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Investment in the arts and creativity is an investment in Wisconsin's future

As candidates for public office put forth their visions for the future during this election season, I encourage them to consider investment in Wisconsin's creative economy as an investment for Wisconsin's future. Wisconsin needs to invest in 21st century development strategies for economic, educational and civic success.

Wisconsin
Creates

Creativity is the resource needed by every entrepreneur and business in the 21st century, and the creative economy is based on ideas, imagination, and innovation. To grow Wisconsin creatively, it's time to invest in:

- **local and regional creative economic development** that creates and expands jobs, businesses and income, through downtown and community revitalization, civic engagement, and cultural tourism programs
- **arts and creativity in education** as a deliberate and pro-active strategy for workforce development, to expand skills training; stimulate creative thinking, ideas generation, innovation and inspiration; and enable entrepreneurship – all qualities needed in the 21st century world and workforce.
- **strengthening capacity and entrepreneurship** for and in the state's multi-faceted arts and culture infrastructure.

Here are some impressive statistics about the local and global impact of the arts, arts education and creative economy:

- According to Americans for the Arts and the Wisconsin Arts Board, the nonprofit arts sector generates \$657 million annually in economic activity in arts, development and tourism, of which \$65 million is in local and state tax revenue and \$479 million in resident and business income.
- According to Dun & Bradstreet, the arts industry also employs over 50,000 full-time workers among 9,100 (mostly small) businesses. (As a comparison, Wisconsin's paper industry currently employs about 31,000 workers and the

biotech industry has 35,000 workers.) This is a locally-based industry ready for investment and increased success.

- According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Commerce Department, and the National Endowment for the Arts, research derived from the Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (ACPSA), the arts contribute \$763.6 billion to the U.S. economy, more than agriculture, transportation, or warehousing. The arts employ 4.9 million workers across the country with earnings of more than \$370 billion. And, the arts exported \$20 billion more than imported, providing a positive trade balance. For Wisconsin, the ACPSA research shows that \$9.1 billion is value added to the state's economy by the arts.

The research provides statistics to go along with the stories of human and community transformation through the arts, proving that we need *Wisconsin Creates!*

When the elections are over and the new Legislature convenes in January, we encourage decision-makers to consider *Wisconsin Creates* as a new program to promote the local and regional creative economy as a 21st century investment program that will make a difference in every Wisconsin community.

Wisconsin Creates will help Wisconsin identify, strengthen and expand its creative programs, workforce, and businesses on the local level, leading to sustainable job growth, a growing talent pool, and community vibrancy and vitality. The program will invest in, grow, and sustain the local and regional creative economy where businesses and organizations produce artistic, cultural, or creative content, such as arts centers, design professionals, architecture firms.

Wisconsin Creates is all about using the arts and creativity for a vibrant, innovative, and successful Wisconsin. Strengthening Wisconsin's creative economy is a critical strategy for the state and all of its communities to compete in the global economy, educate our children, engage residents, and to develop, attract and retain entrepreneurs and a high skilled work force through healthy, vibrant communities where people want to live, work, learn, and play.

Thanks to our elected and local officials for making creativity, innovation, imagination and entrepreneurship a priority for Wisconsin's future.