



For Immediate Release

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Washington County's nonprofit arts and culture sector generates \$21 million in economic activity and supports 942 jobs annually according to a study released this week

HILLSBORO, OR — It's not just entertainment; it's business. A new study reveals that the nonprofit arts and culture industry in Washington County, Oregon generates more than \$21 million in annual economic activity —supporting 942 full-time equivalent jobs and generating \$1.5 million in local and state government revenues.

The *Arts & Economic Prosperity 5* national economic impact study - the most comprehensive economic impact study of the nonprofit arts and culture industry in the United States - was conducted by Americans for the Arts (AFTA), the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education, in partnership with the Westside Cultural Alliance (WCA), an arts service organization in Washington County.

"Many people recognize that the arts play a critical role in improving the quality of life in our communities, but the arts also generate significant economic activity," said Cindy Dauer, Executive Director of the WCA. "For the first time ever we have a study that examines the economic role of the arts in Washington County, and we can see the arts are not just a charity, they are an industry."

Results from the study show that nonprofit arts and culture organizations in Washington County spent \$13.8 million during fiscal year 2015. This spending is far-reaching: organizations pay employees, purchase supplies, contract for services and acquire assets within their community. Those dollars, in turn, generated \$11 million in household income for local residents and \$1.5 million in local and state government revenues.

Nationwide, the arts generate more than \$166 billion annually, according to the study. That includes \$687 million across Oregon and \$330 just in the Portland Metro Area.

"This study demonstrates that the arts are an economic and employment powerhouse both locally and across the nation," said Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. "A vibrant arts and culture industry helps local businesses thrive and helps local communities become stronger and healthier places to live. Leaders who care about community and economic vitality can feel good about choosing to invest in the arts. Nationally as well as locally, the arts mean business."

Arts Industry Boon for Local Businesses

In addition to spending by organizations, the nonprofit arts and culture industry leverages \$7.2 million in event-related spending by its audiences. As a result of attending a cultural event, attendees often eat dinner in local restaurants, pay for transportation, buy gifts and souvenirs, and hire a babysitter. What's more, attendees travel to Washington County from other communities to attend art events. Of the local audiences surveyed, 33.5% of attendees were identified as non-residents, of which 91.5% indicated the primary purpose of their visit was to "specifically attend this arts/cultural event."

"The arts are one of the most important attractions to any city," said Gregg Jacot, President of Sherwood Main Street. "The Sherwood Center for the Arts has been a huge boon to our downtown since being completed in 2015. Our Center for the Arts has brought thousands of people into Old Town Sherwood because of the numerous events and productions. Before and after the productions people like to eat, drink and shop."

Others in Washington County agree.

"My business has definitely been impacted by the promotion of arts in Washington County," said Zachary Clark, owner of Clark's Bistro and Pub in downtown Hillsboro. "My restaurant is often full of happy people who have just come from one of these shared art experiences. The 'arts' in Hillsboro serve as a huge benefit to my business as well as my community."

The *Arts & Economic Prosperity 5* study was conducted by Americans for the Arts and supported by The Ruth Lilly Fund of Americans for the Arts. Americans for the Arts' local, regional, and statewide project partners contributed both time and financial support to the study. Financial information from organizations was collected in partnership with DataArts™, using a new online survey interface. For a full list of the communities who participated in the *Arts & Economic Prosperity 5* study, visit www.AmericansForTheArts.org/AEP5Partners.

Support for the AEP5 in Washington County was provided by the Cultural Coalition of Washington County, the Oregon Arts Commission, and the Regional Arts & Culture Council. For more information including a complete copy of study results, visit www.westsidculturalalliance.org/economic-study.

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