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BUSINESS

pg. 6

How we're addressing the **NEED FOR MORE HEALTH CARE WORKERS**



14 MO CEO pulse

24 PARTY LIKE IT'S 1923

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THE WAR FOR TALENT

What we're doing to win

"We have a lot of jobs, but not enough workers to fill them."

Sound familiar?

I hear this refrain from large manufacturers and mom-and-pop shops, from Joplin to Jefferson City. It's especially concerning, though, when I hear this from the leaders of our state's health care providers.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, our country's health care system will need 2.6 million more workers in the next eight years to meet demand – and that's not just doctors and nurses. A 2023 report from the Missouri Hospital Association includes surgical techs, nurse assistants and radiology techs among the top 10 hospital professions with the highest vacancy rates in Missouri.

That's where the Missouri Chamber Foundation's Industry-Driven Healthcare Apprenticeship Program (IDHAP) comes in. It's a long name for a program with a simple goal: address Missouri's workforce shortage by training up to 1,500 apprentices in health care fields. The best part? This program is a win-win for employers and employees. Health care systems build their talent pipeline while workers gain on-the-job training for a new career with more earning potential.

Of course, health care is just one small piece of the puzzle. What else can we do to meet the demand for workers and keep good talent here in Missouri?

This past fall, I had the privilege of hearing from Kat Saunders, partner at Economic Leadership, LLC, at the Missouri Chamber's Workforce2030 Conference. A few facts from her presentation stood out to me.

When people were asked what they look for when deciding on a job and location, cost of living was the No. 1 factor. Here, the Show Me State has a clear advantage. Missouri had the sixth lowest cost of living in the U.S. for the third quarter of 2023 according to the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center.

Next highest in importance, though, were housing and safety/crime rates.

In the Missouri Chamber's CEO Survey, 90 percent of business leaders said public safety was either a top concern or a growing concern.

To keep workers here in Missouri and attract those looking to relocate, we must address crime in our state and the perception that it fosters. Our Safer Missouri, Stronger Missouri report summed it up best: "The negative national attention stalls economic growth as it hinders the recruitment of talent and business investment. The persistent headlines raise doubts about the future. But most importantly, the day-to-day impacts on Missouri lives and communities are unacceptable."

During the 2024 legislative session, the Missouri Chamber will be championing bills and budget items aimed at helping employers find talent – and that starts with public safety.

Another area of focus will be increasing access to affordable child care. With unemployment near record lows, we can't afford to lose a single worker due to a lack of child care availability. The Missouri Chamber will once again advocate for the passage of a child care tax credit package to increase the capacity of child care providers and help businesses offer child care benefits to support the retention and recruitment of employees.

You can read more about our 2024 legislative priorities on pages 12-13.

It's clear that Missouri's workforce challenges aren't going away anytime soon.

However, they also present tremendous opportunities if we address them with intention and work together to win the war for talent.



Daniel P. Mehan
President and CEO



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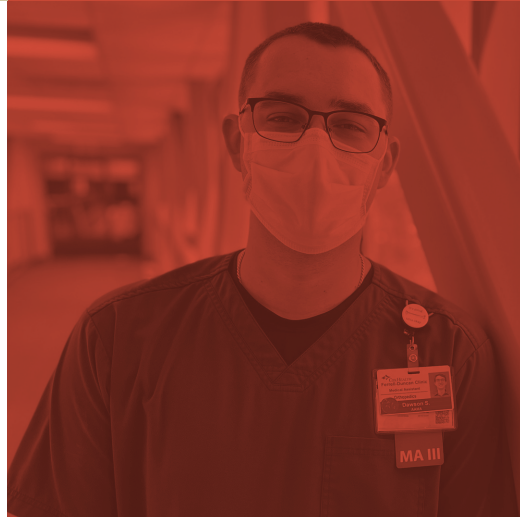
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Missouri Chamber program looks to address

NEED FOR MORE HEALTH CARE WORKERS



Kristen Blum spent nearly 10 years as a server. But after a decade waiting tables, the Springfield, Mo., resident felt stuck.

She didn't have the money to get more education. Then she found out about an emergency medical technician (EMT) apprenticeship program at CoxHealth in Springfield, where apprentices are paid while they are trained.

"When this was offered to me, it was a huge milestone in my life, and I was able to enter the health care field," Blum said. "My father, who also works in emergency medical services, told me about the program and was very excited that I was choosing this career path."

CoxHealth is one of six health care providers taking part in the Missouri Chamber Foundation's **Industry-Driven Healthcare Apprenticeship Program**. The other providers participating are BJC HealthCare, Hannibal Regional Healthcare System, Jordan Valley Community Health Center, Mercy and University Health.

The Missouri Chamber is proud to support health care apprenticeships through the Department of Economic Development and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The program is funded by a \$3 million ARPA grant and a \$1.35 million federal appropriation, and it draws inspiration from the successful Industry-Driven IT Apprenticeship Grant also managed by the Missouri Chamber Foundation.

"We've seen a lot of challenges coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic," said Todd Aherns, president and CEO of Hannibal Regional Healthcare System. "There's a critical shortage of health care professionals across the state, so anything we can do to support bringing in bedside and clinical folks is a huge help to the health care system."

During the grant cycle, which runs through January 2026, employers taking part in the program will be awarded \$2,000 for each apprentice they train for occupations such as:

Medical assistant | Surgical technician
Pharmacy technician | Phlebotomist
Medical coder | Radiology/CT technician
Certified nursing assistant | Dental assistant
Biomedical equipment technician | EMT



“Registered apprenticeships have value because they allow us to provide both the knowledge that individuals need, as well as the skills they need for their job,” said Russell Hoffman, vice president of the Institute of Learning and Development at BJC HealthCare. “But what’s most important is that they are embedded in our workplace.”

The goal is to train up to 1,500 apprentices via this grant. A key objective is cultivating a diverse workforce by working with people from various backgrounds, including people of color, those with low income, the unemployed and underemployed, disabled individuals and veteran workers.

“For example, someone can deliver meals to our patients, and they’ll get to see the other jobs throughout the hospital. They

could decide the role of patient care is for them, so they can come to us, and we can help them start on another career path,” said Beth Camp, supervisor for workforce development and academic partnerships for the BJC Institute.

The program is aligned with the ARPA workforce grant’s intention, striving to transition over 95 percent of trained apprentices into permanent, full-time employees.

“We’ve seen a diverse group of individuals looking to apprenticeship opportunities, but the main thing we have seen with candidates is the desire to provide more for their families,” said Dr. Ruth Stricklen Pullins, chief human resources, diversity, equity, and inclusion officer for University Health in Kansas City. “They see this as a

wonderful opportunity.”

“I was in sales before I became a medical assistant, so adapting to a new culture was a challenge,” said Terricia Berry, an apprentice graduate at University Health. “Just to know that I am helping so many people throughout the day, it’s amazing to know I’m making a change in people’s lives.”

At University Health, Vice President of Ambulatory Care Pam Bean said most of the health system’s first group of apprentices lived right around the Kansas City facility.

“They dealt with some of the same struggles as the patients. So, it was rewarding for me, and I had tears many days with the apprentices, because I grew in recognition of what they had to go through.”





▲ CoxHealth EMT apprentice graduating class of 2023.

Christy Dickson is a mentor at Children's Mercy and sees programs like this as being valuable for any type of business.

"This program allows the new people coming in to see we care enough about them to invest in their education – we're paying you," Dickson said.

"I'm not trying to go get training, plus go to work and be a mom," Hannibal Regional apprentice Brenna O'Brien said. "This is so

much easier for me to be able to start my career path."

CoxHealth EMS educator Russ Scanlan said many of those who were hired out of the EMT apprenticeship program initially had been working in other departments at CoxHealth.

"I want to say over half of these people were looking for an opportunity to better themselves, and they had fun in the

process," Scanlan said. "As we ended that training, I think everybody came up to me and said this was the first time in their life that they were working at a job that they love." •

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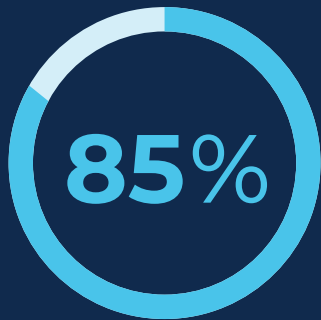


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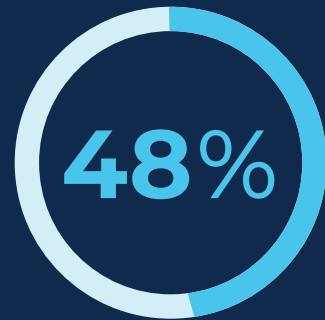
\$63k AVERAGE YEARLY SALARY OF APPRENTICES
WHO COMPLETED THE PROGRAM



OF APPRENTICES RETAINED AS
EMPLOYEES AFTER PROGRAM
COMPLETION



OF APPRENTICES
ARE **WOMEN**



OF APPRENTICES ARE
PEOPLE OF COLOR

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TAKING CARE OF **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

As lawmakers return to Jefferson City for the 2024 legislative session, it's time to take care of some unfinished business: Missouri must address its child care crisis.

Across the state, a shortage of affordable child care options harms employers' ability to recruit and retain workers. In 2023, bipartisan legislation was introduced that would have addressed the issue, endorsed by both Gov. Mike Parson and the Missouri Chamber. Unfortunately, a small group of legislators blocked progress on this statewide economic issue in the final week of the legislative session.

On pages 18–20, we delve more into the child care crisis. But as we look ahead to 2024, one thing is clear: Political posturing and Senate dysfunction caused by a small minority cannot stand in the way of moving Missouri forward.

The Missouri Chamber has released a complete legislative agenda to help guide policy discussions. Prepared with input from CEOs and top business leaders from across the state, this aggressive agenda contains recommendations for growing business and the economy.

In 2024, the Missouri Chamber urges lawmakers to focus on five critical needs:

- 1. Supporting safe, affordable, high-quality child care options for employees and businesses (see article on pages 18–20);**
- 2. Legal reform, beginning with a modified statute of limitations in personal injury cases;**
- 3. Addressing Missouri's rising crime rate and improving public safety;**
- 4. Defending against government overreach and job-killing business mandates; and**
- 5. Clarifying Missouri's workers' compensation law to allow employers to maintain drug-free workplaces.**

Improve Missouri's legal climate

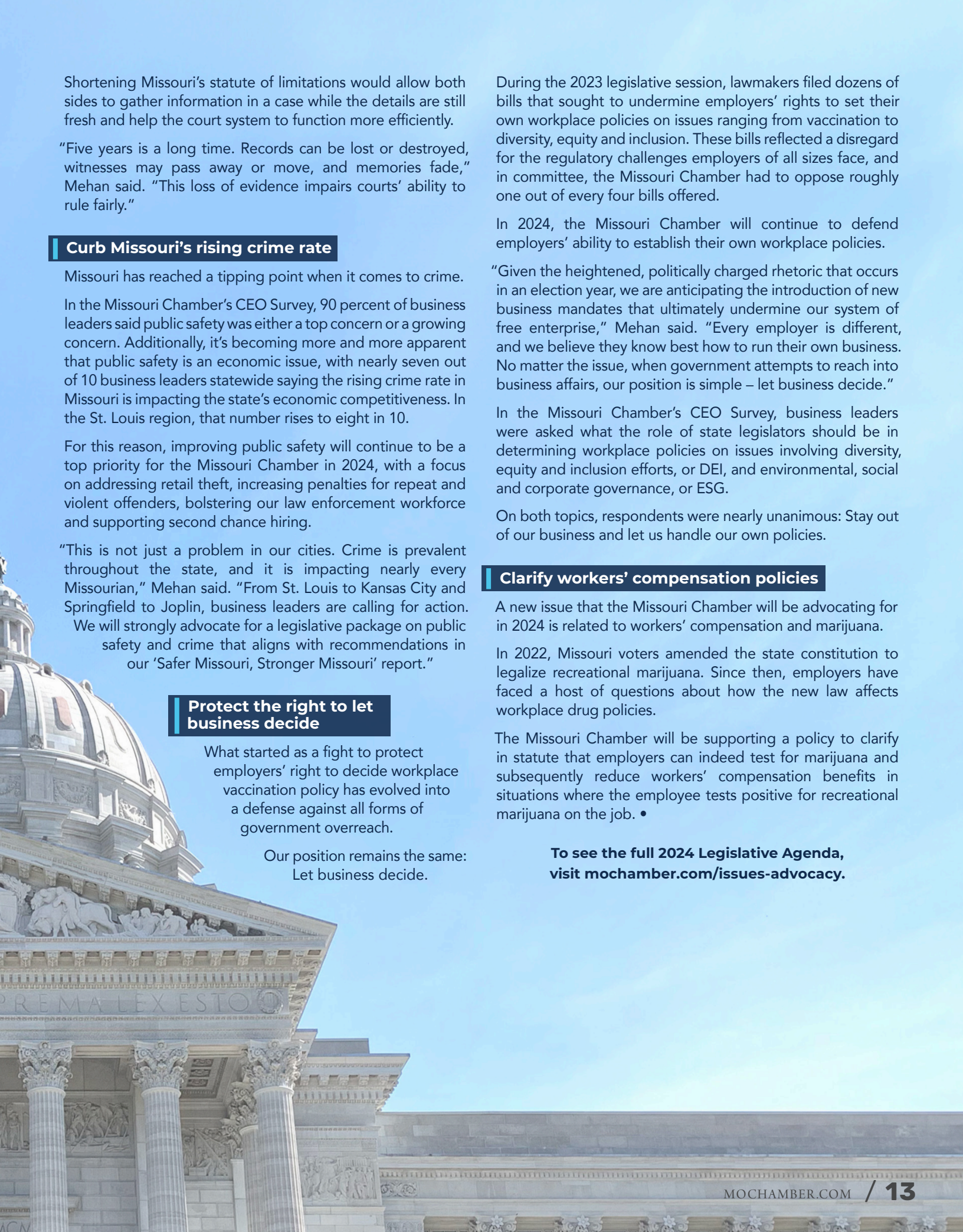
Missouri's legal climate isn't getting any better. In fact, one in five business leaders believes it's getting worse.

As a first step in addressing this issue, the Missouri Chamber is pushing for an update to the state's statute of limitations in certain civil cases – specifically, shortening the statute of limitations for personal injury cases from five years to two years.

Currently, 47 states have shorter time limits than Missouri, including all eight of Missouri's bordering states. In addition, Missouri already has a two-year statute of limitations for other types of claims, including libel, slander, assault and battery.

"We know that Missouri's unfair legal climate hurts our state's economic competitiveness, so we'll continue to fight for reforms in the Capitol," said Daniel P. Mehan, president and CEO of the Missouri Chamber. "This is another key issue that was left on the table in 2023. Missouri's lengthy statute of limitations increases uncertainty for all parties, and a shorter time period would create a more fair and efficient litigation process that doesn't drag on for many years."

Across the state, business leaders are overwhelmingly supportive of shortening the length of time during which lawsuits can be filed. In the Missouri Chamber's annual CEO Survey, 46 percent of respondents said it was the most important legal reform for the business community to support.



Shortening Missouri's statute of limitations would allow both sides to gather information in a case while the details are still fresh and help the court system to function more efficiently.

"Five years is a long time. Records can be lost or destroyed, witnesses may pass away or move, and memories fade," Mehan said. "This loss of evidence impairs courts' ability to rule fairly."

Curb Missouri's rising crime rate

Missouri has reached a tipping point when it comes to crime.

In the Missouri Chamber's CEO Survey, 90 percent of business leaders said public safety was either a top concern or a growing concern. Additionally, it's becoming more and more apparent that public safety is an economic issue, with nearly seven out of 10 business leaders statewide saying the rising crime rate in Missouri is impacting the state's economic competitiveness. In the St. Louis region, that number rises to eight in 10.

For this reason, improving public safety will continue to be a top priority for the Missouri Chamber in 2024, with a focus on addressing retail theft, increasing penalties for repeat and violent offenders, bolstering our law enforcement workforce and supporting second chance hiring.

"This is not just a problem in our cities. Crime is prevalent throughout the state, and it is impacting nearly every Missourian," Mehan said. "From St. Louis to Kansas City and Springfield to Joplin, business leaders are calling for action.

We will strongly advocate for a legislative package on public safety and crime that aligns with recommendations in our 'Safer Missouri, Stronger Missouri' report."

Protect the right to let business decide

What started as a fight to protect employers' right to decide workplace vaccination policy has evolved into a defense against all forms of government overreach.

Our position remains the same:
Let business decide.

During the 2023 legislative session, lawmakers filed dozens of bills that sought to undermine employers' rights to set their own workplace policies on issues ranging from vaccination to diversity, equity and inclusion. These bills reflected a disregard for the regulatory challenges employers of all sizes face, and in committee, the Missouri Chamber had to oppose roughly one out of every four bills offered.

In 2024, the Missouri Chamber will continue to defend employers' ability to establish their own workplace policies.

"Given the heightened, politically charged rhetoric that occurs in an election year, we are anticipating the introduction of new business mandates that ultimately undermine our system of free enterprise," Mehan said. "Every employer is different, and we believe they know best how to run their own business. No matter the issue, when government attempts to reach into business affairs, our position is simple – let business decide."

In the Missouri Chamber's CEO Survey, business leaders were asked what the role of state legislators should be in determining workplace policies on issues involving diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, or DEI, and environmental, social and corporate governance, or ESG.

On both topics, respondents were nearly unanimous: Stay out of our business and let us handle our own policies.

Clarify workers' compensation policies

A new issue that the Missouri Chamber will be advocating for in 2024 is related to workers' compensation and marijuana.

In 2022, Missouri voters amended the state constitution to legalize recreational marijuana. Since then, employers have faced a host of questions about how the new law affects workplace drug policies.

The Missouri Chamber will be supporting a policy to clarify in statute that employers can indeed test for marijuana and subsequently reduce workers' compensation benefits in situations where the employee tests positive for recreational marijuana on the job. •

**To see the full 2024 Legislative Agenda,
visit mochamber.com/issues-advocacy.**

CEO SURVEY RESULTS

WORKFORCE, CHILD CARE AND PUBLIC SAFETY REMAIN TOP CONCERNS OF MISSOURI BUSINESS LEADERS.

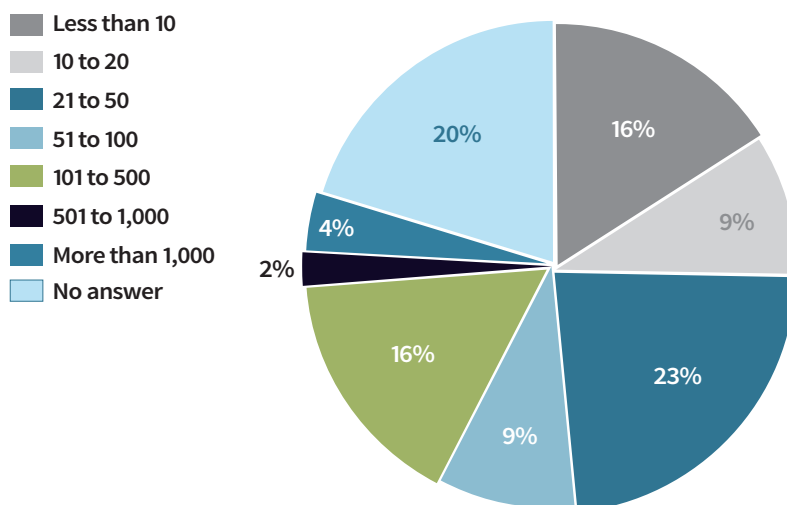
Every year, the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry asks CEOs and top business leaders at companies throughout the state to share their thoughts on the economy, the business climate, the direction of our state and more.

Conducted by an independent research firm, the Missouri Chamber CEO Survey helps determine where and how the Missouri Chamber should focus its attention in the year ahead.

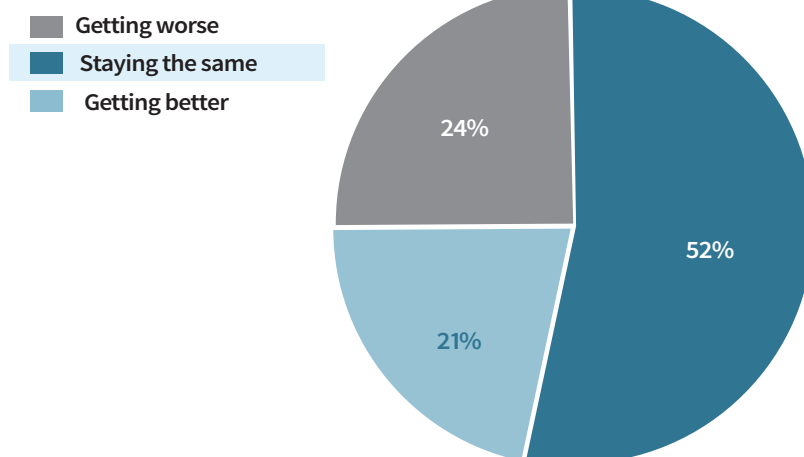
Here's a snapshot of the 2023 results.

The Missouri CEO Survey was conducted by CHS & Associates in October 2023. It's a survey of over 500 business leaders across the state from every industry sector.

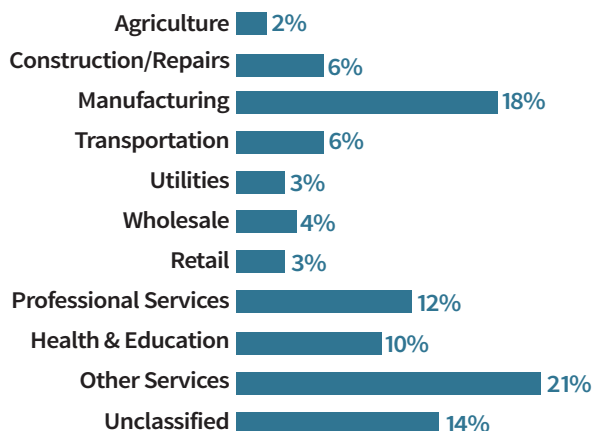
Number of employees in businesses polled



How would you rate the overall business climate in Missouri?

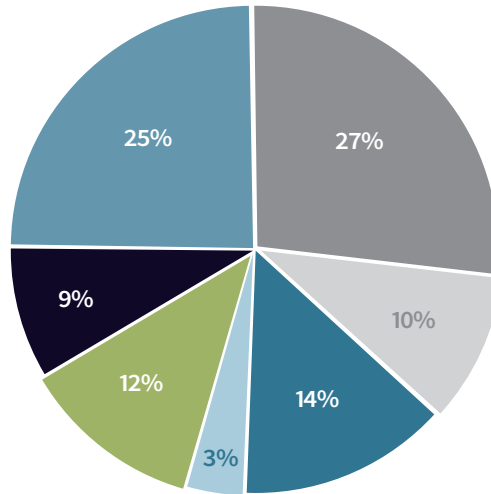
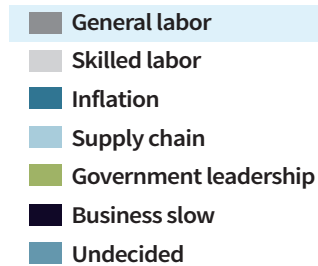


Industry groups represented



Biggest obstacle to growth for your business?

Workforce continues to dominate as the biggest obstacle for Missouri businesses.



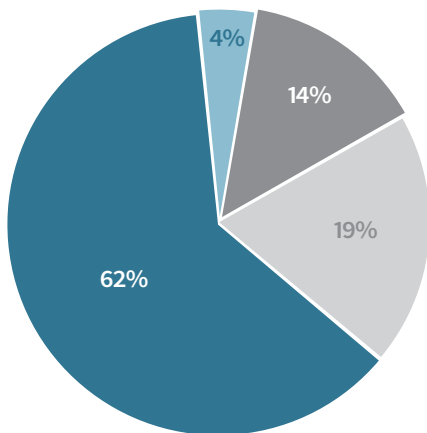
What is most important to the profitability of your business?

38%

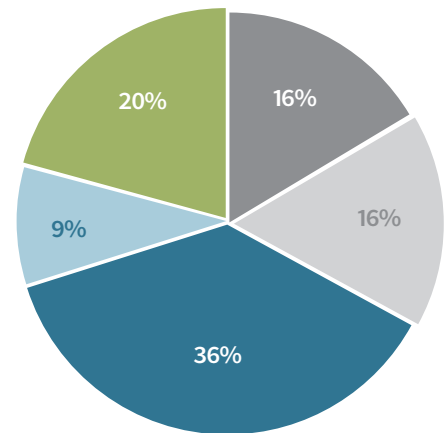
of business leaders said **improving availability of qualified talent**

Greatest concern with available workforce?

Soft skills remain the top concern when it comes to workforce.

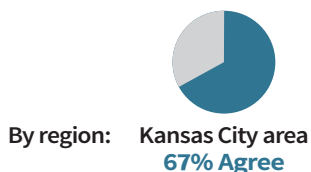


When retaining or attracting new talent, which quality of life factor has the greatest impact?



81%

of business leaders say the expense and difficulty in finding child care keeps a significant number of Missourians out of the workforce



ISSUE SPECIFIC

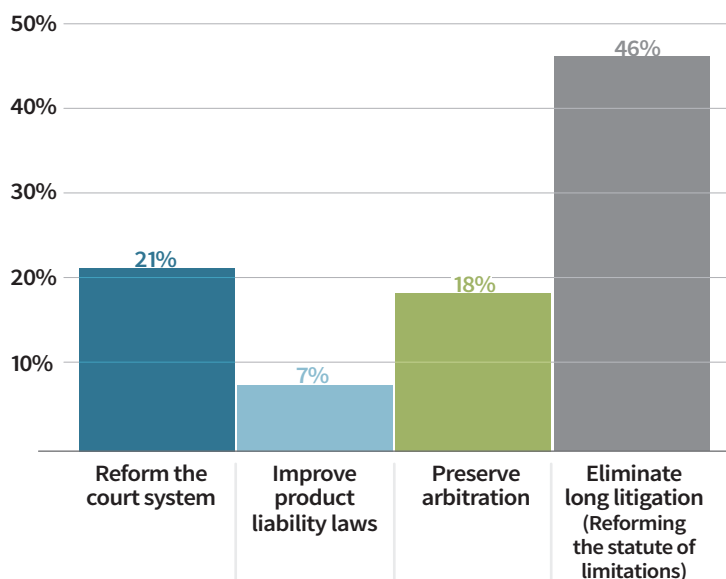
Infrastructure

Support for infrastructure improvements is growing. One out of four business leaders say it's one of the top two issues impacting the profitability of their business, compared to one in five in 2022.



1 out of 4 say it's a
TOP TWO CONCERN

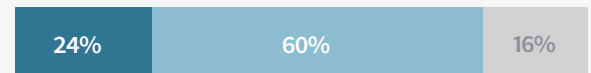
What is the most important legal reform for business?



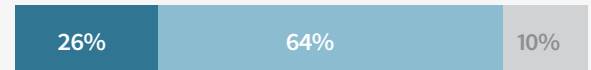
How concerned are you with public safety?

■ Top concern
■ Growing concern
■ Diminishing or no concern

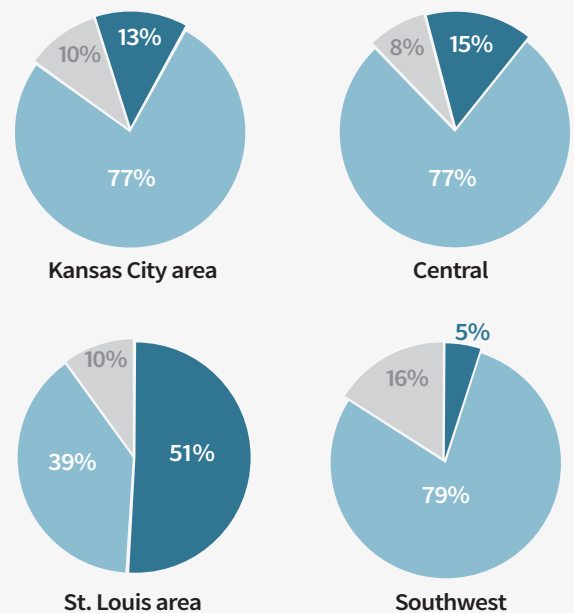
2022



2023



By region:

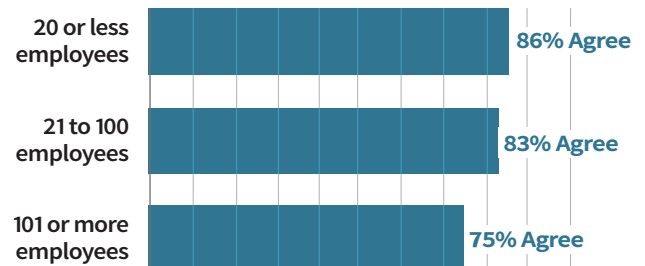


Government involvement in workplace diversity, equity & inclusion efforts



of business leaders think government should stay out of their policies and let business decide

By business size:





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CHILD CARE NEEDS OF BUSINESSES

**promise to be a top priority for
the Missouri Chamber in 2024**

According to a report from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation in 2021, 61% of Missouri parents reported missing work due to child care issues.

Statistics like this led the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry to work with Gov. Mike Parson and lawmakers in the General Assembly to make child care needs a top priority in 2023.

In May, shortly before the end of the legislative session, it looked like these proposals would be headed to the governor's desk with bipartisan support. However, the child care legislative package died in the Senate due to political posturing and dysfunction. The Missouri Chamber is making child care needs a priority in 2024.

"A lot of people used to think that child care was just an issue for working parents to figure out," said Daniel P. Mehan president and CEO of the Missouri Chamber. "What we have found through research, polling and talking to business leaders across the state is that child care is a workforce issue, and it is an economic issue for the state."

Businesses that make employee child care needs a priority reap the benefits.

For nearly 25 years, Prime Inc. in Springfield has offered onsite child care to its employees. The Prime learning center can care for over 100 children. It averages 60-80 kids every day, ranging in age from 6 months to 5 years old.

"Prime has always made a concerted effort to recruit and retain the best trucking professionals in the business," said Prime President Robert Low. "Retaining these professionals comes with the knowledge that we all can be more efficient when working in a modern, comfortable, secure and highly productive environment."



Learning Center Director Anna Messick said the center is licensed to take care of children as old as 12, but the older kids are only in the summer school program, which is also very popular.

"I would consider us a step above what you might find in the normal day care routine," Messick said. "We offer learning through play for our toddlers, and as they get older, we do projects to learn about art, math, science and writing, so they can be prepared for kindergarten."

The center also offers enrichment programs that include activities like soccer, pottery, music and learning Spanish.

Messick, whose husband also works for Prime, has her 2-year-old daughter in the program and said the company offering child care is a big factor in wanting to continue to work for Prime.

"I've heard that multiple times from other parents," Messick said. "A lot of people who do end up leaving have said it was a decision they didn't take lightly because of the child care we offer. For me, it's just super nice to all come to work together and drop her off and know she's in a safe, secure place and know she's going to be loved and cared for by our teachers."

Prime pays part of the costs for this service, while the employees with



children in the program also contribute. Messick added that in the two years she's been there, they haven't had any trouble employing a full staff, which is 20.

"Child care is so important today, so when you find an employer providing something onsite, it's kind of a no-brainer," Messick laughed. "After graduations, I've had parents come up to me and thank us because they feel their children are more than ready to work in the kindergarten environment."

"Our cutting-edge facility has demonstrated its value to the associates who work here," Low said. "The success of the Springfield learning center has led to the development of another Prime learning center in Salt Lake City."

Child care tax credits could encourage more employers to offer perks like those at Prime. In the Missouri Chamber's recent CEO Survey, 64% of business leaders said tax incentives would make their company more likely to offer some type of child care benefits to employees.

Limited child care options mean parents have to make tough decisions.

Much of Missouri is classified as a "child care desert" due to the scarcity of child care providers. This includes towns such as Chillicothe and Rolla.

Rolla Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Stevie Kears said, "The Missouri Chamber's efforts to address these challenges through legislation are commendable, as they reflect a commitment to fostering a more supportive environment for businesses and families alike."

"Child care challenges affect the workforce of Rolla in various ways," Kears continued. "Businesses can struggle with recruitment and retention efforts due to the limited availability of child care services. This issue has the potential to hamper our community's economic growth and competitiveness."

Rebekah Kiersz is the Rolla Chamber Board president. She and her husband run a dental office and with their entire staff made up of women, Kiersz is very familiar with the challenges of finding adequate child care and the effects that can have on their business.

"One of our staff members recently had to go back home because the day care she uses had a power outage," Kiersz said. "She lives 30 miles away from the office and the day care is north of where she lives, so it's already quite a commute every day, even if everything runs as it should."

Kiersz said they found many families are having to pay over \$200 a week to take care of one child.

"It's sad that you can't afford to pay your staff more when child care is so expensive," Kiersz said. "We've got an employee who is going to be taking a cut in pay because the school district in her community will be going to four-day weeks, so she won't be able to work as many days because she has to be at home for her kids."

Crystal Narr is executive director of the Chillicothe Area Chamber of Commerce. She said she wasn't surprised to hear, while doing an informal survey of member businesses, that child care was an issue they'd like to see lawmakers address.

**"THE MOST IMPORTANT
THING WE CAN DO FOR OUR
ECONOMY IS HAVE PARENTS
WHO HAVE AN AFFORDABLE
PLACE TO GO FOR THEIR
CHILD CARE NEEDS, SO
THEY CAN WORK IN OUR
COMMUNITIES."**

"Officials with Hedrick Medical Center, which is part of St. Luke's Health System, said it's not just having enough local child care providers to take care of their staff with kids, but finding any providers who can offer extended hours for employees who work extended shifts," Narr said. "That leads to staff having difficulty working evenings, weekends and nights. Even with the ability to have flexible scheduling, some hospital staff have had to resign because they haven't been able to pay for child care expenses based on the number of children they are paying for."

One of the biggest employers in the Chillicothe area is the Chillicothe R-II School District with 285 employees. Superintendent Dan Wiebers is also president of the chamber board and said that even though the district sponsors a child care center, it's used as a teaching tool for vocational school students, so the number of kids they can oversee is very limited.

"Unfortunately, the red tape is quite cumbersome to start a day care program, so we lose good employees due to the lack of adequate child care opportunities in the Chillicothe region," Wiebers said. "We also need to increase the number of certified or trained workers in the child care field, so anything lawmakers could do to address that we would support."

Wiebers noted along with the benefits to workforce and quality of life that more child care options would bring, there's also an educational benefit. He said kids who are enrolled in child care programs have been found to be much better prepared for kindergarten.

"The most important thing we can do for our economy is have parents who have an affordable place to go for their child care needs, so they can work in our communities," Wiebers said. •







Lawmakers continue river shipping to

Over 500 million tons of cargo flow on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers annually, the equivalent of 19 million trucks on Missouri highways.

One barge can carry the same amount as about 90 trucks. Despite those figures, officials with the Missouri Department of Transportation said the Missouri River remains underutilized for freight transportation.

The Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry has long been a supporter of river port expansion, recognizing ports' critical role in Missouri's economy. In the 2023 CEO Survey, 80% of respondents agreed that Missouri should leverage state and federal funds to invest in its system of ports and waterways.

To increase port utilization and relieve highway congestion, Missouri lawmakers in recent years have been giving more attention to river ports by providing funding to expand their operations. Using a combination of federal and state funding sources, lawmakers included over \$108.5 million for port expansion in the fiscal year 2024 budget, an increase from the \$71 million the legislature approved in 2022.

The largest portion of the appropriations is allotted to the Port Authority of Kansas City, which received \$37 million for the development of two Missouri River ports. Agency officials said freight traveling by river is expected to double in the United States by 2040, and Kansas City is one of the fastest-growing industrial distribution and logistical hubs in the country.

Port KC will use \$7 million of that funding to build a new dock at its Terminal Woodswether port in the West Bottoms.

This new dock will allow Port KC to double the volume of barge traffic at Terminal Woodswether, which connects to railroads and has access to local interstates.

Port KC officials said the remaining \$30 million will support the development of a second Kansas City port, the Missouri River Terminal (MRT). The MRT is located at the site of an old steel mill plant near Interstate 435, where the Blue River joins into the Missouri River in Kansas City. Port KC acquired 415 acres and started early work on the property in 2018. The new site has access to major railroads and the Missouri River, but it needed better road access. The \$30 million in state funding will allow Port KC to continue developing the MRT, which agency officials said they hope will "expand Kansas City's footprint as a global logistics center and attract needed new jobs and opportunity to the eastside neighborhoods of Kansas City."

The approved budget also included \$25 million for a new container port in Herculaneum on the Mississippi River in Jefferson County. Herculaneum's existing small port, which is used primarily for loading sand onto barges, will be transformed. The improvements will include three large cranes for loading and unloading new river vessels, specially designed to haul shipping containers on the river.

Jim McNichols is executive director of the Jefferson County Port Authority. He said the new vessels will handle much larger loads than barges, trucks or trains.

"Shipping costs are much lower, and shipping times are much shorter," McNichols said. "One river vessel replaces nearly 2,400 semi-trucks, and farmers

could save up to 60% of their shipping costs."

An economic impact study for public ports in Missouri, released by MoDOT in 2018, showed the ports supported nearly 290,000 jobs annually in the state, resulting in nearly \$15.4 billion in labor income and over \$100.6 billion in annual economic activity. Ports supported about 34% of the state's economy and one out of every 10 jobs.

Cheryl Ball is the waterways and freight administrator for MoDOT and said that these numbers were surprising to anyone who read the report.

"We knew the ports and the intermodal transportation they provide impacted a lot of people, but frankly, we didn't realize the numbers were that large," Ball said. "Since we put this out, we have seen a substantial increase in the amount of general revenue allocated by lawmakers each year for capital investments in public ports."

Ball added that the agency tracks the private investment made each year in ports. From 2015–2022, ports have received a total of \$57.7 million from private funding sources. This money is used to make improvements to equipment to load and unload barges, as well as improve rail access in and out of the port sites.

The City of St. Louis Port Authority, located in downtown St. Louis, comprises about 10,000 acres along 19-plus miles of riverfront on the Mississippi River and moves 15 to 18 million tons of cargo a year. A landlord port, it has approximately 40 leases with shippers, carriers and fleeting operators up and down the river. Its main terminal is the Municipal River

efforts to **increase** take strain off highways

Terminal, located about a mile and a half north of the Gateway Arch.

The 40-acre site has a 2,000-foot dock that can hold 250-ton crane loads and features 67 fleeting berths, 250,000 square feet of warehouse space and direct rail service.

The Port Authority has invested around \$10 million in the Municipal River Terminal over the past two years. Recent additions include a rail river conveyor system and direct rail access into the yard. Portions of the yard are currently being paved.

Susan Taylor, port authority director for the St. Louis Development Corporation, talked about other new investments.

"We're trying to develop a new rail and river terminal on our south riverfront and have secured a \$5.76 million ARPA grant towards that," Taylor said. "We're talking to a new lessee about a potential liquid fertilizer dock on our north riverfront, and we plan on issuing some RFPs soon for fleeting. There's also a developer interested in a large \$1.2 billion project, just south of the MacArthur Bridge, and it will focus on manufacturing and, hopefully, container on vessels shipping of the manufactured goods."

Taylor also highlighted the benefits of doing business with the City of St. Louis Port Authority located in the Ag Coast of America. "I think it's important for people to realize that we are by far the busiest inland port," she said. "We have approximately 130 facilities in our harbor on both sides of the river. We just have so many different options, and we have ultimate flexibility and last mile in and out options for people."

Mary Lamie, executive vice president

of multimodal enterprises for Bi-State Development, said, "There's a common thread that connects us as we are continuing to invest in our facilities with an eye to the future: making sure that all the ports in this region have the capacity and infrastructure to accommodate future growth."

Bi-State Development has partnered with private and public organizations on hundreds of projects to keep the St. Louis region economically competitive. Lamie pointed out that the U.S. Department of Transportation has predicted that national freight volumes will grow significantly over the next 20–30 years.

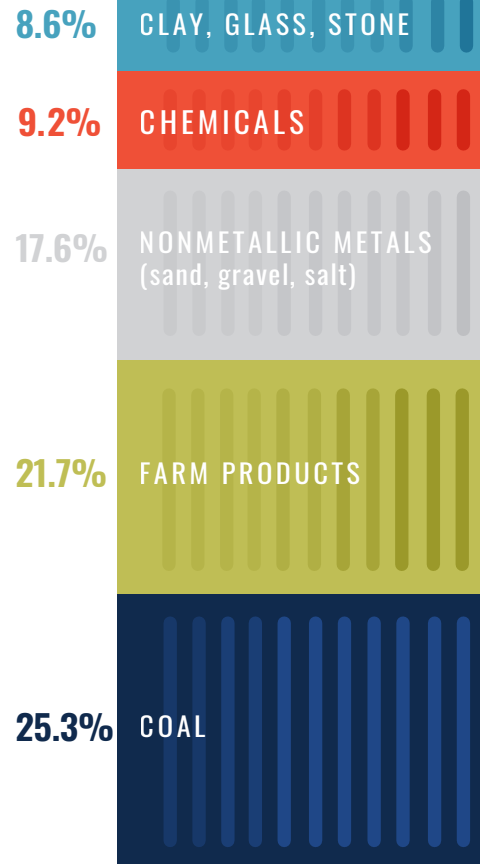
"Politicians have heard these and other figures in recent years and recognized the need to better utilize the inland water system we have in this country," Lamie said. She added they have come up with a unique way to get the message out about the benefits of multimodal transportation.

"Bi-State Development operates two river boats in front of the Gateway Arch, and we have sightseeing cruises to show students, as well as business and civic groups, the ports and terminals along the river and the work that is done on the rivers," Lamie said. "I think we've seen the students become more intrigued about jobs on the river and hopefully that helps grow that workforce."

"The State is very excited, because we are blessed with so many forms of transportation, but the only uncongested form of transportation is on the waterways," Ball said. "Our ports are the on and off ramps to those. There's a lot more room for more commodities to move on the river that would free up space on highways." •



MISSOURI'S **TOP 5 COMMODITIES TRANSPORTED THROUGH PORTS:**



Missouri State Freight Plan

EVENT RECAP

ANNUAL MEETING

THE ONE WHERE WE CELEBRATED LIKE IT WAS 1923.

Capping off a year of celebrations, we closed out our centennial anniversary at the chamber's Annual Meeting with a little extra glitz and glam.



LEFT: Swinging into the reception with Grand Marquis; **BELOW:** Nancy Giddens, The Giddens Group (left) and Catina Shannon, Ameren before the awards dinner; **BOTTOM LEFT:** Missouri Chamber Board members, Tim Drury (left), Drury Development and Jeff Davis, BNSF Railway; **BOTTOM RIGHT:** (From L to R) Chad Massman, Columbia Chamber of Commerce, Chad Higgins and Rob Russell, University of Missouri and Lily White, Columbia Chamber of Commerce.



2009 NOVEMBER 2023
23



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TOP: President of The Silver Dollar City Company, Brad Thomas, has served as the Missouri Chamber's Board Chair since November 2022; **ABOVE:** Attendees dine in the historic Tudor Ballroom in Hotel Kansas City; **RIGHT:** President and CEO Dan Mehan provides welcome remarks to guests; **BOTTOM LEFT:** Missouri Chamber Board members in attendance gather on stage at the conclusion of the ceremony





**FEB.
23**

HEALTH CARE CAREER DAY (FREE!)

This virtual event will take students inside Missouri hospitals to learn about the hottest careers in health care. All grade levels are invited to join! Educators can register their classrooms for FREE and log into the Zoom event to participate.

Health Care Career Day was developed in partnership by the Missouri Chamber Foundation, the Missouri Hospital Association and the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.


 VIRTUAL | mochamber.com/health-care-career-day



**MAR.
05**

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION CONFERENCE

As employees and consumers alike are seeking out more socially responsible businesses, companies are taking intentional action to foster more diverse, equitable and inclusive work environments. Explore best practices with national experts and share frank discussion around these critical issues in an interactive, collaborative format.

 ST. LOUIS | mochamber.com/dei



**APR.
18**

MISSOURI HEALTH AND WELLNESS SUMMIT

Most of us operate in a high-stress world and could use more well-being at work. The Missouri Health and Wellness Summit is designed to provide business leaders, human resource professionals and health and wellness professionals with the tools they need to create a healthier and more productive workforce. Learn best practices from employers and wellness trainers and providers.

 ST. LOUIS | mochamber.com/hwsummit



**JUL.
24
& 25**

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Unite with a rising generation of women leaders. Learn how to inspire others. Discover strength in networking. Rejuvenate your power to lead. Join women leaders from all across Missouri for our fifth annual statewide summit.

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—Chris E.,
ROEMHELD North America

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