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“Artists Count” Finds Southwest Minnesota’s Artists Have \$7.2 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 Southwest Minnesota have a **\$7.2 million** dollar annual impact on Minnesota’s economy, supporting nearly **300 full-time jobs** and delivering more than **\$800,000 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 1073 artists living in Southwest Minnesota. For the purposes of the study, Southwest Minnesota includes: Big Stone, Blue Earth, Brown, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, LeSueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, McLeod, Meeker, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, Rock, Sibley, Swift, Waseca, Watonwan, and Yellow Medicine 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 **Southwest Minnesota Arts and Humanities Council** and **Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council** 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) 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 Southwest Minnesota.**

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 in Minnesota is over \$1 billion 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 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.

Southwest Minnesota 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. In Southwest Minnesota the 2005 economic impact of artistic spending by individual artists totaled **\$7.2 million dollars**. The artists in this area had the highest percentage (**89 percent**) of their **artistic expenditures inside the state of Minnesota** supporting **252 full-time jobs**, along with generating **\$223,000 in local government revenue** and **\$608,000 in state government revenue**.

“As an artist and an educator, I have an acute awareness of how individual artists enrich our lives here in Minnesota,” said T. Mychael Rambo. “They allow our young people, our communities and our state to reap the benefit, both economically and creatively, of the glorious and infinite ideas of the mind and gestures of the heart. Although many recognize the intrinsic value of the arts, this study illustrates the value of our creative culture in a more tangible way.”

HEALTH INSURANCE

While the focus of this study is the economic impact of individual artists, it 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 Southwest Minnesota, 17 percent of artists were completely uninsured (the highest in the state), 31 percent relied on their family, and **25 percent** were paying for their own plan.

“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, Southwest Minnesota had the lowest percentage of artists working full-time at their art (6 percent) and the highest percentage (**69 percent**) of artists indicating they work part time as artists. Perhaps as a result, this area’s artists also had the

lowest percentage of their income coming from their art (**10 percent**), and the lowest average income from their art (**\$3,062**). Average artistic expenditures for full-time, part-time, and hobbyists for 2005 were **\$7,535 per artist**. In total, Southwest Minnesota artists' income is primarily from non-artistic sources (90 percent) with only **10 percent from artistic work**.

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.

Southwest Minnesota's artists also reported high participation rates. Eighty seven percent of artists report they volunteer in their communities at least once each month. An equally high **86 percent of this area's artists report they "always" vote**, 12 percent "sometimes" vote, and only 2 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

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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

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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 programing 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

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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