



10/27/15

Contacts: Sheila Smith, (651) 251-0868
Executive Director, Minnesota Citizens for the Arts
Michele Anderson, (218) 998-4037
Rural Program Director, Springboard for the Arts

Arts and Culture Means Business in the City of Fergus Falls

New Study Shows Strong Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture on Fergus Falls Economy

SAINT PAUL, MN: We have known for a long time that the arts and culture are important to the City of Fergus Falls. 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 Springboard for the Arts, the Lake Region 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 the City of Fergus Falls, generating **\$3 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 **nine nonprofit arts and culture organizations** in Fergus Falls **support the equivalent of 86 full time jobs** in the city, and **42,384 people attend** nonprofit arts and cultural events annually.

Sheila Smith, Executive Director of Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, stated "I've said it before: Fergus Falls has something really special going on with the arts and culture compared to the rest of the state."

"As someone who moved to rural Minnesota in my late 20s, I've directly seen how investment in the arts affects the livability of Fergus Falls for other young people, something that smaller rural communities struggle with constantly," said **Michele Anderson**, Springboard's Rural Program Director, who is based in

Fergus Falls. “Whether through theater, gallery spaces, music or writing, artists here are helping our community tell its own unique story about its past, present and future, and this creativity is sparking curiosity, involvement and passion across all generations for our town and what sets us apart.”

Nine local organizations are part of the study:

- **City of Fergus Falls arts & culture programs**
- **Fergus Falls Center for the Arts**
- **Fergus Falls Concert Association**
- **Fergus Falls Senior Citizens Program**
- **Kaddatz Galleries**
- **Lake Region Arts Council**
- **Minnesota State Community & Technical College arts project**
- **Otter Tail County Historical Society**
- **Springboard for the Arts (Fergus Falls Office)**

Greg Wagner, Economic Development Planner for the West Central Initiative, said, “the arts and its contribution to local economies is fast becoming recognized as an important and valuable approach in the community and economic development field. It goes beyond creating jobs and generating revenue. The utilization of the arts in community and economic development is also an inclusive strategy and resource that can be used to inform and gather information for community members and local leaders as part of the decision making process. The City of Fergus Falls is a prime example of this in its work toward incorporating artists as leaders in community and economic development efforts.”

“The arts are a critical component to the high quality of life we strive to provide in Fergus Falls,” added **Amy Baldwin**, Executive Director, Fergus Falls Economic Improvement Commission. “As demonstrated by the regional *Creative Minnesota* report released earlier this year, the arts also have a significant economic impact in the community. Further understanding of this impact is critical in successfully planning for future support and advancement of artists and their work in the Fergus Falls and other communities.”

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 Sheila 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/>
- **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
- **Lake Region Arts Council:** <http://www.lrac4.org/>
- **Springboard for the Arts:** <http://springboardforthearts.org/who-we-are/rural-program-fergus-falls-office/>

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