

## Ensuring a Vibrant Cultural Legacy for Delaware

*"With the motivation that you gave me, I got more courage, built higher standards, and it made me feel like I'm important. And I just want to say [I don't know] what would we do without people like you who don't give up on us just because of our different feelings and differents [sic] ways of thinking."*

*-- M., Delaware Theatre Company "Arts Across the Curriculum"  
student at Ferris School, 12/11/2006*

The arts have been a vital thread in the social and economic fabric of cultures throughout human history. They bring us together as a community, holding a mirror to our culture and values. They provide our children with an important way to learn discipline, creativity, and commitment to the pursuit of excellence. Arts organizations contribute significantly to the economy, attracting highly qualified workers and businesses. The key ingredients for success in the arts – inspiration, creativity and hard work – are also critical to the 21<sup>st</sup> century entrepreneurial economy. In short, the arts are essential to our way of life.

Delaware is fortunate to have a wealth of arts institutions and initiatives, from music to theater to dance to museums to the visual arts. Nearly 1.6 million people attended nonprofit arts events in Delaware in 2006, and over 25% of attendees were non-local.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, an increasing number of arts organizations in Delaware are struggling to survive.

With the many pressing concerns facing our state – from health care to education to the environment – the arts risk being lost in the debate. However, the arts are not just a "frill" that we should support only in good economic times. On the contrary, the arts are vital to maintaining a healthy economy. Non-profit arts organizations generate over \$134 billion in economic activity in the United States – more than the gross domestic product of most nations in the world.<sup>2</sup> And for every dollar spent by federal, state, and local governments, the nonprofit arts industry generates an 8 to 1 return on investment.<sup>3</sup> In Delaware, non-profit arts organizations generate:

- 3,685 full-time jobs (which is more than the 11<sup>th</sup> largest employer in the state)<sup>4</sup>;
- \$142.4 million in local economic activity;
- \$104.4 million in household income to local residents; and,
- \$9.4 million in state and local government revenue.<sup>5</sup>

The bottom line is that the arts belong to all of us, and Delaware's arts organizations need and deserve the support of the communities they serve. As governor, I will provide the leadership needed to preserve and support our cultural institutions, both now and for generations to come.

## Helping Arts Institutions Thrive in Delaware

Despite the importance of the arts to our quality of life, too many arts institutions in Delaware are struggling. A recent study of 33 Delaware arts organizations found that decreased revenues are causing "ongoing hardships and a financially precarious position," despite aggressive efforts to control costs.<sup>6</sup> Unlike other service industries, arts organizations simply cannot cover all their costs through ticket sales and entrance fees alone; and even as the cost of doing business has risen, other sources of funding, such as donations and grants, have been decreasing. This has resulted in arts organizations being forced to cut back on programming, such as the Arts Across the Curriculum program that teaches valuable life and career skills to students at the Ferris School. *The difficult reality is that some of Delaware's primary cultural organizations are at risk of going out of business.*

As governor, I would take three key steps toward ensuring a financially sound arts community:

- Form a **Delaware Arts Trust** to better ensure that our state's arts and cultural institutions have stable funding to carry out their programs, such as special arts classes for school-aged kids and touring performances outside of the Wilmington area. The Delaware Arts Trust would be modeled after the successful Delaware Arts Stabilization Fund, an endowment fund that supports capital maintenance and facility improvement projects for the state's arts organizations.<sup>7</sup> The Arts Stabilization Fund was formed because of the recognition by corporations, foundations and government that arts organizations needed a permanent source of funds to address ongoing facility maintenance needs. The state of Delaware and private funders provided seed money. Subsequently other corporate funders, foundations, New Castle County, the city of Wilmington and the National Endowment for the Arts contributed.

While the Arts Stabilization Fund has been a model of excellence for helping to fund first-class arts facilities in Delaware, it does not support programming costs and cannot support the full range of the state's arts organizations.

Therefore, a new Delaware Arts Trust is needed to ensure that all arts organizations in Delaware can benefit from a stable source of revenue in order to continue to bring valuable programming to more people and regions in Delaware. Because the arts are a community resource, the fund will be community-owned, funded and governed.

The threats to arts in Delaware is severe, it is far from unique in our state. What is unique is the success of the Delaware Arts Stabilization Fund. As governor, I will build on that fund's success and ensure arts organizations' long-term prosperity.

- **Help non-profit arts organizations reduce their costs** by encouraging them to purchase essential goods and services (such as janitorial services, office supplies, or phones) using existing state contracts. This would help arts organizations reduce their non-critical spending by 15%, which they could re-invest in programming.

## Strengthening Arts Education

*"The best employers the world over will be looking for the most competent, most creative, and most innovative people on the face of the earth and will be willing to pay them top dollar for their services."*

*New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 2006<sup>8</sup>*

One of the most important duties we hold as parents, educators, and elected leaders is to prepare young people for the challenges they will face as adults – both in their individual careers and as citizens of an increasingly complex world. Education in the arts is critical to fulfilling this duty. The skills learned in the arts directly contribute to achievement in math, science, and other critical academic subjects.<sup>9</sup> The myriad skills that people develop through arts education are **critical to success in the new 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace**, where new and creative ideas are always in demand. Arts education can reach students who might not otherwise be engaged in school, helping to recharge their interest in learning and envision a positive future for themselves.

Despite the clear benefits of arts education, it is these courses that are stripped from a curriculum that has been forced to teach to the test, resulting in budgets that can't justify supporting instructors who want to educate their students in the arts. This means fewer arts classes, less money to spend on materials, and fewer school visits to our cultural institutions that have so much to offer our students. Dedicated teachers who want their students to experience the arts should not have to use their own personal funds for field trips.

As governor, I will take the following steps to ensure a positive future for the arts in Delaware's education system:

- **Fight for support for the arts from the federal government.** The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act has had many unintended consequences, including a decline in arts education in schools.<sup>10</sup> As governor, I will work closely with Delaware's congressional delegation to ensure that future federal education policy retains the arts as a core academic subject and includes other provisions that support the arts.
- **Replace the Delaware Student Testing Program** with an adaptive testing method that provides our teachers and students more frequent and discrete information about learning gains—or the lack thereof. The unpopular and misguided DSTP has forced teachers to spend too much time preparing students for the unproductive tests and has reduced classroom time available for the arts.
- **Strengthen Delaware arts education programs** such as the Partnerships in Education program and Delaware After School Alliance. These important programs support partnerships between arts organizations and educational institutions, and ensure that the arts are integrated into after-school programs. Last year, the Delaware Division for the Arts awarded seven grants through the Partnerships in Education program including projects relating the visual arts to science and math and a hands-on museum experience for fine arts students.<sup>11</sup> As governor, I will ensure that the state continues and expands these important programs to introduce young people to the arts.

*"The arts can open doors to children who have trouble with traditional styles of learning. They can reach the unreachable and teach the 'unteachable.'"*

*Maxine Gaiber, Director, **Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts**, writing in a News Journal guest column.<sup>12</sup>*

- **Strengthen arts education for at-risk youth.** The arts can play a critical role in engaging at-risk youth in learning new skills and setting positive goals. However, some programs for at-risk youth in Delaware are in danger of being discontinued due to a lack of programmatic funding. Other states have found innovative ways to fund arts education for at-risk youth. For example, Hawaii's Department of Human Services has used federal dollars to fund 36 arts and social service programs to strengthen families and communities. As a result of one theater program for at-risk youth, 100% of youth participants have committed to staying drug-free.<sup>13</sup>

## Maximizing the Economic Development Potential of the Arts

*"Even in challenging financial times, an investment in the arts pays major dividends."*

*Andrew L. Vick, Coordinator, Cumberland Arts and Entertainment District<sup>14</sup>*

Economic development experts agree that in cities and regions that can attract talent, innovation, and knowledge, workers will have the upper hand in the new economy.<sup>15</sup> A strong arts infrastructure is critical to attracting this talent; the arts improve quality of life and attract a highly skilled workforce, making businesses that depend on creative, innovative employees more likely to settle in the region. For example, graphic design, film and video editing in the United States are projected to grow more than 22 percent in the next decade.<sup>16</sup>

Arts organizations are already strong contributors to Delaware's economy, bringing our state 3,685 full-time jobs and \$142.4 million in local economic activity.<sup>17</sup> However, much of this activity is centered in and around Wilmington. Delaware could do much more to develop arts organizations that would contribute even more to our economic growth. As governor, I will:

- **Establish Delaware Arts and Entertainment Districts.** Over 100 communities in the United States have cultural districts, also known as arts and entertainment districts – defined as a “well-recognized, mixed-use area of a community in which a high concentration of cultural facilities serves as an anchor for cultural and economic vitality.”<sup>18</sup> As governor, I would support legislation to allow Delaware's cities and towns to apply for designation as Arts and Entertainment Districts and provide tax incentives to artists and arts organizations choosing to work or live there.
- Many states have successfully built arts and entertainment districts that attract new businesses, residents, and tourists. For example, Maryland now has 15 Arts and Entertainment Districts in both urban and rural settings as part of that state's strategy to use the arts as an economic development tool. The state allows local jurisdictions, municipalities, and counties to apply for state designation as an arts and entertainment district and obtain incentives such as property-tax credits for the renovation of buildings.<sup>19</sup> As a result, the small rural town of Cumberland, MD has seen more new and expanded businesses, including museums, artist cooperatives, and theaters; increased capital expenditures; and a decreased downtown vacancy rate from 80 percent to 10 percent. According to Andrew L. Vick, the Coordinator of the Cumberland Arts and Entertainment District, “Buildings have been reused and revitalized, tourism is flourishing and new people are moving to the area and paying taxes.”<sup>20</sup>

- **Forster arts entrepreneurship through Delaware’s Higher Education Institutions.** In my plan for economic development in Delaware, I wrote about the importance of entrepreneurship in building the strongest possible state economy. Delaware’s state, community and technical colleges can play an important role in bringing arts education to more Delawareans and contributing to the state’s economic development. This is particularly true in the areas outside of Wilmington, which currently have a lower concentration of arts organizations. This approach has worked well in other states: for example, with the backing of the governor, Hazard Community College in Kentucky transformed a historic high school into a craft school that teaches business and entrepreneurial skills. The small town of Whitesburg, Kentucky is home to Appalshop, a nationally recognized media center that trains Appalachian youth in media skills, reaches millions of people with theater, film, radio and other productions, and generates more than \$2.2 million in revenues. And in North Carolina, one community college hosts a “fine-arts business incubator” that has helped dozens of businesses develop their marketing, business, and funding plans.<sup>21</sup> As governor, I will convene the state’s higher education institutions, business leaders, Delaware Division for the Arts, Delaware Economic Development Office and other stakeholders to identify how the state can better integrate arts programming into higher education in a way that benefits economic and workforce development in our state. I will also provide leadership in encouraging the business community to be more generous in its support of the arts.
- **Support arts education and career development for persons with disabilities.** The arts should be for everybody, including persons with disabilities. Arts organizations, cities and states increasingly are creating specialized programs to ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to experience the arts or pursue an arts-related career. For example, a recent forum held by the state of Maine brought together artists with a variety of disabilities to learn more about how to succeed in an arts career. The vast majority of arts administrators and supporters who attended the forum reported that it gave them resources to help artists with disabilities find employment in the arts, and several statewide arts organizations have since taken more steps to hire persons with disabilities. As governor, I will work to ensure that persons with disabilities can succeed in arts careers; my first step will be to host a statewide forum for careers in the arts for persons with disabilities.<sup>22</sup>

## Conclusion

The arts enrich our lives, our children's education, and our understanding of other cultures, history, and diverse perspectives. They anchor and help the economy grow by attracting tourists, new residents and new businesses. And they help create healthy, vibrant communities by providing a positive alternative for at-risk young people. My life has been enriched in countless ways by participating in the arts, both as a student in school and as a patron and audience member in my adult life. As governor, I will take the lead in ensuring that Delawareans have these same opportunities and that Delaware's arts and cultural organizations thrive for generations to come.

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<sup>1</sup> Delaware Division of the Arts, 2007 Annual Report, [http://www.artsdel.org/reports/FY2007\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](http://www.artsdel.org/reports/FY2007_Annual_Report.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Americans for the Arts. Arts and Economic Prosperity. (2006)

[http://www.artsdel.org/advocacy/Delaware\\_Econ\\_Impact\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](http://www.artsdel.org/advocacy/Delaware_Econ_Impact_Report_Final.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Americans for the Arts. Arts and Economic Prosperity. (2006)

[http://www.artsdel.org/advocacy/Delaware\\_Econ\\_Impact\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](http://www.artsdel.org/advocacy/Delaware_Econ_Impact_Report_Final.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Delaware Division of the Arts, 2007 Annual Report, [http://www.artsdel.org/reports/FY2007\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](http://www.artsdel.org/reports/FY2007_Annual_Report.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Americans for the Arts. Arts and Economic Prosperity. (2006)

[http://www.artsdel.org/advocacy/Delaware\\_Econ\\_Impact\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](http://www.artsdel.org/advocacy/Delaware_Econ_Impact_Report_Final.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Delaware Division of the Arts 2007 Annual Report,

[http://www.artsdel.org/advocacy/State\\_of\\_the\\_Arts\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.artsdel.org/advocacy/State_of_the_Arts_Final_Report.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Delaware Division of the Arts 2007 Annual Report, [http://www.artsdel.org/reports/FY2007\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](http://www.artsdel.org/reports/FY2007_Annual_Report.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce. *Tough Choices or Tough Times*, 2006.

[http://www.skillscommission.org/pdf/exec\\_sum/ToughChoices\\_EXECSUM.pdf](http://www.skillscommission.org/pdf/exec_sum/ToughChoices_EXECSUM.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Arts Education Partnership, 2000. <http://www.aep-arts.org/files/publications/ChampsReport.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Washington Post, "Coloring outside Curriculum Lines to Depict Drop in Arts Education, 2008.

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/05/AR2008030503695.html?referrer=emailarticle)

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<sup>11</sup> Delaware Division for the Arts Annual Report, [http://www.artsdel.org/reports/FY2007\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](http://www.artsdel.org/reports/FY2007_Annual_Report.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Delaware Division for the Arts Annual Report, [http://www.artsdel.org/reports/FY2007\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](http://www.artsdel.org/reports/FY2007_Annual_Report.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> National Association of State Arts Agencies, [http://www.nasaa-arts.org/spotlight/stspot\\_0906.shtml](http://www.nasaa-arts.org/spotlight/stspot_0906.shtml)

<sup>14</sup> National Association of State Arts Agencies, [http://www.nasaa-arts.org/spotlight/stspot\\_1207.shtml](http://www.nasaa-arts.org/spotlight/stspot_1207.shtml)

<sup>15</sup> National Governors Association Center for Best Practices "[Strengthening Rural Economies through the Arts](#)"

<sup>16</sup> National Governors Association Center for Best Practices "[Strengthening Rural Economies through the Arts](#)"

<sup>17</sup> Delaware Division of the Arts, 2007 Annual Report, [http://www.artsdel.org/reports/FY2007\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](http://www.artsdel.org/reports/FY2007_Annual_Report.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Americans for the Arts,

<http://www.americansforthearts.org/NAPD/files/11618/Local%20Arts%20Funding%20May2004.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> National Governors Association, <http://preview.nga.org/Files/pdf/RURALARTS.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> National Association of State Arts Agencies, [http://www.nasaa-arts.org/spotlight/stspot\\_1207.shtml](http://www.nasaa-arts.org/spotlight/stspot_1207.shtml)

<sup>21</sup> National Governor's Association, <http://preview.nga.org/Files/pdf/RURALARTS.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> National Arts and Disability Center. 2007 Statewide Forums on Careers in the Arts For People with Disabilities, <http://nadc.ucla.edu/2007NEAforum-followup.doc>