

## ARTS AND CREATIVITY IN 2010: MAKING THE CASE

### *Who is Wisconsin's Arts and Creative Sector?*

We are performing and visual artists and craftspeople, nonprofit organizations and small businesses, rural community leaders and urban entrepreneurs, preservers of tradition and developers of new ideas. We are nearly 50,000 strong—and our nonprofit arts organizations alone generate over \$418 million in economic activity every year, including \$61.8 million in local and state tax revenues for Wisconsin.<sup>1</sup>

### *How do we make a difference in Wisconsin?*

**The arts are paving the way forward for Wisconsin.** Our performances and concerts, designs and crafts, galleries and cafes, museums and theatres all help make our state a high-quality place to live, work and raise children. Our nonprofit organizations, small businesses, professional and community networks, and entrepreneurial innovations create jobs and revitalize communities and neighborhoods. Our festivals, arts districts, heritage celebrations, and art exhibitions draw visitors to our counties, towns and cities. Our arts and arts-rich curricula help students and young people thrive across all subjects in school, and our workshops, practice sessions, rehearsals and arts-oriented programs help them to stay safe and happy after school.

And, perhaps most important of all, there are real opportunities right now for the arts and arts education in Wisconsin and the United States. Decision-makers on all levels are taking a real interest in the role of the arts in shaping communities. And the difficult economic times—while tough on many individuals and organizations—helps the arts sector acknowledge its essential contribution to economic recovery, educational advancement, civic engagement and community vitality. **The state's arts and creative sector is helping Wisconsin to meet our shared challenges using creative thinking and innovation.**

### *How can this key sector thrive and benefit everyone, everywhere in Wisconsin?*

1. **Arts Agency Support.** One tenth of one percent of Wisconsin's state budget is allocated for the arts— less than the cost of 30 miles of highway. **The Wisconsin Arts Board's budget must be preserved in the coming year** in order for Wisconsin's arts organizations to continue providing quality programming to their constituencies. As a result of the nation's current financial woes, many in the private sector are discontinuing their arts funding programs. The Arts Board must be allowed to soften the impact of this shift by continuing to provide substantial grants for arts projects around the state.
2. **Rural Development through Community Arts Development.** Since the Wisconsin Idea integrated the arts and agriculture in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Wisconsin has been a leader in strengthening rural communities through grassroots arts development. Arts groups and creative businesses are now at the

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<sup>1</sup> Americans for the Arts' 2009 *Creative Industries Study* finds that Wisconsin is home to 10,571 arts-related businesses that employ 44,895 people. The 2005 *Arts and Economic Prosperity* survey of the economic impact of the arts across America by Americans for the Arts and the Wisconsin Arts Board finds that Wisconsin's nonprofit arts industry generates \$418 million in economic activity every year, including \$61.8 million in local and state tax revenues.

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heart of rural Wisconsin, adding richness to daily life in communities around the state and helping to express and define their uniqueness for residents and visitors alike.

- 3. The Arts and Creative Industries Driving Economic and Community Development.** Wisconsin's greatest asset is fast becoming its knowledge economy. According to Tom Still, President of the Wisconsin Technology Council, "We now stand at...an economic crossroads in the history of the state. To build a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy anchored by technological innovation, Wisconsin must make the most of its people, resources, and opportunities." Engines for creativity and innovation, the arts and creative industries also make Wisconsin communities more livable and attractive to Knowledge Economy businesses. Vibrant arts scenes help stop brain drain and retain corporate business: they helped Milwaukee attract corporations such as Roundys and Rockwell International and small-town Amery attract a Mayo Clinic-affiliated medical center. The arts are also a key component in neighborhood revitalization, drawing new retailers, restaurants and residents as well as visitors. Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward, Madison's Schenks-Atwood neighborhood, and Green Bay's Broadway District are just a few examples of neighborhoods brought back to life by nonprofit galleries and performance spaces.
- 4. The Arts: Cornerstones of Wisconsin's Growing Tourism Industry.** Wisconsin's arts and cultural events and sites are drawing tourists to Wisconsin destinations in record numbers and making tourism the state's second-largest industry. Nationwide, approximately 65% of U.S. adult travelers (some 92.7 million) include a cultural, arts, heritage or historic activity while traveling 50 miles away or more, and cultural attractions and activities inspire over a third of tourists to extend their trips by a day or more.<sup>2</sup> In Wisconsin, the Fall Art Tour in Baraboo, Spring Green, Dodgeville and Mineral Point and the Dunn County Artists Tour in Menomonie, Colfax, and Downsville are just two excellent examples of successful tourism endeavors that use the arts as an economic development advantage.
- 5. Help Students Thrive with Arts-Rich Curricula.** Studies have shown that when students have long-term exposure to arts-integrated curricula, their learning across all subjects improves dramatically. In January 2009, Lt. Governor Barbara Lawton and former State Superintendent for Public Instruction Elizabeth Burmaster released the Wisconsin Task Force on Arts and Creativity in Education report recommending increased investment in creativity as part of a quality education for all Wisconsin students. The new State Superintendent Tony Evers has expressed his support of these recommendations, and seven teams are now continuing the Task Force's work on the local level.
- 6. Ensure that Students Stay Safe and Prevent Delinquency through Arts-Rich After School, Recovery/Re-Entry, and Family Support Programs.** The arts can be a positive, productive and stimulating means to a crucial end: preventing delinquency among Wisconsin's at-risk youth. Dozens of programs throughout the state are using the arts to enhance and inspire afterschool, recovery/re-entry, and family support programs targeted at at-risk youth and their families. But the arts can benefit more than just the most vulnerable: participating in arts activities and attending arts events help to bind families together, and strong families are important barriers to difficulties in adolescence and beyond.

**For more information and to get involved, contact**  
Arts Wisconsin | 608 255 8316 | [akatz@artswisconsin.org](mailto:akatz@artswisconsin.org)  
[www.artswisconsin.org](http://www.artswisconsin.org)



<sup>2</sup> Source: Travel Industry Association of America national survey, 2001.