

## Creative opportunities should be embraced by lawmakers

Ryan Keiffer • March 11, 2010

In January, Gov. Bill Ritter and Lt. Gov. Barbara O'Brien, along with state lawmakers, announced new job-creation and economic-growth strategies for Colorado's creative industries sector, including three bills that will be introduced this session.

These bills are designed to capitalize on the potential the arts industry already has to grow, and to bring about more jobs for the industry to ultimately bolster the state's economy.

Colorado's creative enterprises alone employ more than 122,000 individuals in about 8,000 establishments, accounting for 3.9 percent of the state's estimated 3.2 million jobs.

The arts industry almost is as large as biotechnology/biomedical and information technology and telecommunications, and larger than defense and security and agribusiness, food processing and technology.

This makes the arts Colorado's fifth largest employment sector.

Another 64,000 individuals work in creative occupations in noncreative enterprises, demonstrating that we have a community that is dedicated to ingenuity and innovation.

We have a lot of good economic reasons to continue supporting the arts, and we are fortunate in that our legislators recognize the potential for this industry's

continual growth.

The introduction of this legislation is just the beginning. To really utilize the arts industry to its full potential, we need to make sure that our legislators know just how important we feel this issue is to our economy.

This is the goal of the state-wide advocacy organization Arts for Colorado. With a focus on preserving and expanding state supports for the arts, Arts for Colorado serves as the community's eyes, ears, and voices at the capital and with leaders across the state.

With this group's critical involvement the Colorado Council of the Arts was able to renew \$2 million in funding in 2006, a major step in the process of building the arts industry to its current size. Through an organization like Arts for Colorado, you can voice your opinion directly to legislators statewide.

That voice, however, can only be as loud as the organization's support, so individual memberships are crucial to the operation of this advocacy group.

Joining Arts for Colorado, or even simply making a donation, not only helps preserve the cultural benefits of the arts on our community but contributes to the building of our state's economy.

When looking to relocate, other businesses will see a flourishing community full of arts, culture and an educated work force.

Building our reputation in this way makes our state attractive to new enterprises. Thus, this industry has the power to create more economic opportunity both within its own boundaries and throughout

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other industries in Colorado. What begins as a \$35 membership fee turns into major economic profit for our state.

We already know the great personal benefits to having arts and culture in our community. We can feel it when we see a local theater performance or attend a new art gallery opening.

This feeling is further enhanced with the knowledge that while we enjoy and benefit from art, art can also make an incredible contribution to Colorado's economy.

With your support, the arts and creative industries can help ensure the cultural and financial success our great state.

For more information visit [www.artsforcolorado.org/Arts\\_for\\_Colorado/Home.html](http://www.artsforcolorado.org/Arts_for_Colorado/Home.html).

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