SAINT PAUL, MN: We have known for a long time that the arts and culture are important to St. Louis Park. 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 St. Louis Park, St. Louis Park Friends of the Arts, the Metropolitan 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 St. Louis Park, generating over $1.5 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, 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.

Fifteen local organizations are part of the study:

- Harmony Theatre Company and School
- Sholom Community Alliance
- Eclectic Edge Ensemble
- Maggie’s Farm Free-Range Theater
- Minneapolis Jewish Film Festival
- Public Theater of Minnesota
- Rimon: The Minnesota Jewish Arts Council
- St. Louis Park Historical Society

Creative Minnesota: The Impact and Health of the Nonprofit Arts and Culture Sector found that these fifteen nonprofit arts and culture organizations in St. Louis Park support the equivalent of 40 full
time jobs in the city, and that 27,363 people attend nonprofit arts and cultural events here annually.

Sheila Smith, Executive Director of Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, said “Clearly St. Louis Park’s arts and culture organizations are bringing people to town who wouldn’t otherwise be there to spend their money in local businesses. There is something special going on in St. Louis Park.”

Mike Klement, St. Louis Park Friends of the Arts Board President said, “a vibrant arts community not only motivates residents and their dollars to stay in the community, it attracts visitors, new residents, and helps local business. This data helps us understand the depth and breadth of those factors.”

According to St. Louis Park Mayor Jeff Jacobs, “a 2008 survey of SLP residents indicated that 92% of the respondents believe that “It is important to have a strong arts and cultural presence in the community.” We are very proud of the partnership between the city and Friends of the Arts that has built that presence to a level of activity and inclusivity we had not imagined.”

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.

“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 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/
- 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
- Metropolitan Regional Arts Council: http://www.mrac.org/
- City of St. Louis Park: http://www.stlouispark.org/
- St. Louis Park Friends of the Arts: http://slpfota.org/

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