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Contact: Sheila Smith, Executive Director  
Minnesota Citizens for the Arts  
651-251-0868 / [she-mca@mtn.org](mailto:she-mca@mtn.org)

**“Artists Count” Finds Artists in Minnesota’s Arrowhead  
Have \$13.8 Million in Annual Economic Impact**

**Statewide study also finds that artists are twice as likely as other Minnesotans to go without health insurance.**

A new study released by **Minnesota Citizens for the Arts** as part of Arts Advocacy Day at the Minnesota State Capitol reveals artists in the Arrowhead have a **\$13.8 million** dollar annual impact on Minnesota’s economy, supporting nearly **500 full-time jobs** and delivering **\$1.6 million in state and local government revenue**.

These regional findings are part of a statewide study that shows artists in Minnesota had a total statewide economic impact of **\$205.2 million dollars**. However, the study also found, on the whole, that Minnesota artists are **twice as likely as other Minnesotans to go without health insurance**.

The health insurance figures were part of the “Artist Quality of Life” section of *Artists Count*, which also looked at the percentage of artists covered by retirement plans and frequency of volunteerism and voting.

“*Artist Count: The Economic Impact of Minnesota’s Individual Artists* identified nearly **20,000 artists** living in every corner of Minnesota, including full-time, part-time, and retired/hobbyist artists,” said Sheila Smith, Executive Director of Minnesota Citizens for the Arts. “We believe this is a conservative estimate of the number of artists in our state. Artists are a contributing factor to the economies and communities of every region of Minnesota, but we were dismayed by the high rate of the uninsured.”

**The study found 1,990 artists living in Minnesota’s Arrowhead Region.** For the purposes of the study, the Arrowhead includes: Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis counties.

The study, primarily funded by **The McKnight Foundation**, was conducted by **Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, Springboard for the Arts**, and the **Minnesota Craft Council** in 2006. Fifty Minnesota arts organizations including the **Arrowhead Regional Arts Council** and the **Lyric Center for the Arts in Virginia** partnered in the data collection, which asked artists to report their spending, income and other data from 2005.

“As a professional modern dancer without insurance, I injured my ankle and had to go to an emergency room for treatment. Without insurance, I was forced to pay more,” said Sandra Augustin, who is also Executive Director of the National Association of Artists’ Organizations. “Having an affordable, individual healthcare plan is essential for low-income individuals, many of whom are artists.”

Minnesota Citizens for the Arts (MCA) is producing a number of studies on the arts in Minnesota. Last year MCA and the Forum of Regional Arts Councils produced *The Arts: A Driving Force in Minnesota’s Economy* (found at [www.mncitizensforthearts.org](http://www.mncitizensforthearts.org)) about the economic impact of arts and culture organizations and their audiences. **These previous studies included a look at the economic impact of arts organizations in the Arrowhead.**

This new report focuses specifically on individual artists, who were excluded from the previous studies. **Added together, the economic impact of artists, organizations and their audiences**

**statewide in Minnesota is over \$1 billion per year, and in the Arrowhead is \$44.9 million per year.**

#### **FINDINGS: ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ARTISTS**

Altogether, in 2005, Minnesota's individual artists made artistic expenditures of **\$250.1 million**. **Eighty two** percent of those expenditures were made to local merchants and businesses with an in-state total impact of **\$205.2 million**. This spending supported **5,937 jobs** and **\$171.8 million** in resident household income. Expenditures of individual artists generated **\$5.2 million** in local government revenue and **\$18.8 million** in state government revenue.

**The Arrowhead was one of six regions included in the study.** Every region in Minnesota is home to working artists and every region sees economic benefits from those artists' work. The Arrowhead is second, behind only the seven county Metro Area, in most of the economic impact indicators including artistic expenditures, jobs created, and household income generated from artistic spending. In Minnesota's Arrowhead the 2005 economic impact of artistic spending by individual artists totaled **\$13.8 million dollars**. The Arrowhead's artists tied for second in the state, behind only the seven county Metro Area, in supporting **490 full-time jobs**. Along with generating **\$371,000 in local government** revenue, it was near the top of all regions with **\$1.2 million in state government revenue**.

"The stark and sometimes bleak climate of northern Minnesota turns out to be lushly peopled with art makers and art lovers, and has made it possible for me to work as an artist living in rural northern Minnesota," said Betsy Bowen, Arrowhead artist.

#### **HEALTH INSURANCE**

While the focus of this study is the economic impact of individual artists, is also investigated Minnesota artists' quality of life. The study found a major concern in terms of health insurance. **Fourteen percent of Minnesota artists are not covered by insurance**, compared to 7 percent of the general population of Minnesotans who are uninsured. Another **23 percent of artists rely**

**on a spouse, partner or family member for coverage, while 28 percent of artists are paying for individual plans.**

**In the Arrowhead, 16 percent of artists were completely uninsured, 30 percent relied on their family, and 22 percent were paying for individual plans.**

“We believe a great majority of those individual plans are high deductible or catastrophic-only coverage, which doesn’t help artists with daily or preventative health care,” said Laura Zabel, Executive Director of Springboard for the Arts. “It is alarming that such high percentages of artists are unable to provide themselves with proper insurance coverage. More research needs to be done as to why artists are so much less likely than the general public to be insured. Partly, this reflects the problems America is having in providing health care to all its citizens. When policy makers are looking at ways to make sure that all Americans have access to health care and to a secure retirement, attention should be directed at why artists are so much less likely to be insured.”

## **ARTIST INCOME AND EXPENSES**

**Only 24 percent of the artist population reports that they are working full-time on their art.** Sixty percent report they are working part-time in the arts and the remaining 16 percent are artists who do not receive payment for their work, including retired and hobbyist artists.

For the artist population as a whole, 71 percent of their income was *not* from artistic work, with only **29 percent of their income coming from their art.** Full-time artists, of course, rely more on their artistic income for their living, reporting an **average income from their art of \$34,342.** Average artistic expenditures for full-time artists was \$26,177.

Among the six regions studied, the Arrowhead beats every other area, including the Metro Area, in the make-up of its artist population, in that it has the **highest percentage of full-time artists (30 percent) and retired/hobbyist artists (26 percent).** As a result, it also has the lowest percentage of part-time artists (44 percent). Average artistic expenditures for full-time, part-time,

and hobbyists for 2005 were **\$9,680 per artist**. Along with the highest average amount of **income from their art (\$29,808)**, this area's artists also achieved the highest percentage of **income from their art (38 percent)**. This area's artists must be doing something right, because even their non-artistic income is higher than anywhere else in the state (**\$48,795**).

## **COMMUNITY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

In addition to their economic contributions to the economy, Minnesota artists are active and engaged in their communities, volunteering and voting at higher levels than the general public both in the state and nationwide. **Eighty one percent of Minnesota artists reported that they volunteer in their community** at least once each month compared to relatively high 67 percent of the general Minnesota public and only 27 percent of all Americans. The volunteer time contributed by Minnesota's individual artists represents a donation of time with a conservatively estimated value of **\$2.1 million** annually.

"The artists in my community represent possibly every art form...designers, film makers, sculptors, dancers, jewelry artists, photographers...all of whom volunteer, work, create, and inspire the communities they interact with. I can't name one thing in my neighborhood an artist has not contributed to in some way," said artist Ta-coumba Aiken.

In terms of civic participation, **82 percent of artists report they "always" vote**, 16 percent "sometimes" vote, and only 2 percent "never" vote. When compared to the very high voting rates of the general Minnesota public at 77 percent and all Americans at 58 percent, artists' civic participation is exceptionally high.

**The Arrowhead's artists also reported high participation rates. Eighty eight percent of artists report they volunteer** in their communities at least once each month. A high **84 percent** of this area's artists report they **"always" vote**, 12 percent "sometimes" vote, and only 4 percent "never" vote.

Artists are very engaged with their communities, volunteering and voting to a higher degree than the rest of the population. Our communities would be diminished without the many and varied contributions of our artists. Just as we look for ways to ensure that our communities are “hospitable” places for businesses to locate and thrive, we must make certain that our artistic resources are nurtured as well.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The cultural contributions of Minnesota artists are self-evident. Every time we participate in an art crawl or music festival, see an August Wilson play in our home town, use a ceramic bowl made by Warren Mackenzie, see a Judy Onofrio sculpture, or enjoy a performance by Low or the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra we are reminded of Minnesota’s contributions to America’s cultural energy. Young people seeing that Minnesota artists have “made it” are provided role models to help them decide they can follow their individual dreams and live a full and creative life here and in the world. An environment that supports artists is an environment that encourages bright, creative people to make a living and a life here in Minnesota.

How can we, as individuals, help artists thrive in Minnesota? Here are some things that we suggest:

- Support increased funding at the local, state and national level for individual artists and the organizations that employ and assist them.
- Insist that public art be a part of new building projects in your neighborhood, county and state.
- Ask Congress to pass the Artists’ Deduction bill, which would allow artists to deduct the full market value of a work of art donated to a charity.
- Attend local dance and theatre productions, buy local art, and see local bands.
- Commission a piece of art or a song to commemorate events in your life.
- Enroll your child in art classes, music lessons, or an after school theatre program.
- Serve on a board of directors or volunteer for an organization that works with artists.
- Take a class or attend a workshop to create your own art and explore your own creative passions.

*Artists Count: The Economic Impact of Minnesota’s Individual Artists* demonstrates that

investment in the health and vitality of individual artists and their artwork yields significant economic benefits in every region of our state. Data from this study will be used to advocate for the arts and artists at all levels because this report shows conclusively that individual **artists count** as a significant contributor to Minnesota's economy and to our quality of life.

*Background on study partners provided below.*

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## **BACKGROUND ON STUDY PARTNERS:**

*Artists Count: The Economic Impact of Minnesota's Individual Artists (2007)* is a statewide study conducted by lead organizations **Minnesota Citizens for the Arts (MCA)**, **Springboard for the Arts**, and the **Minnesota Crafts Council (MCC)**, and was primarily funded by the **McKnight Foundation**. Many additional partners assisted in the data collection and are listed in the complete report. The lead organizations contracted with **Americans for the Arts** to create the economic models for the statewide and six regional area studies, and to also provide secure web-based surveying tools.

## **LEAD ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Minnesota Citizens for the Arts**

2233 University Ave. W. #355, St. Paul, MN 55114

651-251-0868

[staff@mncitizensforthearts.org](mailto:staff@mncitizensforthearts.org)

[www.mncitizensforthearts.org](http://www.mncitizensforthearts.org)

Minnesota Citizens for the Arts 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 42,000 arts advocates in Minnesota. For more information on MCA, this project or statistics about the arts in Minnesota, please contact MCA Executive Director Sheila Smith at the above number or view MCA's website.

### **Springboard for the Arts**

308 Prince Street, Suite 270, St. Paul, MN 55101

651-292-4381

[info@springboardforthearts.org](mailto:info@springboardforthearts.org)

[www.springboardforthearts.org](http://www.springboardforthearts.org)

Springboard for the Arts' mission is to cultivate a vibrant arts community by connecting artists with the skills, contacts, information and services they need to make a living and a life. For over 20 years, Springboard has served individual artists and their organizations with one-on-one consulting, on-line resource guide and job listings in the arts, workshops, the Artist Loan Fund,

Emergency Relief Fund, Artist Access to Health Care (AAH) and other resources. Springboard for the Arts is based in Saint Paul, MN and serves the 5-state upper Midwest.

### **Minnesota Craft Council**

The Minnesota Crafts Council, an artist member organization for over 30 years, has been responsible for the Minnesota Crafts Festival and the MCC Fall Show, two premier juried venues exhibiting the work of over 100 fine craft artists at these annual events. MCC published the Craft Connection, a quarterly magazine featuring fine craft artists, and produced professional and aesthetic development workshops. MCC's signature work was programming for artists by artists. The Council's participation in this study was its last activity, as it closed its doors in February of 2007.

### **The McKnight Foundation**

710 South Second Street, Suite 400, Minneapolis, MN 55401  
612-333-4220

[www.mcknight.org](http://www.mcknight.org)

The McKnight Foundation, a Minnesota-based private philanthropic organization, seeks to improve the quality of life for present and future generations. Through grant making, coalition-building, and encouragement of strategic policy reform, we use our resources to attend, unite, and empower those we serve.

### **PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

American Composers Forum  
American Association of Woodturners  
Americans for the Arts  
Arrowhead Regional Arts Council  
Art Educators of Minnesota  
Bryant Lake Bowl  
Center for Hmong Arts & Talent  
Central Minnesota Arts Board  
COMPAS  
Cornucopia Art Center  
East Central Arts Council  
Five Wings Art Council  
Forum of Regional Arts Councils of Minnesota  
Illusion Theater  
Intermedia Arts  
Lake Elmo Regional Arts Center  
Lake Region Arts Council  
The Loft  
Lyric Center for the Arts  
MacPhail Center for Music  
Metropolitan Regional Arts Council  
Minnesota Center for Book Arts  
Minnesota Fringe Festival  
Minnesota State Arts Board  
Minnetonka Center for the Arts  
MMEA (Minnesota Music Educators Association)

mnartists.org, a program of the Walker Art Center  
National Association of Artist Organizations  
National Writer's Union-Twin Cities Chapter  
Northern Clay Center  
Northwest Regional Arts Council  
Perpich Center for Arts Education  
Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council  
Region 2 Arts Council  
The Southern Theater  
Southeast Minnesota Arts Council Inc.  
Southwest Minnesota Arts and Humanities Council  
St. Paul Art Collective (St. Paul Art Crawl)  
SteppingStone Theatre for Youth Development  
Textile Center  
Theatre in the Round Players  
Thirst Theater  
Twin Cities Theater and Film  
Uptown Association/Uptown Art Fair  
VSA Arts of Minnesota  
Young Audiences of Minnesota