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Arts and Culture Means Business in Northwest Minnesota

New Study Shows Strong Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture on Northwest Minnesota's Economy

SAINT PAUL, MN: We have known for a long time that the arts and culture are important to Northwest Minnesota. 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 Northwest Regional Arts Council and Minnesota Citizens for the Arts that shows the nonprofit arts and culture sector is also a substantial industry in Northwest Minnesota, generating **over \$1 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. It kicks off a new centralized, 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 **26 nonprofit arts and culture organizations support the equivalent of 23 full time jobs** in Northwest Minnesota. Over **31,411 people attend** nonprofit arts and cultural events annually in the region.

Creative Minnesota is a snapshot of the health and impacts of nonprofit arts and culture organizations in 2013 and looks at their spending and their audiences as well as other indicators of the sector's health and impact on the economy.

Sheila Smith, Executive Director of Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, said "It is a testament to how much Minnesotans care about arts and culture that every region of Minnesota has a robust arts and culture economy, and Northwest Minnesota is no exception."

Mara Hanel, Executive Director of the Northwest Regional Arts Council, said "We are pleased with the results of this survey, since it shows substantial economic impact in our Northwest region. It is also exciting to note that results would have been substantially greater if the audience surveying would have occurred into July, August, and September, (it occurred in the Spring) because in the summer our region hosts exciting events that bring visitors into our area for arts experiences.

“People that travel to attend an arts festival or a performance spend money on food, gasoline, and shopping which brings economic growth to our communities. Also, it is encouraging to hear from our fine craft artists, who create pieces like pottery, jewelry, and original furniture, that sales are great at our local shops. We encourage residents and visitors to support our local artists by buying locally made art. Artists are small business owners. Nourishing artistic growth and expression truly has brought economic impact to our region.”

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).

“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, Executive Director of Minnesota Citizens for the Arts.

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, the 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.”

The report references data about **26 arts and culture organizations** in Northwest Minnesota: including: Ada Chamber of Commerce; City of Roseau Scandinavian Festival; Crookston Civic Music League; Fertile Community Club; Fosston Library Arts Center; Friends of Lake Bronson State Park; Heritage Foundation; Kittson County Historical Society; l'Association des Francais du Nord; Middle River Community Club; Middle River Community Theater; Norman County Historical Society; North Country Fiddle and Dance; Northwest Minnesota Arts Council; Palmville Press & Publishing; Polish National Alliance Lodge 3060; Roseau Area Arts Association; Roseau County Historical Society; Sand Hill Settlement Historical Society; Sons of Norway Snorre Lodge #70; Stephen Arts Council; Summer Arts Stages; Thief River Falls Community Arts Council; Twin Forks Chorus; Valley Crossing Arts Council; and Warroad Summer Theatre.

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.

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

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