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Contacts: Sheila Smith, 651-251-0868
Executive Director, Minnesota Citizens for the Arts
Pete Pellinen, 218-780-1264
Lyric Center Board Chairman

Arts and Culture Means Business in the City of Virginia

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

SAINT PAUL, MN: We have known for a long time that the arts and culture are important to Virginia. 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 City of Virginia, the Arrowhead 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 Virginia, generating **nearly \$180,000 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, this time including in-depth analysis of seventeen Minnesota cities and counties. All of the research developed by the *Creative Minnesota* team is available at creativemn.org.

Four local organizations are part of the Virginia study:

- East Range Choral Society
- Friends of B'nai Abraham
- Laurentian Arts and Culture Alliance
- Mesabi Symphony Orchestra

Creative Minnesota: The Impact and Health of the Nonprofit Arts and Culture Sector found that these **four nonprofit arts and culture organizations** in Virginia **support the equivalent of five full time jobs** in the city, and that **2,478 people attend** nonprofit arts and cultural events here 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.”

Connie Christianson, Economic Development Representative for St. Louis County notes, “I have been involved with recruitment of new businesses, as well as the expansion of existing businesses. One of the threads in a common theme by corporate officers and their decision makers is, what does a community have to offer in areas of education, health and most importantly, arts and culture.”

“In every livable practical community, an active arts program, whether it be theatrical, musical or visual, exists. Best of all, a theatre, which can house all kinds of artists’ projects will anchor a business district, industrial park and school/college campuses, making for a hub of intellectual activity that enhances every part of a community, exponentially improving the quality of life. Everyone is a winner,” said Bernie Collins, President and CEO, Laurentian Chamber of Commerce. “We all need to support our active arts community and especially the efforts of The Lyric Center for the Arts during their process of enlivening the Quad City community with culture. May art live and thrive on the Iron Range!”

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 Grand Rapids, Duluth, and Cook County.**

“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 Regions 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, Regions 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, Regions, 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 Regions 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/>
- **City of Virginia** <http://www.virginiamn.us/>
- **Lyric Center for the Arts** <http://lyriccenterforthearts.blogspot.com/>

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