

**Colorado Council on the Arts  
2011 Governor's Arts Award  
Nomination Form**

Please fill in the blanks and include this form with your nomination letter and support materials. ***Nominations must be postmarked by October 29, 2010.***

Town or City being nominated: Fort Collins

Town or City primary contact person and title: Jill Stilwell, Cultural Services Director

Street address: 417 W. Magnolia St

City, state, zip code: Fort Collins, CO 80521

Day phone: 970-416-2935

Evening phone: 970-218-6542

Email address: jstilwell@fcgov.com

In one sentence summarize the manner in which the town or city has employed the arts and creativity as a factor in creating a vital and economically strong community:

Fort Collins is creating a vibrant destination while focusing on professional development as economic and quality of life strategies.

Nominated by (your name): Jill Stilwell

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Email address: jstilwell@fcgov.com

Briefly describe your relationship to the nominee: resident and City employee

Your signature: 

Signature of Mayor or City Representative: 

Title: Cultural Services Director

Your nomination must include this nomination form, a two-page nomination letter and support materials.

Thank you for your nomination!

## 2011 Governor's Arts Award - Fort Collins Nomination Letter

Fort Collins is building on its strong history of arts, culture, and science to create a dynamic and uniquely creative community and a destination for arts and culture that enriches the lives of our citizens and visitors, and serves as an economic engine.

A small city of 130,000, Fort Collins is brimming with art and creativity - Colorado State University has dedicated significant resources to its new University Center for the Arts; more than 80 nonprofit and for profit arts, culture, and science organizations thrive; the City's Cultural Services Department manages a model art in public places program, a premier performing arts center, and is partnering on a merger to create a one-of-a-kind in the country science and cultural museum; Fort Collins continues a deep commitment to historic preservation; both the public and private sector have dedicated significant capital and operational investments in cultural venues; and the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) has invested nearly \$4M into arts and culture projects including the creation and funding of Beet Street.

The City of Fort Collins Cultural Plan, adopted in 2008, proved invaluable in charting the course for growth and sustainability of arts and culture in Fort Collins and has served as a resource to government, non-profits and the private sector. The number of initiatives currently underway is astounding: from the new \$45M University Center for the Arts to the Poudre River Arts Center; from \$8.2M renovation and expansion of the Lincoln Center for the arts to the new Mid-Town Arts Center; from the new Our Global Village Museum to the Discovery Science Center/Fort Collins Museum partnership and new \$25M facility; from transformer cabinet murals to businesses commissioning murals; and the revised strategic direction of Beet Street that included the creation of Streetmosphere, a pilot professional development program, and the seeds for an arts incubator set to launch in 2012.

What makes Fort Collins innovative is how these and other unique projects and activities are surging forward together and the investment that is coming from all sectors -- a diversification strategy that is particularly important in these economic times: from local government and citizen approved initiatives, the university system, non-profits, DDA, charitable foundations, the private sector, and individual community members. The numerous projects and activities merge symbiotically to create a distinctive and vibrant community, honoring our values, and having positive economic impact as evidenced by the Arts and Economic Prosperity Study III (Submittal 2). It's no surprise to those of us who live here that Fort Collins continues to win accolades as one of the "best places to live" due in large part to the city's solid foundation of arts and culture and commitment to innovation and creativity. And our community believes (97%) that arts, science, and culture improve our quality of life (Submittal 1, Appendix B). This is evidenced by a French company recently locating their world headquarters to Fort Collins citing the arts and culture as part of the quality of life they were seeking for their employees.

### **Downtown Fort Collins Thrives and Inspires**

The arts are having a significant impact on the vitality of our Downtown and reaching a wide audience through a number of free and complementary activities all set in historical Old Town. The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and the City's Art in Public Places program (APP) created **Art in Action**, where an artist spends the summer months creating an artwork in full view of the public in Old Town Square, attracting many passersby to stop and interact with the artist. The final works are to be installed in one of the DDA's Alley Improvement Projects, which are transforming our alleys into wonderful pedestrian pathways with retail appeal.

**Streetmosphere**, presented by Beet Street, also adds to the dynamic atmosphere of Downtown. This four-month program presents arts entertainment on the street corners of Downtown every Friday, Saturday and Sunday throughout the summer months. In 2010, Streetmosphere included 56 local acts - 185 performers in total - and more than 1500 hours of free experiences including classical, jazz, country, bluegrass, and pop singers; dancers, actors, comedians, jugglers, magicians, painters, weavers and even a cowboy poet. Paid performers ranged in age from 4 to 82. Entertainment and art abound (as can be seen in Submittal 8), and reaches a broad audience. Nearly 60,000 people stopped and watched Streetmosphere performances, -an average of 3100 every weekend. Beet Street auditioned artists and paid for each performance, as a strategic step towards sustainability for the working artist in our community. More than 40 companies and organizations made financial contributions allowing \$60,000 to go directly into the pockets of local artists.

Art in Public Places' nationally recognized **Transformer Cabinet Mural Projects** infuses Downtown with art in unexpected places. The Transformer Cabinet Mural Project is also a highly successful graffiti abatement program. The artist-painted murals deter graffiti, which was a major problem for the Utility Department and saves thousands of dollars each year. With 90 cabinets painted, the cabinets are an icon of Downtown, with self-guided tour maps available on-line for school kids and tourists alike. The program has also become a model for other communities and is being replicated across the country. Nineteen galleries join forces every first Friday of the month to create the Fort Collins Arts District and **First Friday Gallery Walk**, showcasing the growing, vibrant visual arts scene.

The Downtown Development Authority is keenly aware of the vital contribution arts and culture makes in creating and sustaining a vibrant Downtown. Citing the *Arts and Economic Prosperity III, 2007* study, the **DDA is investing in arts and culture** Downtown, including a free Rent-Technical Labor grant program for performances held at the City owned Lincoln Center for the arts. DDA also contributed more than \$3.5 million to two cornerstone capital projects in the Downtown: the new **Fort Collins Museum/Discovery Science Center partnership** facility and the first major renovation and expansion of the **Lincoln Center for the arts**. The new Museum anticipates 90,000 visitors annually, and the only museum combining science and culture into one experience. The renovation and expansion of the Lincoln Center for the arts will offer a revitalized arts-going experience and continue to serve as one of the largest presenters of theater, dance, music, and children's programming in the state. In addition to these anchor facilities, Downtown supports additional arts venues including Bas Bleu Theater, Nonesuch Theater, Lyric Theater, Fort Collins Museum of Art, Avery House Museum, Center for Fine Art Photography, 19 galleries, and restaurants and other venues that support live music.

Special Downtown events bring people from all over the region. **Bohemian Nights at NewWestFest**, presented by the Bohemian Foundation, is a free three-day music festival with more than 100 performances featuring local and regional talent. In 2010, Beet Street's **Creative Garden** was added to Bohemian Nights and focused on performing, visual, and culinary arts. These events along with the Fort Collins Jazz Experience, TriMedia Film Festival, Homegrown Fort Collins, the French Nest Market, and the Indian Market and Music Festival bring thousands of people of all ages and backgrounds into Downtown to enjoy an arts experience.

### **Supporting and Developing Artists and Creatives**

Participating in the arts is a life-long adventure, and in Fort Collins, we want to be a place where artists and creatives can live and make a living. This has never been more important than in today's difficult economic times. The new **Beet Street Strategy** identifies professional development as a major component in their economic development strategy. Beet Street, CSU and the City's Cultural Services Department have partnered to create a multi-track arts incubator in the City-owned Carnegie Building which will provide a broad selection of professional development courses and workshops, a full range of administrative, technical and professional services plus certificate and masters level degree tracks for artists and art administrators. This program will be the first of its kind in the United States to connect an arts incubator directly with a university. As a first step, Beet Street is piloting a Kauffman Foundation FastTrac Entrepreneur class with an arts angle. Twelve local organizations are participating in the ten-week intensive course which requires both staff and board member attendance. In spring 2011, Creative Capital will bring their first workshop to the state of Colorado as part of Beet Street's professional development offerings. The workshop will serve 24 professional artists and funnel them to the venture capital available through the Creative Capital non-profit organization. Detailed information on these innovative programs is included in the Arts Incubator Strategic Plan (Supplement 9).

**Art Lab** is a private venture that turns empty store-fronts Downtown into vibrant art-spaces where artists can work and show on a temporary basis. This program will be aligned with the Art Incubator to offer additional resources to artists.

The public, private, and non-profit sectors are investing in the arts and culture industry on a magnitude we've rarely seen before. By working together as a community, we are investing both in the economic benefits as well as the quality of life arts, culture and creativity provide for our community. The future of the creative industry in Fort Collins has never been brighter.

**2011 Governor's Arts Award  
Fort Collins – Inventory List of Support Materials**

**1. Fort Collins Cultural Plan, including the Cultural Facilities Plan.**

Adopted by City Council August 2008.

- Cultural Plan
- Appendix A: Arts & Economic Prosperity Study, 2003, 2007
- Appendix B: Community Cultural Survey Results
- Appendix C: Cultural Facilities Plan
- Appendix D: Cultural Inventory
- Appendix E: EVSAG Report, July 2004
- Appendix F: Participants List
- Appendix G: Poudre School District Humanities Standards
- Appendix H: Uniquely Fort Collins Industry Cluster
- Appendix I: UniverCity Connections Arts & Culture Task Group Action Plan

**2. Arts & Economic Prosperity III** study results. Fort Collins participated in this study in 2003 and 2007 to quantify the economic impact of the arts in Fort Collins. The 2007 study showed an impact of nearly \$16 million, up from \$9 million in 2003. Fort Collins will again participate in the next study group.

**3. Art in Public Places.** Transformer Cabinet Mural Map and thumbnails.

**4. Fort Collins Museum/Discovery Science Center (DVD).** This unprecedented public/private partnership merges two Fort Collins cornerstone museums and culture and science into one new institution. The partners are engaged in a \$25 million capital campaign, and despite the current economic climate, have raised \$20 million. The project broke ground in September 2010 with plans to open in early 2012.

**5. Lincoln Center Renovation and Expansion (DVD).** This project revitalizes the 32-year old Lincoln Center for the arts, the first major cultural facility built in Northern Colorado with more than 350 performances and 220,000 patrons attending each year.

**6. Fort Collins Arts District** brochure. Promotes visual arts galleries and monthly First Friday Gallery Walk

**7. Creative Garden at Bohemian Nights (Powerpoint).** In 2010, Beet Street's **Creative Garden** was added to Bohemian Nights and focused on performing, visual, and culinary arts.

**8. Streetmosphere Event (DVD).** This four-month program presents arts entertainment on the street corners of downtown every Friday, Saturday and Sunday throughout the summer months. In 2010, Streetmosphere included 56 local acts - 185 performers in total - and more than 1500 hours of free experiences.

**9. The Arts Incubator Strategic Plan.** A partnership between Beet Street, Colorado State University, and the City's Cultural Services Department, the incubator will create a diverse professional development programs, workshops, classes, and degree tracks that will serve not only Fort Collins, but the Mountain West region.

**10. Beet Street Strategic Plan.** Developed in 2009, the retooled Beet Street Strategic Plan focuses on adding to the economic development and vibrancy of our Downtown by building art and culture as a unique economic engine, and to lead Fort Collins to become a regionally and nationally recognized arts and culture center and destination.

# Arts & Economic Prosperity<sup>III</sup>

The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences  
in THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS, CO





Beet Street Strategic Plan  
:: 2010 & Beyond ::

DECEMBER 2009 | PRESENTED BY RYAN KEIFFER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR