

Arts advocates seek legacy fund support

Written by

On March 7, 2013 Minnesota Citizens for the Arts will bring more than seven hundred arts advocates from around the state to the State Capitol for “Arts Advocacy Day” to ask legislators to follow through on the promise of the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment that dedicated funds to conservation and the arts.

At risk is the next two years of arts funding.

Passing it by 56%, in 2008 Minnesota voters approved the Legacy Amendment, creating four new dedicated funds for land, water, parks and arts. Last year arts advocates challenged legislative suggestions that the Arts & Culture Fund be used to build a stadium. In the end, the legislature secured other resources to build the stadium and left the Arts Fund alone.

“Our message is that we want the Legislature to continue to follow through on the wishes of Minnesota voters,” said Sheila Smith, MCA’s Executive Director. “The Constitutional Amendment states that, *“the dedicated money under this section must supplement traditional sources of funding for these purposes and may not be used as a substitute,”* she said. “We understand that there is a deficit and that legislators have an extremely tough job ahead of them.”

“We are asking that at least 50% of the Legacy Amendment’s Arts fund go through the highly accountable and transparent Minnesota State Arts Board and Regional Arts Council system because it ensures that citizens in all 87 counties will benefit. We are concerned about some bills that would earmark the resources intended for all Minnesotans to benefit only a few.” In addition, advocates are hoping to protect the other traditional source of funding for the arts from the general fund. “In the past two years the Minnesota State Arts Board and Regional Arts Councils could meet only 50% of incoming requests for grants and services.”

Arts advocates are also concerned about some of the tax reform proposals that would do damage to nonprofit’s role as partners with the state in providing arts and educational services to Minnesotans.

The day begins with a rally at 8:30 a.m. in the Minnesota History Center and continues with legislator meetings legislators in the Capitol from 10:00 to 1:00.

Minnesotans have a strong tradition of interest in access to arts and culture, and participate in the arts to a higher degree than citizens of other states. Minnesota is home to over 1400 non-profit arts organizations that collectively serve 12.5 million people annually and provide an economic impact of over \$1 billion to our state’s economy. The Arts: A Driving Force in Minnesota’s Economy (2006)*, showed that the nonprofit arts provide 22,095 full time jobs and generate more than \$94 million in state and local government revenues.

According to Artists Count: *An Economic Impact Study of Artists in Minnesota (2007)** our state is also home to over 20,000 artists, who are a contributing factor to the economies of every region of Minnesota, supporting an additional 6,000 full time jobs with their work.

* *Both studies are available for downloading at www.mncitizensforthearts.org.*

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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 651-251-0868 or view MCA's website www.mncitizensforthearts.org, @MNCitizen on Twitter or on Facebook.