

PRESS RELEASE

Reno Sparks Chamber of Commerce Urges Legislature to Implement Long-Term Spending Reforms

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(1-15-09) - Reno, NV– The Reno Sparks Chamber of Commerce, Northern Nevada’s largest business organization, applauds Governor Gibbons for the steps he has taken to deal with this unprecedented budget crisis. As the private sector has taken aggressive steps in response to the current economic downturn, the governments of the State of Nevada should do so as well.

Before there is any discussion of increased taxes, the Legislature must address long-term structural spending issues. Taking more money out of the private sector and out of the paychecks of working Nevadans should be a last resort.

When the Legislature convenes on February 2nd, the Reno Sparks Chamber expects the following issues to be addressed:

-The Spending and Government Efficiency (SAGE) Commission has released two reports to date that present potential savings of over \$1 billion over five years. Steps must be taken to analyze and implement these reforms as soon as possible.

-The Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) and the Public Employee Benefits Program (PEBP) must be restructured to reduce unfunded long-term liabilities of billions of dollars. Public employee pay and benefit packages must be more in line with the private sector.

-NRS 288 must be revisited to allow Nevada’s local governments greater control and more flexibility over their labor contracts. The negotiation process must be more transparent and accessible to the public. Prevailing wage laws should be reviewed so that our public construction projects are not inflated by

excessive union wages.

-Enforcement efforts related to tax and fee collection must be enhanced to ensure that everyone is paying what they owe to the people of Nevada.

-Binding spending caps and a meaningful rainy day fund is needed. The Legislature must be forced to set aside money during prosperous times in order to stabilize the budget during economic downturns.

"Nevada taxpayers deserve assurances that current resources are spent as effectively and efficiently as possible" stated Doug Kurkul, Chamber CEO. "Increasing taxes, especially in today's weak economy, should be considered only after substantial progress has been made on necessary spending reforms. The Reno Sparks Chamber looks forward to working with all policymakers to address these important issues."

The Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce has done an outstanding job with its release of several reports outlining the details of the issues identified above. You can find those reports at www.lvchamber.com. The Reno Sparks Chamber pledges to work with the Las Vegas Chamber and any other Nevadan who is concerned about these issues.

The Reno Sparks Chamber of Commerce, with nearly 1,500 members, is Northern Nevada's largest business organization. It offers a powerful combination of business leads, access to business and political leaders, pro-business advocacy, leadership development, savings opportunities and programs targeted to members' interests.

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