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Arts and Culture Means Business in Cook County

New Study Shows Strong Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture on Cook County's Economy

SAINT PAUL, MN: We have known for a long time that the arts and culture are important to Cook County. They enhance our quality of life, bring diverse communities together, and make our area a magnet for jobs and businesses. A new study was released today by the Arrowhead Regional Arts Council, Cook County Chamber of Commerce, Grand Marais Art Colony, North House Folk School, Sivertson Gallery and Minnesota Citizens for the Arts that shows that, in addition to contributing to our state's excellent quality of life, the nonprofit arts and culture sector is also a substantial industry in Cook County, generating **over \$4.6 million in total economic impact annually.**

As the most comprehensive report ever done of the creative sector, *Creative Minnesota* is a new effort to fill the gaps in available information about Minnesota's cultural field and to improve our understanding of its importance to our quality of life and economy. Today's report release is the second wave of a concentrated effort to collect and report data on the creative sector every two years for analysis, education and advocacy. All of the research developed by the *Creative Minnesota* team will be available at creativemn.org.

Creative Minnesota: The Impact and Health of the Nonprofit Arts and Culture Sector found that **17 nonprofit arts and culture organizations in Cook County support the equivalent of 127 full time jobs** in the city, and that **78,000 people attend** nonprofit arts and cultural events annually.

Although Cook County ranked 16th of the 17 local areas studied in size of population, the county ranked 7th in overall economic impact. Amazingly, Cook County ranked 3rd among the cities studied

in this report, behind only Minneapolis and St. Paul, in per capita economic impact from the arts and culture, with a whopping \$889 for every one of the county's 5,176 residents.

Sheila Smith, Executive Director of Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, said "the results for Cook County were a real eye-opener. I knew the arts were important to the area but the arts and culture footprint here is vastly out of proportion to the population. The arts are a core part of the county's economy."

Grand Marais Mayor Jay Arrowsmith DeCoux said, "we encounter the arts in our community everyday. Whether it is visual art, crafts, or performance art, the experience of living here is deeply informed by the presence of these art forms. It is clear, as well, that the arts provide several additional outlets for commerce that would not exist without them."

County Commissioner Jan Sivertson, owner of Sivertson Gallery and Member of the Minnesota State Arts Board, offered some explanation of why the arts are so important to the area, "the Arts in Cook County are so pervasive that I really can't think about them as a separate entity. At first there was amazing beauty, rugged landscape, unbelievable lakes and Lake Superior, and powerful art emerged from this. Everything in Cook County has been colored, flavored and infused by Art or desires to be. Cook County has many thriving arts structures: the Grand Marais Art Colony, North Shore Music Association, The Grand Marais Playhouse, North House Folk School and more."

"Cook County seeks to grow economically in ways that reflect and preserve who we are and where we live. We seek progress that takes inspiration from and pays homage to the North Woods and Lake Superior," said Jim Boyd, Cook County Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director. "Thus we turn to the arts and crafts, so much a part of the very definition of Cook County, epitomized by the Grand Marais Art Colony and North House Folk School with their loyal legions of potters and glass artisans, fiber and wood workers and basket weavers and water colorists and plein air devotees. With them, we seek to generate the creative critical mass that will allow artists and craftspeople to live and work prosperously here, raise families, participate fully in our community and add to the richness of the life we celebrate in this special place."

Seventeen local organizations are part of the city study:

- Johnson Heritage Post Art Gallery
- Art 'Round Town
- Borealis Chorale and Orchestra
- Cook County Community Radio Corporation
- Cook County Historical Society Museum
- Empty Bowls
- Good Harbor Hill Players
- Grand Marais Art Colony
- Grand Marais Playhouse
- Gunflint Trail Historical Society
- North House Folk School
- North Shore Music Assn.
- Sky Blue Jazz Ensemble
- WTIP North Shore Community Radio
- Hovland Arts Festival
- Schroeder Area Historical Society
- Sugarloaf Cove Nature Center

Creative Minnesota was developed by a collaborative of arts and culture funders in partnership with Minnesota Citizens for the Arts (MCA). The report leverages new in-depth research made possible because of Minnesota's participation in the **Cultural Data Project** (culturaldata.org). The first round of studies, released in February 2015, looked at the state's eleven arts regions and at the state as a whole. This round is about cities and counties. *Creative Minnesota* is a snapshot of the health and impact of nonprofit arts and culture organizations' budgets in 2013 and looks at their spending and their audiences as well as other indicators. **The other Northland cities that were studied include Virginia, Duluth, and Grand Rapids.**

“We hope that arts advocates, legislators, local government officials and arts and cultural organizations will use this report to find new ways to improve their lives and economies with arts and culture,” said Sheila Smith.

The *Creative Minnesota* team includes **Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, The McKnight Foundation, the Minnesota State Arts Board, the Forum of Regional Arts Councils of Minnesota, Target, Bush Foundation, Mardag Foundation, and Jerome Foundation**, with in-kind support from the **Minnesota Historical Society** and others.

Kate Wolford, President of The McKnight Foundation said, “Like other entrepreneurs and small business owners, artists add significant economic and creative value across the entire state. Backed by hard data, *Creative Minnesota* reveals important truths about how our state’s artists and arts and culture organizations are making dynamic contributions to our economic vitality and to our high quality of life.”

Notes on the Cultural Data Project and other Sources:

This research was made possible by the state’s participation in the **Cultural Data Project**, www.culturaldata.org/ which is a web-based data system utilized by arts and culture grant makers in thirteen states and the District of Columbia. Many public and private grant makers in Minnesota require some or all of their arts and culture grantees to submit data to the CDP. Most CDP data is financial, though it includes information about services provided, numbers of participants, staffing and volunteers as well. CDP data in this report is from 298 arts nonprofits as they reported it to the CDP.

The CDP data was supplemented by the responses of 396 arts and culture nonprofits to a brief online financial survey and by 575 organization’s grantee data provided by the Minnesota State Arts Board, Regional Arts Councils and the Minnesota Historical Society. In addition, 3410 audience members completed a survey at arts and culture events around the state. Additional information came from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Tourism Marketing Council, Explore Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Education and others.

Americans for the Arts (AFTA) was commissioned to calculate the economic impact research portion of this report as part of *Arts & Economic Prosperity® IV: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences in the State of Minnesota*, Americans for the Arts, 2014 and the associated eleven regional Minnesota studies, which can be downloaded at creativemn.org. Additional data analysis was done by CliftonLarsonAllen using the data sources cited above.

The Legacy Amendment

The Legacy Amendment was passed by a statewide vote of the people of Minnesota in 2008 to dedicate a portion of the state’s sales tax to create four new funds for 1. land conservation, 2. water conservation, 3. parks and trails, and 4. arts and culture. The legislature appropriates the dollars from the Legacy Arts and Culture Fund to the Minnesota State Arts Board, Regional Arts Councils, Minnesota Historical Society and other entities to provide access to the arts and culture for all Minnesotans.

Sponsoring Organizations

- **Minnesota Citizens for the Arts (MCA)** is a statewide arts advocacy organization whose mission is to ensure opportunity for all people to have access to and involvement in the arts. MCA organizes the arts community and lobbies the Minnesota State Legislature and Congress on issues pertaining to the nonprofit arts and conducts original research. MCA works with over 40,000 arts advocates in Minnesota. 651-251-0868, www.mncitizensforthearts.org @MNCitizen.
- **The McKnight Foundation:** www.mcknight.org
- **Target:** <https://corporate.target.com/corporate-responsibility>
- **Bush Foundation:** www.bushfoundation.org
- **Mardag Foundation:** <http://www.mardag.org/>
- **Jerome Foundation:** <http://www.jeromefdn.org/>
- **The Minnesota State Arts Board:** <http://www.arts.state.mn.us/>
- **Forum of Regional Arts Councils of Minnesota:** <http://www.arts.state.mn.us/racs/forum.htm>
- **Minnesota Historical Society:** <http://www.mnhs.org/about>
- **Ideas that Kick:** www.ideasthatkick.com
- **Americans for the Arts:** www.AmericansForTheArts.org
- **Arrowhead Regional Arts Council:** <http://aracouncil.org/>
- **Cook County Chamber of Commerce:** <http://www.cookcountychamber.org/>
- **Grand Marais Art Colony:** <http://www.grandmaraisartcolony.org/>

- **North House Folk School:** <http://www.northhouse.org/>
- **Sivertson Gallery:** <https://www.sivertson.com/>

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