

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 21, 2007

CONTACT:

For Art Works: Beth Erickson
(218) 310-5074

For KCCI: Greg Grell
(218) 726-8567, ext. 116

For DSACF: Holly C. Sampson, President
(218) 726-0232

Art Works releases community input on arts and business sectors working together to boost Twin Ports economy

DULUTH, MN—Overwhelming local response to a survey conducted in late August emphasized the significant potential benefits of greater collaboration between Twin Ports artists and businesses.

A total of 320 people involved in the arts and business sectors responded to the survey conducted by Art Works, a Knight Creative Communities Initiative team which is planning an expo for spring 2008. The purpose of the Art Works Expo is to provide a structured forum for arts, business and community leaders to learn what other cities have done to leverage creative assets and develop specific initiatives to build on the unique assets and strengths of our area. The following is a brief summary of the survey findings:

- 79% of artists suggested the business community should recruit and promote local talent to help the arts community be more successful in the Twin Ports; 75% expressed a need for more workshop and display space to be made available; and 71% believed collaboration on projects would be successful for the arts community.
- 81% of business people reported they contributed to the local arts with 58% of those doing so by donating funds.
- 50% of business respondents reported purchasing local art. Of those who did not purchase local art, 37% reported they did not know how to purchase local art and 33% don't purchase local art due to convenience of purchasing art via corporate retail.
- 88% of all respondents suggested that increased marketing would enhance the Twin Ports appeal as a destination for tourists interested in attending arts events.
- 72% of respondents are interested in attending an expo, 68% are interested in participating on the Art Works team and 83 people provided contact information for volunteering opportunities.

“We are extremely excited by the number of people that indicated an interest in attending and volunteering in an expo focused on bringing together artists and businesses in the Twin Ports to spur economic growth,” said Kami Norland, Art Works research co-chair and community specialist at the Rural Health Resource Center.

“The need for this expo was further supported by the majority of Twin Ports businesses that participated in this survey that want to support the arts but either don't know how or choose to do so by just donating funds. Our goal is to educate artists and businesses about the benefits of collaborating on citywide projects to help both groups see an immediate return on their investment,” said Norland. “There also appears to be a communication gap in educating the public about the variety of artistic opportunities available in the region, preventing Northlanders from fully utilizing the available local arts.”

The survey comes on the heels of the most comprehensive statewide arts survey ever completed. *The Arts: A driving force in Minnesota's Economy*, conducted in part by the Arrowhead Regional Arts Council, found that the arts contribute nearly 32 million dollars in the Arrowhead Region, second only to the arts economic impact in the Twin Cities. The survey found that, for every state dollar invested, nearly 11 dollars is returned to support the arts.

“Multiple research sources indicate how important the arts are in contributing to Minnesota’s bottom line and helping create a vibrant community,” said Norland. “We plan to use these survey results in addition to qualitative research we are in the process of conducting to host an Art Works Expo this spring to provide a platform for artists and businesses to work together to a greater extent than in the past.”

Full results to the survey are available by contacting Kami Norland at knorland@ruralcenter.org.

Art Works, one of five teams of the Knight Creative Communities Initiative, aims to engage the arts community and business sector in collaborative efforts to spur greater economic prosperity in the region.

The Knight Creative Communities Initiative is a venture that aims to pull together the ideas and talents of all parts of the community in building a more attractive environment for economic growth. The KCCI was initiated and funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation and works with the Creative Class Group and 31 citizen Catalysts.

###