

## Arts - The Cornerstone of Tourism

Tourism industry researchers have concluded that **arts travelers stay longer and consume more** than other tourists. The U.S. Department of Commerce demonstrated that the percentage of international tourists who visit American museums on their trips has grown annually since 2003. According to a survey conducted by Americans for the Arts in 2010, 58.1% of non-residents indicated that attending an arts or cultural event is the main reason for their trip to Whatcom County. Moreover, about 50% of event attendees stated that they would have traveled to a different region in order to attend a similar event. Clearly, these results emphasize the importance of arts to the economic prosperity of Whatcom County.

## Arts - A Sustainable and Responsible Industry

While people are worrying about environmental issues and questioning corporate social responsibilities, arts organizations are typical examples of responsible and sustainable businesses, employers and consumers. **This is a clean industry, creates jobs that cannot be outsourced, contributes significant tax revenues to local and state governments, and nourishes the creativity-based economy.**

## Allied Arts of Whatcom County

Allied Arts of Whatcom County is a non-profit organization whose vision is **“to enliven and promote the artistic identity within Whatcom County and make our region an arts destination and a creative, vibrant place to live.”** Allied Arts organizes three annual large scale festivals; one of them is the Holiday Festival of the Arts which features over 100 artisans in a six-week-long celebration. Last year, they broke their 32-year-long sales record by selling over 32,000 objects. The organization also holds juried gallery exhibits, produces annual regional arts and culture maps, and operates AARTS – the Allied Arts Reuse Thrift Store. Recently, Allied Arts has partnered with the City of Bellingham and the Downtown Bellingham Partnership on Creative Spaces project – using vacant storefronts for exhibit space. The Allied Arts Education Project, which is one of the largest in the state, offers arts education for over 10,000 students annually. With over 400 members and serving more than 50,000 people per year, Allied Arts has truly been a primary driving force in cultivating and nourishing the arts scene in Whatcom County.

**“The arts help to improve the quality of life in our community and provide a significant economic impact.”**

**Kelly Hart,  
Executive Director of Allied Arts**

Art Means Business materials produced in 2013 by Allied Arts of Whatcom County - Supporting the Arts of Whatcom County.  
www.alliedarts.org (360)676-8548

*This brochure is part of a pilot project through the Washington State Arts Commission for the Creative Vitality Index to measure the health of the Creative Community in Washington State.*



2013

BELLINGHAM / WHATCOM COUNTY

# ART MEANS BUSINESS

*Cultural resources add value to regional economy*

## Whatcom County -

### A Place for the Arts

Located between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C., Whatcom County has great advantages for developing creative industries. According to the well-respected organization, Americans for the Arts, **as of January 2012, Whatcom County has 1,488 arts-related businesses**, including both non-profit and for-profit organizations in such diverse areas as **symphony orchestras, museums, arts education and advertising**. In addition, Western Washington University currently exhibits 29 outdoor sculptures which makes it one of the Top 10 university collections in the nation.



Photo by Kazunori Kimizuka

Whatcom County is also home to many major art festivals such as the Bellingham Festival of Music, the Holiday Festival of the Arts, and three regional studio tours. For a long time, the City of Bellingham has partnered with other organizations to preserve arts buildings and improve artful streetscapes. Thankfully, these projects are strongly supported and appreciated by local residents.

*(to be continued on page 2)*



## Why the Arts are Important...

- In 2011, the arts industry generated more than \$41 million and supported over 3,000 jobs in Whatcom County.
- Art is vital to tourism. Nearly 60% of tourists attending arts events in Whatcom County mention the event as the main reason for traveling.
- Arts tourists stay longer and spend more, which greatly benefits local merchants.
- The arts constitute a creative and competent workforce for companies.
- The arts industry is clean, sustainable and responsible.

Image by Everett Aison

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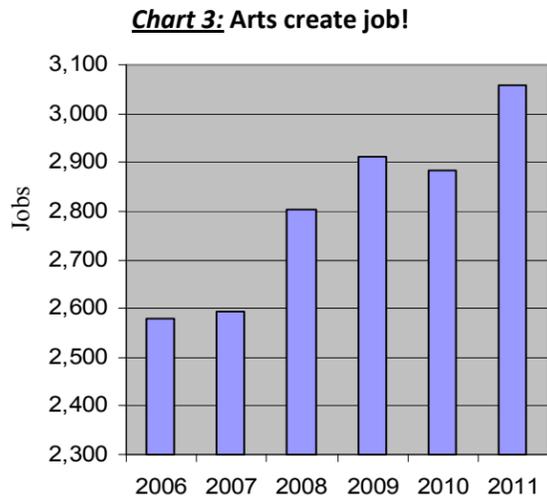
As reported in a survey conducted in 2011 by the city of Bellingham, of 1,632 respondents, 94% concurred that “historic buildings add to the character of downtown”, and 81% agreed that “public artwork adds beauty and interest to downtown”. Furthermore, the Arts District is considered by local people as one of their most favorite places in downtown Bellingham. It also ranked eighth in the *Top 100 Public Spaces in the US and Canada* (2011), according to Planetizen.

**“The arts of Whatcom County is vibrant, adventuresome, and professional.”**  
**Janet Oakley,**  
**Artist in Bellingham**

**Jobs and Revenue Contribution for the County**

Americans for the Arts reported that in the U.S., the arts industry generated more than \$135 billion of economic activities and created over four million full-time jobs. Based on the Creative Vitality Index data, Whatcom County revenues for the arts industry had increased steadily from 2006 to 2010 before declining slightly in 2011 (*chart 1*). **In 2011, the industry had more than \$41 million in revenue.** Art gallery and individual artist sales accounted for the largest portion (43%), followed by non-profit organizations and book and record store sales. These three categories together comprised 93% of revenue (*chart 2*). In the Washington State, excluding the four-county hub (King, Pierce, Snohomish and Thurston), **Whatcom County ranked third in revenue generated by non-profit arts organizations, and ranked fourth in total arts revenue.**

Maya Roney, a columnist for BusinessWeek.com, argued in her article *Bohemian Today, High-Rent Tomorrow* (2007), that arts and culture contribute greatly to the economic rebound of cities and regions. This is actually true for Whatcom County since the number of jobs created by the arts industry increased every year from 2006 to 2009 even in the middle of the recession! The employment level slowed down in 2010, but rebounded very quickly (*chart 3*). **In 2011, there were over 3,000 arts-related jobs in Whatcom County.** *Table 1* provides the detailed statistics of the most popular occupations in the arts of our region.



Source: Creative Vitality Index

**Table 1: Top arts occupations in 2011**

Occupations	Numbers total jobs	% of
Photographers	662	22%
Musicians and Singers	320	10%
Graphic Designers	289	9%
Writers and Authors	282	9%
Art Directors	144	5%
Multi-Media Artists and Animators	140	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1837</b>	<b>60%</b>

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc.,  
 Quote from Creative Vitality Index

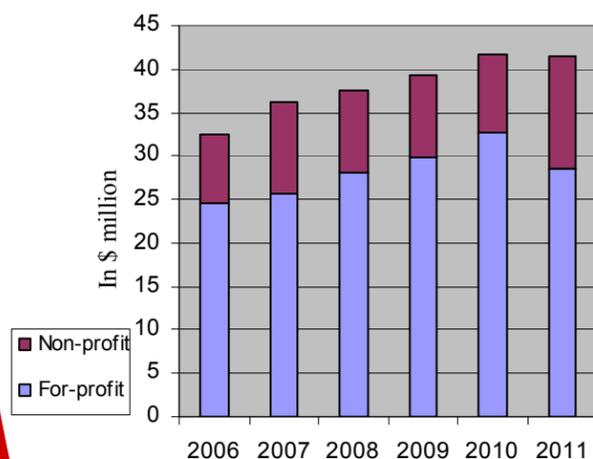
**The Significance of Arts to Local Enterprise**

Other businesses in Whatcom County also significantly benefit from the arts. **Arts events attract lots of customers to local restaurants, bars, hotels, etc.** Americans for the Arts estimated that in our region, **arts events attendees spent a total of \$5.4 million** excluding the cost of event admission. In particular, on average, each non-resident attendee spent nearly twofold more than a resident.

**“Organizations need the arts. They need culture in their business.”**  
**Giovanni Schiuma**  
**Author of the book**  
***The Value of Arts for Business***

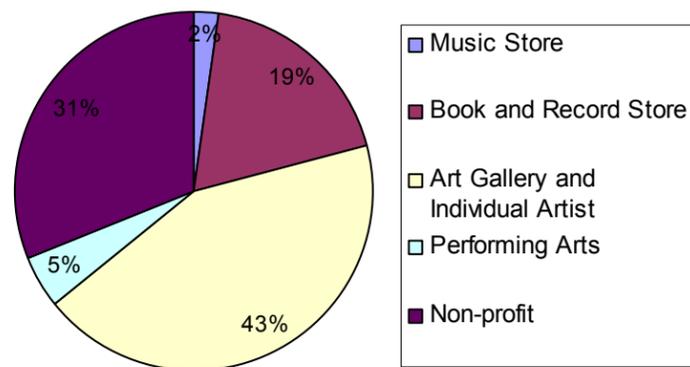
Not only do they bring in customers and revenues, the arts constitute a competent workforce for enterprise. Surveys conducted by Americans for the Arts showed that **companies view an arts degree as the most compelling indicator of creativity.** Similarly, Arnold Packer, in his article named *Arts and Learning a Living* (1997), concluded that knowledge of the arts enhances problem-solving and improves effective communication in the workplace.

**Chart 1: Arts revenues from 2006 to 2011**



Source: Creative Vitality Index

**Chart 2: Revenue by categories in 2011**



Source: Creative Vitality Index

**“The Arts and Sciences, essential to the prosperity of the State and to the ornament of human life, have a primary claim to the encouragement of every lover of this country and mankind.”**  
**George Washington**



Photo by Dawn-Marie Hanrahan