

Colorado Positions Creative Industries Sector For Big Growth

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Governor Bill Ritter strengthened Colorado's promising creative-industries economic sector by signing four bills into law that will help the state capitalize on the sector's immense potential for innovation, imagination and growth.

"By focusing on creative industries, we can grow clean and sustainable jobs for the future," Gov. Ritter said during a signing ceremony at the Art Institute of Colorado in Denver. "This legislation, along with additional recommendations from our Creative Economy Advisory Panel, now gives us a roadmap to establish Colorado as the best creative economy in the country."

Gov. Ritter established the panel last year. It is co-chaired by Lt. Gov. Barbara O'Brien, Colorado Economic Development Director Don Marostica and Botanic Gardens CEO Brian Vogt. The Governor announced in January that thanks to the panel's work, creative industries would become a higher priority for state economic-development efforts.

In fields ranging from art to film to theater, the creative economy supports 186,000 jobs in almost 8,000 enterprises, making it the fifth-largest employment cluster in Colorado.

The bills signed today:

Senate Bill 158 (Newell/Rice) creates the Creative Industries Division within the Colorado Office of Economic Development. It merges the Office of Film, Television and Media, the Colorado Council on the Arts, and the Art in Public Places Program, and renames the State Council on the Arts as the Council on Creative Industries and authorizes the Council to establish policies for the merged entity.

"We are already highly ranked nationally in architecture and publishing," Sen. Linda Newell said. "We need to continue to foster a business environment in which these industries can thrive and create jobs in Colorado. This will show that in Colorado, the arts mean business, revenue, tourism, and jobs."

"This new law represents an efficient solution to growing jobs in the creative industry, which is the fifth largest sector of our state's economy and is the fastest-growing sector at that," Rep. Joe Rice said. "It will greatly benefit the state's economy and go a long way towards boosting local economies as well."

House Bill 1180 (Massey/Gibbs & Spence) changes the criteria required of a film production company to qualify for a performance-based incentive for film production activities in Colorado, making the incentive more usable and thus able to attract more film and television work to Colorado.

"I was thrilled to support these bills and am pleased Gov. Ritter is signing them into law," Rep. Tom Massey said. "Giving incentives for film production in Colorado is a great way to advance our economy and increase tourism to our state. The creative arts are a very viable segment of Colorado's economy and will be a great industry for our future."

"This bill is good for Colorado business, arts and tourism," Sen. Dan Gibbs said. "When we bring film production to Colorado, we are opening all the windows and showcasing the best of Colorado. With the signing of this bill, we are competing with other states in the region for international attention."

"The cost of film making continues to rise every year and incentives are one way for Colorado to help attract film production to our state," Sen. Nancy Spence said.

Senate Bill 94 (Steadman/Rice) clarifies that the state's 33-year-old Arts in Public Places law, which requires a 1 percent set-aside for public art, applies to all capital construction projects funded with state dollars, regardless of the funding mechanism.

"This law will create substantial benefits for our state, not only in improving our quality of life but also in terms of economic development within the creative industries," Sen. Pat Steadman said. "Art in public places attracts business and prosperity to Colorado. I'm proud to see the Governor sign this bill today"

"This law will create substantial advantages for our state, by providing jobs within creative industries," Rep. Rice said. "Art projects add a great deal of enrichment to our communities, and that's something that everyone can benefit from."

House Bill 1273 (Merrifield/Spence & Steadman) encourages all Colorado public schools to provide education in the visual and performing arts and directs the State Board of Education to recognize the importance of the arts in development of future graduation guidelines.

"This new law sends the message that the jury no longer is out on the value of the arts," Rep. Michael Merrifield said. "There are numerous studies on improved achievement and school participation by students who receive arts education, and as a retired music teacher, I have seen first-hand the benefit an arts education has on the lives of students."

"All children deserve a great well-rounded education," Senator Spence said. "Learning through the arts provides students with the skills to creatively solve problems."

For a complete list of Gov. Ritter's 2010 legislation decisions, visit www.colorado.gov/governor ^[1]

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