

ARTS AND CULTURE

“The arts develop skills and habits of mind that are important for workers in the new economy of ideas.”

Alan Greenspan, former U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman

Art galleries are opening downtown, an independent movie house is alive and well, and after nearly three decades, the Gillioz Theatre showed its new face to a proud community. These and other advancements are markers for the outstanding health of arts and culture in Springfield and Greene County. There is room to grow, however.

Funding for operating expenses remains a concern as do other challenges such as reaching audiences in the region beyond Greene County and sharing key staff positions. Addressing these issues can improve arts and culture in our community.

COLLABORATION. Collaboration continues to flourish in Springfield’s arts and cultural community. For example, for the first time in Springfield’s history, Springfield Little Theatre’s Youth Performers, Springfield Regional Opera and Springfield Symphony joined the Springfield Ballet in its annual Nutcracker production in December 2006. This kind of collaboration demonstrates how organizations can merge resources to create new arts and cultural offerings that best serve the community.

FACILITIES. The Gillioz Theatre reopened its doors in October 2006 after being closed for 26 years. Located on the former Route 66, the facility is registered on the National Register of Historic Places. The building seats 1,131 and features a restaurant and bar as well as a banquet facility on the second floor. Already it is home to Broadway productions, theatre, arts classes, film festivals and concerts.

The Creamery Arts Center, located in Jordan Valley Park, is home to the offices of the Springfield Ballet, Springfield Regional Opera, Springfield Symphony and Springfield Regional Arts Council. It is also a meeting place for other arts and community groups such as Southwest Missouri Art & Craft Guild, Studio 55, Creamery Writers’ Workshop, Missouri Film Alliance of Springfield and Jordan Valley Advisory Committee.

Phase II of construction began in spring 2007, providing

needed renovations to the 35,000-square-foot building, including an arts library, editing bays, arts classrooms and office space for the Springfield Symphony. Tuck pointing and new windows also were included in this phase.

Other arts related facilities include:

- Drury University’s Pool Arts Center
- Evangel University’s Barnett Fine Arts Center
- History Museum for Springfield and Greene County
- Juanita K. Hammons Hall for the Performing Arts, Missouri State University
- Landers Theatre
- Moxie Cinema
- Springfield Art Museum
- The Skinny Improv Comedy Theatre
- Vandivort Center Theatre

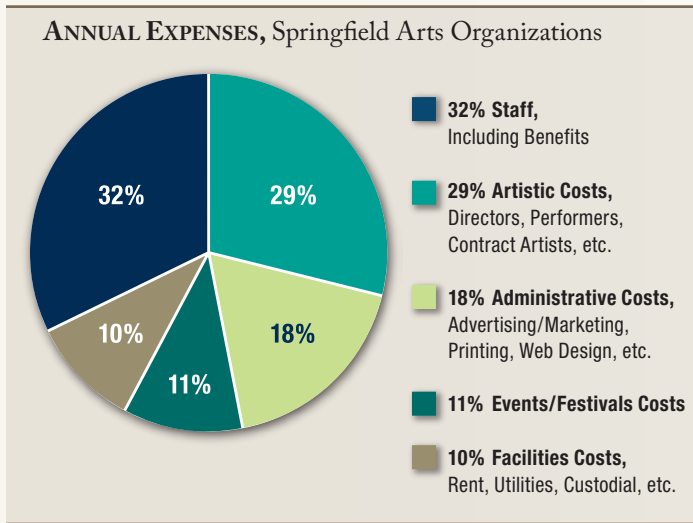


Springfield Art Museum

QUALITY AND ATTENDANCE. Responding to the needs of the growing community, arts organizations have introduced new and improved cultural experiences. Theatre venues have become more diversified, offering children’s theatre, musicals, traditional theatre, and family series as well as more contemporary productions. The Moxie, a downtown venue, offers independent movies. Art galleries are multiplying, introducing the community to national and international artists. Collaboration and improved facilities also have played a role in offering patrons a high quality experience leading to a greater interest in the arts. For example, the Springfield Ballet saw an increase of more than 1,000 audience members for its 2006 Nutcracker performances, compared to 2005.

HUMAN RESOURCES. Because collaboration is becoming secondhand for most area arts organizations, the next logical step is pooling human resources. Several arts organizations have identified staff needs: marketing director, education coordinator, grant writer and development director.

Organizations spend a significant amount of their budgets on staff. Sharing employees would reduce the financial burden on organizations and, indirectly, on sponsors and donors. Combining staff would be fiscally responsible, similar to the way groups are sharing office space at the Creamery Arts Center.



FUNDING. Arts and cultural agencies are actively engaged in improving the quality of life of Springfield and Greene County. Yet many times these groups are not able to fully reach their mission due to a lack of operating funds. Although financial assistance is offered by application from several local and regional agencies, this form of income is not sustainable. Endowments have been established for many groups, but there are no formal sources of annual support.

In Mesa, Ariz., citizens passed a “quality of life” sales tax. If an annual source of income like this were available in our community, organizations could invest their energy in providing more services to residents rather than concentrating on securing overhead expenses.



Springfield Ballet performs during Artsfest.

REGIONAL OUTREACH. When the arts community serves the region, a cultural tourism for Springfield is created and the economy grows. As arts and cultural organizations showcase Springfield’s talents throughout the region, more visitors will be drawn into the city. Increasing the frequency of regional performances, workshops and traveling visual arts shows can address this red flag.

ARTS AND CULTURE SNAPSHOT			
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
People Employed	71	76	—
Arts and Cultural Organizations	43	49	50
Museums	3	4	7
People Served by Arts and Culture Organizations	228,692	278,277	465,163*
Local Arts Festivals and Events	12	14	19
Organizations Offering Art/Dance/Music/Theatre Classes	7	8	11
Springfield Regional Arts Council Budget	\$211,000	\$229,061	\$336,540**
Number of SRAC Members	135	135	138
Springfield Art Museum Attendance	39,329	56,227	39,688
SRAC Event Attendance	96,900	63,170	81,440
Volunteers at Arts/Cultural Events	611	2,435	4,157

(Statistics based on 16 organizations’ individual reports.)

* Number affected by Discovery Center expansion, First Friday Artwalk growth, other new events
 ** SRAC budget increase due to grant assistance from U.S. Dept. of Education.

ARTS FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Art in the Park	Midtown Concert Series
Artsfest	Phelps Grove Concert Series
Artsfiesta	Show Me Missouri
Bluesfest	Film Festival
Cherry Blossom Kite Festival	Japanese Fall Festival
Cider Days	Movies at Founders Park
Festival of Lights	Ozarks Celebration Festival
Firefall	Watercolor USA
First Friday Art Walks	Wednesdays at Founders Park
First Night Springfield	Winterfest