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MESA NONPROFIT ARTS AND CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR AUDIENCES SPENT NEARLY \$30 MILLION IN 2015

Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 Study Shows Spending Supported Over 1,000 Jobs

MESA, Ariz. (Aug. 28, 2017): Mesa nonprofit and public arts and culture organizations and their audiences contributed nearly \$30 million in direct economic activity in 2015, supporting 1,024 full-time jobs and generating almost \$3.1 million in local and state government revenues, according to [Arts & Economic Prosperity 5](#), a national study conducted by Americans for the Arts every five years. Compared with the findings five years earlier, AEP5 shows an increase of \$4.5 million in total economic impact in Mesa, growth in overall attendance by 100,000 visits (719,470 in 2015) and the addition of over 170 arts and culture jobs.

Participating nonprofit and public arts and culture organizations in Mesa spent a total of \$16.8 million, while attendees spent \$12.8 million directly related to their participation in cultural activities, excluding the cost of event admission. Arts and culture attendees in Mesa were found to be fairly representative of the community at large, in terms of both age distribution and household income, when compared to census data for the area.

Fourteen nonprofit arts and culture organizations in the City of Mesa were among organizations in 341 communities across the nation participating in the study, which included collecting detailed budget information in more than 40 expenditure categories and surveying a varied sampling of attendees at arts events.

Nationally, nonprofit arts and culture organizations and their audiences collectively spent \$166.3 billion to support 4.6 million jobs.

Other Valley communities participated in the study and also benefitted significantly from arts and culture spending. In Phoenix, 90 nonprofit arts and culture organizations and their audiences accounted for nearly \$402 million in expenditures (\$164.6 million by organizations, \$237.2 million by audiences). West Valley expenditures totaled \$22.9 million (\$13.1 million by organizations, \$9.8 by audiences).

“This study shows the undeniable economic impact of arts and culture organizations in Mesa and the vital revenue audiences bring into our local businesses,” said Mesa Mayor John Giles. “Growth in attendance in recent years reinforces that there is a strong desire for arts experiences and opportunities in our city.”

Of the survey respondents who identified as residents, 52.5% said that, had the event they were attending been unavailable, they would have “traveled to a different community to attend a similar cultural event,” implying lost revenue in Mesa if the area lacked the arts opportunities and experiences desired by its residents and visitors.

Expenditures in 2015 contributed \$1.37 million in local-government revenue in Mesa and \$1.72 million to the state.

In 2015, nonprofit and public arts and culture event attendees in Mesa spent an average of \$17.77 per person, excluding the cost of admission. The 13% of attendees who were non-residents spent an average of \$32.21 per person. Of the survey respondents who identified as residents (all over the age of 18), 63.5% were under the age of 55, and 36.5% were 55 and older.

“Every dollar spent on nonprofit arts and culture produces a significant return on a significant investment,” said Catherine “Rusty” Foley, executive director of the statewide arts and cultural advocacy organization, Arizona Citizens for the Arts.

Cindy Ornstein, Director of Arts and Culture for the City of Mesa, stated, “Impact of the arts and culture industry in the City of Mesa can be observed in increased activity and burgeoning development efforts in and around downtown. Developers repeatedly cite the growing arts scene as a major catalyst for their interest in Mesa. With the recent groundbreaking of Artspace Mesa Lofts and new development projects being planned, such as the hotel and apartment project announced this summer by Habitat Metro and partners, it is clear that a creative environment and varied arts offerings are viewed as essential assets for a successful urban center.”

For the full national study, visit www.artsusa.org.

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About the City of Mesa Arts & Culture Department

The Arts and Culture Department of the City of Mesa, Arizona serves as the cultural liaison and ambassador for the City; the chief advocate for the importance of arts and culture to community life, education and economic development; and the oversight body for the three City-owned arts and culture venues/programs: the i.d.e.a. Museum, the Arizona Museum of Natural History, and the Mesa Arts Center. The Department supports the idea that arts and culture—rooted in the value that creativity and discovery are the engine of human progress and well-being—are essential to healthy and civilized societies, and to fulfilled and productive human activity.