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ARTSSOUTHDAKOTA.ORG



April 10, 2024

Sen. Mike Rounds
United States Senate
Hart Senate Office Bldg., Suite 716
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Sen. Rounds,

Greetings from the prairie on a warm, spring day. Inevitably, the start of spring stirs up excitement for the many summer events we pack into the short season. Summer brings outdoor concerts, art festivals, and Plein Aire painting. Tourists will be traveling thousands of miles to witness Mt. Rushmore, Crazy Horse, Dignity, and Arch of Dreams — our art on a grand scale!

The arts are an important economic driver, community builder, workforce recruitment and retention tool, and, most importantly, the very fabric that weaves our many cultures together in South Dakota. Funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), directly administered by our state agency, the South Dakota Arts Council, is a very effective investment in our state's economy. For every \$1.00 from the NEA & SD Arts Council, the return is \$11.86 in local investment. South Dakota's non-profit arts sector is a \$362,987,162.00 annual economic engine, employing over 6,000 FTEs. Every part of the vast state benefits from the investments we make in our creative sector.

We ask for your support in the coming months as you work to draft our nation's 2025 budget. The NEA has been a key leader in developing South Dakota's creative infrastructure over the last half-century. It is fair to say that NEA funding supports rural communities at a level that would be impossible to replace. The NEA, through its partnership with SDAC, resulted in 335 grants that reached 85 different SD communities. In short, through its highly effective model partnership with state arts agencies, the NEA truly works!

Thank you for your service to our nation and most importantly, the great state of South Dakota. If I can assist you or your staff on arts-related issues, please know I am happy to help.

Best Regards,

Jim Speirs
Executive Director
encl.

