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## Arts and Culture Means Business in Chisago County

### New Study Shows Strong Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture on Chisago County’s Economy

SAINT PAUL, MN: We have known for a long time that the arts and culture are important to Chisago 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 **Chisago County HRA-EDA, 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 Chisago County, generating **nearly \$2.9 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 **six nonprofit arts and culture organizations in Chisago County support the equivalent of 46 full time jobs** in the county, and that **82,880 people attend** nonprofit arts and cultural events annually.

Sheila Smith, Executive Director of Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, said “The study shows that 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.”

#### Six local organizations are part of the study:

- Center City Opera Company
- We R Able
- Franconia Sculpture Park
- St Croix Valley Potters Tour
- Hazelfest at Hazelden
- Wyoming Area Creative Arts Community.

Several area Mayors commented on the importance of the arts to the economy and quality of life in Chisago County:

“The availability of affordable housing and the close proximity to cultural centers of the Twin Cities Metro area in our region have made our district a haven for visual, performing, and literary artists,” said **Wyoming Mayor Eric Peterson**. “The Wyoming Area Creative Arts Community continues to reach out to these artists, nurturing their talents and exposing their art to the public. Working with nearby community education, expanding exhibits to local businesses, and working directly with aspiring artists at community events, these artists help attract traffic to businesses, visitors to communities, and expand the way people throughout the region start to see the world.”

**Mayor Dan Dahlberg of Rush City** said, "The Rush City community has a rich tradition in all forms of the arts. We enjoy a wood carver, quilt makers, a jewelry maker, a group of young film makers, many photographers and even a sculptor who works with masonry to name a few. All of which enhance the quality of living in our area. Not only do they benefit our economic and cultural well-being, but many charitable organizations as well."

“The City of Lindstrom supports the arts,” said **City Administrator John Olinger**. “We have long recognized the value to our community that art in its many forms and roles plays to build community, enhance our economic development and celebrate our history. The City of Lindstrom has supported the Community Foundations Big Chair Art Project and the Barn Quilt Art Project for economic development. The City sponsors through its Park Commission the Harmony in the Parks Music Series to build community and funded the statues of Eric Norelius, Per Anderson and Daniel Lindstrom to celebrate our history. We know the value of art to our community and have invested City tax dollars to enhance our livability.”

**Samantha Denney of the Stacy City Council** adds, "Art is imperative to Minnesota cities. It provides a sense of identity, culture, aesthetic beauty and history, all of which attract tourism and businesses that enhance and develop rural communities."

"I support local arts because of it's positive impact on both the young and young at heart," said **Minnesota State Representative Bob Barrett**. “For those pursuing art as a vocation or for recreation, it is a way to explore their talents in a very positive way. For those viewing the results of this talent, it is a way to appreciate the beauty and grace that art reveals in its works. Having little artistic talent (my sister, however, achieved a Master of Art Therapy degree) I have a tremendous amount of respect for those that discover and pursue their talents in the arts."

“The Chisago Lakes Area has been blessed with a diverse and generous art community,” said **Noel Stensrud, Chisago Lakes Community Foundation**. “Our businesses were suffering from extended road construction. We called upon artists and artisans in our community to build Adirondack chairs and then turn them into a piece of art by painting them. These graced our community for one summer and brought many visitors to our area to see each of the chairs. This brought foot traffic to our businesses and a sense of hope back to the main streets. It also united our five communities in a cooperative project.”

*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)). *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.”

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#### **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.

#### **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](http://www.mncitizensforthearts.org) @MNCitizen.
- **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)
- **East Central Regional Arts Council** <http://www.ecrac.org/>
- **Chisago County HRA-EDA** [www.chisagocounty.org](http://www.chisagocounty.org)

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