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## Arts and Culture Means Business in West Central Minnesota

### New Study Shows Strong and Growing Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture on West Central Minnesota Economy

SAINT PAUL, MN: We have known for a long time that the arts and culture are important to West Central 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 Lakes Region Arts Council and Minnesota Citizens for the Arts that, in addition to contributing to our state's great quality of life, shows the nonprofit arts and culture sector is also a substantial industry in West Central Minnesota generating **nearly \$10 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](http://creativemn.org).

*Creative Minnesota: The Impact and Health of the Nonprofit Arts and Culture Sector* found that **fifty nonprofit arts and culture organizations support the equivalent of 273 full time jobs** in West Central Minnesota. Over **207,438 people attend** nonprofit arts and cultural events annually in the region.

*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 of the sector's health and impact on the economy. **West Central Minnesota is "punching above it's weight" because the region ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in population in 2010 compared to other areas of the state, but it ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in the amount of its economic impact from the nonprofit arts and culture sector.**

Maxine Adams, Executive Director of the Lakes Region Arts Council, said "this study helps us to better understand the full impact of the arts on our regional and state economies. When someone buys a ticket to an arts event in Detroit Lakes, Alexandria or Fergus Falls, they are also having dinner in a local restaurant, shopping in local stores, and buying gas for the trip home. Many of our communities are adding the arts to their community enrichment plans, knowing that including the arts will increase their economic, cultural and educational assets, making the quality of life better for everyone."

Del Rae Williams, Mayor of the City of Moorhead, said her city has been taking advantage of the economic power of the arts. “I see investment in art as a win-win for my City. This past year, at a series of “Community Voices” events, my citizens expressed interest in more art in our community. It’s a quality of life issue for them. The double-win for my City is that art is also an economic development driver. It is my goal to make art an integral part of Moorhead’s growth and plans to move forward. This study will help connect the dots between development and art.”

Local legislators were also impressed by the strength of the arts impact on local economies.

“I am very excited for the results of this statewide study on the economic impact of arts in Minnesota, said Minnesota State Representative Ben Lien. “There have been several community conversations in Moorhead over the last year regarding the future direction people would like to see for the city; more focus on the arts was a consistent theme in those conversations. I anticipate this study will provide direction to establish more arts across Minnesota and further enrich the communities in which we live.”

*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](http://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 **fifty arts and culture organizations** in West Central Minnesota including: Alexandria Area Arts Association; Ann Bickle Heritage House; Art of the Lakes Association; Becker County Historical Society; Boys and Girls Club of White Earth; Brush & Palette Club; Central Square Inc; City of Alexandria; City of Fergus Falls; City of New York Mills; Concordia College Cultural Events; Evansville Arts Coalition; Fargo-Moorhead Chamber Chorale; Fergus Falls Center For The Arts; Fergus Falls Concert Association; Fergus Falls Senior Citizens Program; Friends of History Museum of East Otter Tail County; Gooseberry Park Players; Grant County Historical Society; Henning Landmark Center Inc.; Heritage Education Commission; Historic Holmes Theatre; Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County; Kaddatz Galleries; Lake Region Arts Council; Lake Region Writers Network; Lakes Chamber Music Society; Minnesota State Community & Technical College; Minnesota State University Moorhead; Minnesota's Historic Northwest; New Rivers Press; New York Mills Arts Retreat; Nordic Arts Alliance; Nordic Culture Clubs; Otter Tail County; Pope Art; Pope County Historical Society; Prairie Renaissance Cultural Alliance; Probstfield Farm Living History Foundation; Prospect House Museum; Rourke Art Gallery Museum; Springboard for the Arts (Fergus Falls Office); Starbuck Depot and Museums; Stevens County Historical Society; Terrace Mill Foundation; The Minnesota Lakes Maritime Society; The Prospect House Museum; The Straw Hat Players; Theatre L'Homme Dieu; and Wilkin County Historical Society.

**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](http://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](http://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](http://www.mncitizensforthearts.org) @MNCitizen #CreativeMN
- **The McKnight Foundation:** [www.mcknight.org](http://www.mcknight.org)
- **Target:** <https://corporate.target.com/corporate-responsibility>
- **Bush Foundation:** [www.bushfoundation.org](http://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](http://www.ideasthatkick.com)
- **Americans for the Arts:** [www.AmericansForTheArts.org](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org)

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