

Business leaders help grow the arts in Sioux Falls

By Jim Speirs, Executive Director, Arts South Dakota

Business leaders have always been a driving force for strengthening the arts and helping to grow cultural opportunities throughout Sioux Falls. Traditionally, business owners and executives are among the strongest community boosters—contributing time, talent and funding to those activities that define our hometown. Imagine Sioux Falls without SculptureWalk, the Arc of Dreams or the Washington Pavilion—all supported by the Chamber of Commerce and the business community. Additionally, business leaders understand the power of a diverse economy and the role arts and cultural organizations play in building local economic prosperity for the Sioux Falls area.

The national statistics are impressive—research by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis shows that nonprofit and for-profit arts are a \$730 billion industry that directly employs 4.8 million arts workers **and** represents 4.2 percent of the nation's GDP—a larger share of the economy than transportation, tourism and agriculture. The arts industry in the greater Sioux Falls region generates \$105 million in total economic impact annually, supporting 3,567 jobs and adding \$3.4 million in total government revenue.

We know that families from all over the tri-state region come to Sioux Falls for a variety of shows and events sponsored by nonprofit arts organizations. Those attendees spend an average of \$24.60 per person, per event, beyond the cost of their ticketed admission, on items such as meals, parking, hotels and babysitters—valuable revenue for local commerce **and** the community.

A vibrant arts scene is also a vital recruitment tool in attracting new talent. At a time when Sioux Falls is striving to build its workforce in a competitive environment, creative leisure time activities, entertainment opportunities and participatory arts events are all major factors in attracting new workers. And, with its widely acknowledged role in cultivating critical thinking abilities, our arts in education curriculum helps to prepare young people in Sioux Falls public and private schools for challenging careers in any field.

With their long-range view of local development, business leaders are strong and effective partners in expanding the impact of the arts in Sioux Falls. Artists and arts organizations respect the contributions of the business community and applaud their efforts to make the entire Sioux Falls area a better place to live.

To learn more about the economic impact of the arts and how you can help grow the arts throughout South Dakota, please visit www.ArtsSouthDakota.org.