

2009 ARTS LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



Artistic and creative expression and participation are essential to the well-being of everyone, everywhere in Wisconsin. Public investment in the arts, culture, creativity and innovation gives Wisconsin the competitive edge in economic development, downtown revitalization, educational advancement, tourism opportunities, and community engagement. Wisconsin must support coordinated policies and strategies using the arts and creativity to compete in the global economy and address the state's priorities: incubate, attract and retain business, grow the economy, stop the "brain drain" of young people leaving our communities, provide a quality education for all students, enhance quality of life, and keep communities livable. **Investment in cultural and creative programs and opportunities is not separate from the overall priorities of the state—it's vital to the overall health and well-being of the people of Wisconsin. The arts are not a frill, they are part of the solution.**

The 2009 Arts Legislative Agenda covers these critical issues:

- ★ **ENCOURAGE STATE INVESTMENT IN THE ARTS THROUGH THE WISCONSIN ARTS BOARD AND OTHER STATE AGENCIES:** The Wisconsin Arts Board's budget for 2009-2011 as recently presented by Gov. Doyle reflects a reasonable outcome in very rough economic times. The Arts Board will face a cut of \$59,300 annually out of the budget (which totals about \$2.4 million annually), but overall the Arts Board's operation or grant making ability will not be severely hampered or eliminated. The contrast is particularly stark when we consider the continuing effects of the current economic downturn, and, the Arts Board's budget is compared to what is happening to the other state arts agencies in the country, many of which are experiencing reduced budgets or even elimination.

In addition to keeping the Wisconsin Arts Board strong and healthy, the Departments of Commerce, Tourism, Workforce Development, Public Instruction and other state agencies should continue to fund and initiate programs that use the arts for short and long-term impact on economic development, education, tourism, and quality of life. **We call for continuing to strengthen the state's commitment to cultural economic development, community revitalization, civic engagement through the arts and arts education while meeting the expanding artistic and cultural needs of the people of Wisconsin.**

- ★ **REINSTATE THE FILM INDUSTRY TAX INCENTIVES:** Gov. Doyle's 2009-2011 budget completely eliminates the film production services and film production company investment income and franchise tax credits overseen by the Department of Commerce, and replaces them with an annual \$500,000 grant program for "film- and video-related activities that create permanent jobs in Wisconsin."

The incentives were signed into law by Gov. Doyle in 2006 and were effective as of January 1, 2008. In just over a year of existence, this 21st century economic development strategy has already resulted in high-profile films such as *Public Enemies* being filmed in Wisconsin and the establishment of locally-based film development programs and facilities around the state. The growth of the film industry in Wisconsin has already had positive repercussions for the entire arts industry, expanding and diversifying employment opportunities and increasing involvement in the arts overall.

The \$500,000 allocated for the new grant program is a significant decrease from the \$5 million per year currently specified for the film incentives program. These actions will effectively shut down this exciting and successful new industry that is already making a positive difference in communities across the state and for the state as a whole. **To ensure that Wisconsin builds and sustains economic and community development and civic strategies for the 21st century, the film industry tax incentives must be reinstated and supported.**

- ★ **ADVANCE THE WISCONSIN TASK FORCE ON ARTS AND CREATIVITY IN EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT CREATIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL STUDENTS:** The Wisconsin Task Force on Arts and Creativity in Education, co-chaired by Lt. Governor Barbara Lawton and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Elizabeth Burmaster, reported that active participation in and understanding of the arts and creativity are essential to young people's success in school and in life. The same qualities that characterize successful arts education programs are also essential to making Wisconsin a leader in the global creative economy. Arts education rewards children by helping them to reach practical goals of academic achievement and career success. The arts are much more than just fun "extra" activities for kids. The profound impact of arts education on children and youth follows them throughout their lives, and participation in the arts opens up children's worlds and minds, and offers them the skills they need for a bright future. **To provide opportunities for creative expression and engagement, and prepare students for the 21st century workforce, we call for systemic, integrated arts educational opportunities as recommended by the Task Force.**

