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Arts and Culture Means Business in the Mille Lacs County

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

SAINT PAUL, MN: We have known for a long time that the arts and culture are important to Mille Lacs 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 Mille Lacs County, the East Central Regional Arts Council 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 Mille Lacs County, generating **nearly \$850,000 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 **10 nonprofit arts and culture organizations** in Mille Lacs County **support the equivalent of 17 full time jobs** in the city, and **10,185 people attend** nonprofit arts and cultural events annually.

Sheila Smith, Executive Director of Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, said "It's been interesting to find that even in towns that aren't very large, there is a big impact from the presence of nonprofit arts and culture organizations, bringing people to town who wouldn't otherwise be there to spend their money in local businesses."

"The arts have substantial sway in bringing top talent to communities," said Richard Baker, Mille Lacs

County Community Development Coordinator, who organized the study locally. “Artistic and creative movements make communities more energetic, diverse and attractive and are key to recruiting and retaining the best and the brightest workers. By emphasizing a community’s culture and through the use of the arts, a community can develop their sense of place; making them a unique and vibrant place to live, work and play, and thus driving economic development.”

Ten local organizations are part of the study:

- Depot Studios,
- City of Milaca arts & culture programs,
- Milaca Area Historical Society,
- Milaca Fine Arts Council,
- City of Onamia arts & culture programs,
- Onamia Area Friends of the Library,
- Onamia Community Education arts & culture programs,
- Elim Oasis Adult Day Health Center arts and culture programs,
- Central Minnesota Arts Co-op, and the
- Princeton Area Visionary Committee.

Jolene Foss, Community Development Director of the City of Princeton said, “Beautification, learning opportunities and hometown pride are just three of the uniquely beneficial qualities that can be seen and felt by incorporating the arts into our community...As we continue to foster a strong art presence, we know that this will in turn spur economic development and make this small town an ‘Art Destination!’”

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). *Creative Minnesota* is a snapshot of the health and impact of nonprofit arts and culture organizations in 2013 and looks at their spending and their audiences as well as other indicators.

“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 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
- **East Central Regional Arts Council** <http://www.ecrac.org/>
- **Mille Lacs County** <http://www.co.mille-lacs.mn.us/>

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