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COCA Joins Americans for the Arts' National Study of the Economic Impact of Spending by Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences

Tallahassee, FL — The Arts Mean Business. That is the message being delivered today by the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA), who announced it has joined the *Arts & Economic Prosperity*® 5, a national study measuring the economic impact of nonprofit arts and culture organizations and their audiences. The research study is being conducted by Americans for the Arts, the nation's nonprofit organization advancing the arts and arts education. It is the fifth study over the past 20 years to measure the impact of arts spending on local jobs, income paid to local residents, and revenue generated to local and state governments.

As one of nearly 300 study partners across all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, COCA will collect detailed financial data about our local nonprofit arts and culture organizations such as our theater and dance companies, museums, festivals, and arts education organizations. "Many people don't think of nonprofit arts organizations as businesses," said Sue Dick, CEO/President of the Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Council, "but this study will make clear that the arts are a formidable industry in our community—employing people locally, purchasing goods and services from local merchants, and helping to drive tourism and economic development." Gina Kinchlow, interim president for the Big Bend Minority Chamber of Commerce, says, "Kudos to our local Council on Culture & Arts (COCA) for recognizing the importance of this groundbreaking research and its potential for impacting our vibrant local arts community. The quantitative data COCA will gather as a study partner provides the ideal evidence that the arts mean business in Tallahassee."

COCA will also collect surveys from attendees at arts events using a short, anonymous questionnaire that asks how much money they spent on items such as meals, parking and transportation, and retail shopping specifically as a result of attending the event. Previous studies have shown that the average attendee spends \$24.60 per person, per event, beyond the cost of admission. Those studies have also shown that, on average, 32 percent of arts attendees travel from outside the county in which the arts event took place, and that those cultural tourists typically spend nearly \$40 per person—generating important revenue for local businesses and demonstrating how the arts drive revenue for other businesses in the community.

Surveys will be collected throughout calendar year 2016. The results of the study will be released in June of 2017.

The Capital Area Cultural Plan, released in January 2014, prioritized the need for regular economic impact studies of non-profit arts and cultural organizations in our community. According to Berneice Cox, Chair of the Economic Development and Marketing Committee, Cultural Plan Review Committee and Co-Chair of the Capital Area Cultural Plan Advisory Committee, "Arts, culture and heritage are vital contributors to Tallahassee/Leon County's character, quality of life and economy. Investing in arts is yielding substantial economic benefits. The arts community is an industry that supports jobs, local businesses, tourism and generates revenue. In 2008, spending by arts and culture organizations and their audiences totaled \$74.6 million in our area. This new economic impact report will provide current information on the impact of arts and culture in our community."

"This study will show that when we support the arts in Tallahassee, we are making an investment in an industry, one that supports jobs and generates government revenue, and is the cornerstone of tourism," said COCA's Executive Director, Dr. Audra Pittman.

According to Americans for the Arts' most recent national study, the nonprofit arts industry generated \$135.2 billion in total economic activity and supported 4.1 million full-time equivalent jobs during 2010, resulting in \$22.3 billion in federal, state and local government revenues. The \$135.2 billion total included \$61.1 billion in spending by arts organizations and \$74.1 billion in event-related spending by their audiences on items such as meals, local transportation and overnight lodging. Complete details about the fiscal year 2010 study are available at www.AmericansForTheArts.org/EconomicImpact.

"Our *Arts & Economic Prosperity* series demonstrates that the arts are an economic and employment powerhouse both locally and across the nation," said Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. "Leaders who care about community and economic vitality can feel good about choosing to invest in the arts. Nationally as well as locally, the arts mean business."

Americans for the Arts' *Arts & Economic Prosperity 5* study is supported by The Ruth Lilly Fund of Americans for the Arts. In addition, Americans for the Arts' local and statewide study partners are contributing both time and a cost-sharing fee support to the study. For a full list of the nearly 300 *Arts & Economic Prosperity 5* study partners, visit www.AmericansForTheArts.org/AEP5Partners.

COCA is the local arts agency serving Tallahassee, Leon County, and the entire Big Bend region. COCA's mission is to serve as a catalyst for development and support of arts and culture in Tallahassee's capital region. COCA's programs are sponsored in part by the City of Tallahassee, Leon County, the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.