

# Arts & Culture

The concern and focus on creating jobs, the economy, and attracting and retaining a quality workforce has put the cultural scene to the test. *Our arts and cultural organizations have made a significant impact during the Great Recession* by employing people locally, purchasing goods and services within the community, and marketing and promoting diverse, quality programming to the region. These services have *created awareness for arts and culture in addressing community issues* in sectors such as education, economic development, quality of life, civic engagement, and poverty. The sustained programming of the downtown arts district, including First Friday Art Walk, live theater shows and concerts, and community festivals, has leveraged additional event-related spending by audiences that pumps revenue into the local and state economy. In the past two years, the *cultural scene has worked hard to keep locals and their discretionary spending close to home* while also attracting visitors who help local businesses thrive.

## BLUE RIBBONS

### Continued Collaboration

Collaboration has been a consistent blue ribbon for Springfield-Greene County arts and cultural organizations since the 2005 Community Focus report. The recession, however, has allowed more non-traditional arts and cultural collaborations to emerge.

- Funding opportunities have improved through the Community Foundation of the Ozarks' new crowdfunding site, Cause Momentum. For example, the Moxie Cinema raised nearly \$20,000 towards a \$120,000 goal to convert to digital projection.
- The Springfield Arts Collaborative Endowment Campaign raised more than \$2 million towards arts endowments for organizations in The Creamery Arts Center.
- The Springfield Regional Arts Council (SRAC) combined its annual Ozzie Awards, presented to individuals, corporations, and organizations that have made significant contributions to the arts in the area, with the annual Flights of Fancy event at the Springfield-Branson National Airport.

Non-traditional theater venues have

emerged, including:

- Theater productions at Canvas Gallery downtown;
- The Skinny Improv's move to a larger shared space on South Avenue;
- The Creamery Arts Center for the Springfield Regional Opera (SRO) Lyric Theatre's monthly Operazzi series; and
- Theatre productions by Springfield Little Theatre, Vandivort Theatre, and Drury University at the Springfield Art Museum.

### Audience Development Efforts

Recent increases in artists, new organizations, and initiatives interested in fostering local creative culture and offering diverse cultural programming have helped address the Audience Development red flag in the 2011 Community Focus report. With the downtown Square renovation complete and a new ordinance led by young professionals allowing alcohol at certain events on the Square, the number of street festivals and events has increased. New and enhanced festivals from 2011–2012 include:

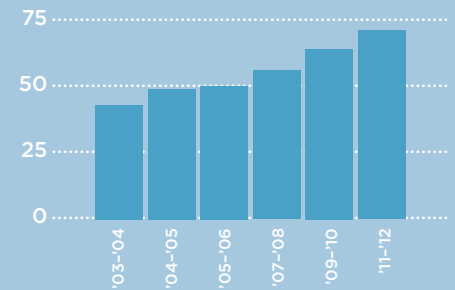
- ArtsFiesta\*\*
- Craft Beer Bash\*
- Birthplace of Route 66 Car Show\*\*
- James River Basin Partnership's Dam Jam\*\*

Springfield Little Theatre's YES Troupe at the 4th Annual Flights of Fancy featuring the 2012 Ozzie Awards at Springfield-Branson National Airport. PHOTO CREDIT: FAMILY TREE STUDIOS

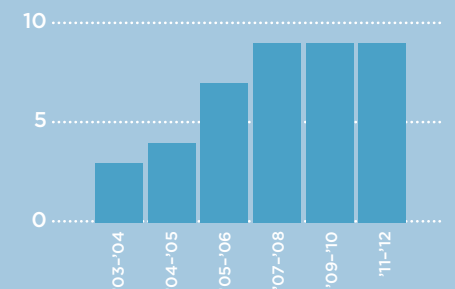


## ARTS & CULTURE IN SPRINGFIELD, 2003-2012

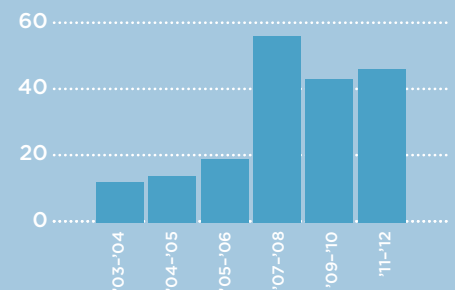
### Arts and Cultural Organizations



### Museums



### Local Arts Festivals and Events



Source: Springfield Regional Arts Council Arts/Culture Survey

- Moxie Cinema and Mother's Brewery Fourth Friday Flick\*
- Oktoberfest\*\*
- Pridefest\*\*
- Springfield Jazz Festival\*\*
- TAG Magazine's Do Good Festival\*

\*Designates a new event/festival; \*\*Designates an event/festival that has relocated to the Square

### Arts and Culture Snapshot

Boasting hundreds of performances in both 2011 and 2012, The Springfield Theatre Alliance announced a 4.2 percent increase in audiences with 207,933 patrons attending live theater in 2012. In addition, area cultural organizations reported 293 free community events, performances, lectures, and workshops offered throughout 2012.

There is renewed cultural energy also on the Square with the History Museum now relocated to the northeast corner. The Museum has extensive plans for a multi-million dollar renovation in hopes of becoming one of the area's top cultural attractions.

## Creative Outlet for Community Awareness

Many organizations are using cultural programming to address community issues. The Discovery Center's RACE exhibit encouraged civil discussion about diversity issues in the area. Springfield Little Theatre's regional premiere of "Rent" and the emerging Men's Chorus of the Ozarks have taken steps to address important issues in the LGBT community. Springfield Sister Cities Association continues to bring artists and performers from our region's sister cities in Isesaki, Japan, and Tlaquepaque, Mexico.

Despite continued efforts to develop audiences, there is still work to be done to overcome a perceived lack of inclusiveness and create more participatory, meaningful experiences for diverse audiences.

## Interest and Focus on Public Art

There has been a renewed interest in creating consistent policies for public art in the Springfield area as found in Springfield's Cultural Plan and the Springfield Regional Arts Council's strategic plan. Various community leadership visits to other cities demonstrate the power of public art on community pride, land value, and creating an authentic sense of place.

Random acts of public art have popped up on Springfield streets including the James River Basin's artwork competition for city water drains as well as Drury University's Art of Space "The Nest" parade in downtown Springfield in fall 2011. The ideaXfactory, a city-owned building leased by the Springfield Regional Arts Council for temporary art installations, has gained national attention as a \$200,000 award recipient in the esteemed Art-Place grant competition.

Currently, a "percent for public art" is in the planning stages that would dedicate at least 1 percent of the total budget for all above-ground Springfield construction projects towards commissioning artwork. This initiative would make Springfield one of more than 300 cities in the United States that have a municipal percent for public art policy. In addition, a sculpture walk forum was held to get community feedback on where citizens would like to see public art in Springfield.

## RED FLAGS

### Sustainable Funding for Organizations and Artists

A consistent red flag since the 2004 Community Focus report, sustainable funding continues to be a barrier in overcoming a "good enough" attitude for our arts and culture scene. In a 2011 assessment by the Springfield Arts Collaborative, private funding from corporations and individuals showed there is high capacity, but low propensity, to give to the arts. Both public and private funding support need to increase in order for



The ideaXfactory, Harmonic Wall by Russ RuBert; City Manager Greg Burris at guitar.

Springfield's urban setting to allow for more progressive, yet accessible, programming. For organizations and artists to think bigger and patrons to give more, a sustainable source of operating and capital funding must be secured; typically this is a local tax mechanism in support of arts and culture in conjunction with a healthy endowment for arts organizations.

Based on a study by the National Endowment for the Arts, 25 percent of a cultural organization's revenue should come from interest earnings off its endowment to allow for sustainability without the risk of stagnation. Currently, endowment earnings comprise only 2 percent of Springfield arts organizations' annual operating revenue, significantly lower than the ideal.

In 2012, state public funding for the arts through the Missouri Arts Council reached a critical low with the Missouri Cultural Trust near depletion. With no new funding in 2010 and 2011, and only \$600,000 in 2012 from the state legislature, the Missouri Arts Council has cut its grant awards to arts organizations in our region by 50-75 percent over the past three years. For many organizations, these grant funds cover crucial operating and programming costs that are then leveraged by local private funds.

Locally, Springfield City Council approved reallocating 60 percent of the returned Hotel/Motel tax funds from the Wonders of Wildlife Museum towards cultural capital projects. While a good step forward in creating or enhancing facilities, grants from public funds primarily assist with programmatic costs. Like Columbia and St. Louis, Springfield needs to support the operating costs of running arts facilities and programming. A future public funding source for supporting arts and cultural organizations is included in the Field Guide 2030 community strategic plan.

In addition to organizational sustainability, funding for emerging and established professional artists also is a concern. There have been numerous requests for funding individual artist residencies in schools and neighborhoods, but there is a lack of support because individual artists are not tax-deductible entities. There is a national trend emerging to support individual artists' work in communities. For example, based on the results of Artists Count, a recent survey of regional artists and their working and living environments, the St. Louis Regional Arts Commission will begin funding individual artists in 2013.

Although university/college teaching opportunities allow professional artists to support themselves while pursuing their art form, more efforts need to be made to find paying jobs for creatives such as artists, writers, and musicians. This need is addressed in the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce's strategic action plan.

## Organizational Capacity Building

Quality and consistent leadership among area arts and cultural organizations is still a concern since identified as a red flag in 2011. It is difficult for small or developing arts organizations to find quality members for their Boards of Directors. Based on the Springfield Regional Arts Council's arts/culture survey for cultural organizations, staff turnover and volunteer burnout

**"In the past, companies considering moving jobs to Springfield always asked about schools first and then the Parks system. Now they include questions about the arts and cultural activities within the community. Artsfest, ArtsFiesta, Oktoberfest, and the Japanese Fall Festival are drawing more and more people into cultural activities. In addition, the Springfield Art Museum, as well as our First Friday Art Walk, are leading the way in getting people more involved in the art world. The arts and culture segment is truly driving economic activity in Springfield."**

—Robert Stephens, Mayor,  
City of Springfield

also have increased. In addition, there has been inconsistent tracking of organizations' institutional histories due to a lack of resources or fluctuating leadership. Establishing and sustaining accurate databases will help with donor and board retention as well as cultivation.

New efforts are underway to begin addressing this red flag, including SRAC's launch of the free "Speaking of the Arts" professional development series. The Community Foundation of the Ozarks also added a new grant category strictly to support arts organizations with budgets under \$100,000.