

Community Focus | *A Report for*
Arts and Culture

“The many great gardens of the world, of literature and poetry, of painting and music, of religion and architecture, all make the point as clear as possible: The soul cannot thrive in the absence of a garden.”

Thomas Moore

As the Springfield region fully acknowledges its role as a metropolitan community, arts and culture have taken center stage. Local government, foundations, business leaders, and the arts organizations realize the importance of collaboration and communication in order to build a healthy community. The arts play a role in economic development, job creation, downtown stabilization, education, social services, and quality of life.

The result is a community that offers a variety of events, including the acclaimed Artsfest, which just celebrated its 25th year, The Greater Ozarks Blues Festival, and WinterFest, now at the ten-year mark. Two new festivals were started in 2004-05 due to the influence of Springfield’s two sister cities: Isesaki, Japan and Tlaquepaque, Mexico. The Cherry Blossom Kite Festival celebrates the Japanese culture and ArtsFiesta! provides a strong link to Springfield’s growing Hispanic population.

In addition to festivals, Springfield has its own professional organizations in opera, ballet, symphony, and theatre. New galleries and performing arts groups have opened space downtown within the past year. Residents of, and visitors to, the Springfield area have a vast array of entertainment and cultural opportunities on almost any night of the week, with a growing downtown at the core of the attractions.

Examples of the community focus on the arts and cultural development include:

The Creamery Arts Center. A 35,000 square foot facility located in the City’s premier Jordan Valley Park, The Creamery has been a focus as it completes Phase I of its renovation and opens to the public. A highlight is the recently completed Rotary Centennial Outdoor Classroom.



Springfield Mayor Tom Carlson presents a gift of locally-made pottery to Mayor Miguel Castro of our sister city, Tlaquepaque, Mexico

Collaborative Efforts.

- First Friday Art Walk, a partnership among 15 local galleries.
- Joint grant writing, which has led to almost \$200,000 in direct collaborative grant awards plus \$1.4 million in federal appropriations.
- Artist-in-residence and internship opportunities with local universities.

Local arts organizations do a good job of working with service agencies. A program called, “Arts in the Park,” for example, offers ten weeks of instruction to minority and underserved children through the Springfield Community Center.

One of the outgrowths of these partnerships has been a team approach to event management among local not-for-profit organizations, the City of Springfield and the Springfield-Greene County Park Board. By working together to provide free family entertainment at Jordan Valley Park venues, we address the community red flag of at-risk families and offer positive opportunities for family activities and interaction.

Operating Revenues.

Funding for arts and cultural organizations is the biggest red flag. The majority of the arts and cultural organizations operate primarily with volunteers, with few paid staff. Endowment funds have been established for the leading organizations; however, a lack of consistent contributions to those endowments is a concern.

The majority of the organizations fund their operations through sponsorships, donations, membership fees, corporate support, grants, ticket sales, program guide ad sales, and fundraisers.

The arts organizations make good community partners, and provide discounted or free performance tickets in support of



SPRINGFIELD'S ESTABLISHED ARTS & CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS & MUSEUMS

Springfield-Greene County Library District – Established 1903
Springfield Art Museum – Established 1928
Springfield Little Theatre – Established 1934
Springfield Symphony – Established 1934
History Museum for Springfield-Greene County – Established 1976
Springfield Ballet – Established 1976
Springfield Regional Arts Council – Established 1978
Springfield Opera – Established 1979
Children’s Choirs of Southwest Missouri – Established 1986
Springfield Sister Cities Association – Established 1986
Air & Military Museum of the Ozarks – Established 1990
Discovery Center of Springfield – Established 1991
American National Fish & Wildlife Museum – Established 2001

tourism and non-profit events. Organizations offer a variety of performances, educational opportunities and special events, serving over 285,000 people per year. There are numerous children’s programs and school outreaches, serving thousands of students and teachers. Regional programming is growing, although still identified as a need.

Arts organizations have indicated their top three needs as operational dollars, funding, and marketing. Specific areas most needing attention for the further development and sustainability of local arts organizations include:

- Funding, particularly for day-to-day operations
- Marketing
- Continued implementation of the Cultural Plan
- Endowment building
- More educational programs for children
- Regional programming

Additional information about the arts and cultural opportunities in the Springfield region is available online at www.springfieldarts.org or by calling 417.862.2787.

Resources: www.springfieldarts.org
 SRAC 2005 survey
 Missouri Arts Council
 Americans for the Arts
 Jordan Valley Marketing Council

Website links: www.springfieldarts.org
www.missouriartscouncil.org
<http://ww3.artsusa.org/>

DATA	2003-04	2004-05
Number of People Employed Full-time in the Arts	71	76 *
Number of Arts & Cultural Organizations	43	49
Number of People Served by Local Arts & Cultural Organizations	228,692	278,277
Number of Museums	3	4
Number of Local Arts Festivals & Events	12	14
Number of Organizations Offering Art/Dance/Music/Theatre Classes	7	8
Budget Springfield Regional Arts Council (SRAC)	\$211,000	\$229,061
Number of SRAC Members	135	135
Springfield Art Museum Attendance	39,329	56,227
SRAC Event Attendance	96,900	63,170**
Number of Volunteers at Art Related Events	611	2,435

* National average for a city our size for jobs in the arts is 448 FTEs; it is not known if that includes educators (local figure does NOT).

**Rain conditions at Artsfest 2004 caused an estimated 25,000 decline in that event alone.