues Determined by

Flat dues or fees

Annual Dues Paid by

Largest Member Companies: N/A
Smallest Member Companies: N/A

Annual Operating Budget

2003: Less than \$500,000
1998: \$500,000 to less than \$1 million

Staff Members (FTE)

2003: 3
1998: 3

Board Members

2003: 95

Regional Priorities

Governance; K-12 Education; Higher Education; Diversity Arts and Culture; Strong Regional Business Community

ST. LOUIS BUSINESS DIVERSITY INITIATIVE

Over 45 Regional Business Council companies are currently participating in the St. Louis Business Diversity Initiative — a collaborative effort to create an expanded and diversified talent pool and supplier base in the St. Louis region.

Launched in 2001, the St. Louis Business Diversity Initiative helps area companies build successful diversity programs. The Initiative is made up of companies, organizations and agencies committed to attracting and retaining talented, diverse employees and to building business with minority suppliers.

In addition to RBC, the Initiative is sponsored by Civic Progress, FOCUS St. Louis, the Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois, RCGA, the St. Louis Minority Business Council and St. Louis 2004.

support the three schools and the Compact. It is also a priority of RBC to advocate for urban school district reform and board/school accountability through Mayor Francis Slay's Education Coalition. In addition, RBC is assisting Cardinal Ritter College Preparatory School by working with the school's administrators to provide internships in RBC companies to the school's graduates. In 2002, RBC also assisted the school with its \$33 million capital campaign to build a new school now located in Grand Center neighborhood.

Structure and Operations

The Regional Business Council has a small staff of only three full-time staff members. RBC is exclusively led by mid- to large-sized companies. For example, 70% of RBC's membership is listed as mid-sized companies (100 to 500 employees) and 30% are large companies. Despite only having three full-time employees, RBC has a large Board of 95 members — almost twice the amount in 1998 (50). The annual budget of RBC has declined since 1998. It was reported that RBC's annual budget was between \$500,000 and \$1 million in 1998; in 2003 the budget was less than \$500,000 annually.