



[From Blues to Benton to Bluegrass]

The Economic Impact of the Arts in the South

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The multi-layered contributions of the arts and arts-related activities rank among the lesser known and unheralded aspects of contemporary American society. Beyond the intrinsic benefits of the arts—i.e. benefits that serve to enrich an individual’s life experiences, standard of living and learning—recently, advocates have demonstrated the crucial role played by the arts in generating a significant level of economic growth too. In fact, highlighting the substantial private and public economic benefits flowing from a thriving arts environment continues to be a theme often stressed by arts advocates of every stripe across the country. Consequently, the objective of this summary report* is to capture elements of this theme by focusing on the 16 states that belong to The Council of State Governments’ Southern office, the Southern Legislative Conference (SLC). This is not the first time that the SLC has featured this topic among its publications, with the most recent effort being in November 2000, and the SLC’s ongoing review of this topic is a reflection of the recognition of its importance to SLC economies and public officials in the South.

The last five years saw the American economy face a series of unprecedented challenges that rippled across all levels of society. The arts community was certainly not impervious to these challenges, and artists and arts advocates in every part of the country faced their own set of obstacles in responding adequately and appropriately to these economic shocks. In fact, these past few years witnessed both public and private sector funding for the arts come under severe stress as all levels of government, corporations and individuals struggled to deal with the lingering effects of the 2001 economic recession, the terrorist attacks of September

2001, the collapse of the stock market (2000-2002), the worst fiscal downturn to plague state governments in decades and a number of other negative economic developments. In such a fiscally challenging environment, the ability of the arts community, a community that relies largely on funding from the public and private sectors for survival, to adequately raise funds proved to be extremely onerous. As a result, arts practitioners were forced to devise a range of alternate funding mechanisms to continue providing the crucial assistance necessary for the support of artists and others in the arts community.

The major difference that rapidly surfaced in gathering information for the current 2005 SLC report and the previously mentioned 2000 SLC report was the radical change in economic climates. During the preparation of the 2000 report, the U.S. economy was enjoying an unparalleled level of prosperity that allowed it to expand every month between March 1991 and March 2001, the longest economic expansion in the history of our nation. In stark contrast, the last few years, as previously noted, saw the U.S. economy rocked by a number of both internal and external shocks that resulted in sluggish growth rates, anemic job creation, significant spikes in energy costs, plunging revenue inflows and ballooning deficits at the federal, state and local levels, among other negative developments.

These negative developments had an immediate impact on state legislative appropriations to art agencies; specifically, all but three SLC states experienced negative growth in appropriations between fiscal years 2001 and 2005 (see Table 1). In fact, 11 of the 13 SLC states that saw appropriation reductions actually ex-

* This summary report is a precursor to a more in-depth, extensive Special Series Report that the SLC will publish, with the assistance of the Southern Arts Federation (SAF), later in 2005. Once completed, the full report will be available on both the SLC (www.slcatlanta.org) and SAF websites (www.southarts.org).

SLC State Legislative Appropriations to the Arts, Fiscal Years 2001 and 2005

State	FY 2001	FY 2005	% Difference 2001 to 2005
Alabama	\$6,121,164	\$3,169,195	-48%
Arkansas	\$1,311,070	\$1,460,643	11%
Florida	\$36,935,278	\$15,809,390	-57%
Georgia	\$4,835,331	\$4,054,234	-16%
Kentucky	\$4,072,800	\$3,593,700	-12%
Louisiana	\$4,898,143	\$5,231,961	7%
Maryland	\$12,646,294	\$11,001,522	-13%
Mississippi	\$3,283,961	\$1,661,551	-49%
Missouri	\$11,971,858	\$500,000	-96%
North Carolina	\$7,832,771	\$5,920,552	-24%
Oklahoma	\$4,235,497	\$3,878,871	-8%
South Carolina	\$5,421,706	\$3,076,621	-43%
Tennessee	\$2,306,600	\$2,014,900	-13%
Texas	\$4,739,335	\$4,510,252	-5%
Virginia	\$4,682,112	\$3,001,535	-36%
West Virginia	\$2,342,597	\$2,378,218	2%

Source: National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA)

perienced double-digit reductions during this period. The state that saw the steepest drop was Missouri (-96 percent), while Arkansas' 11 percent growth was the highest during this time period. The other two states that saw increases were Louisiana (7 percent) and West Virginia (2 percent).

Even for the nation as a whole, the scenario was not that much more promising. In fiscal year 2005, the 50 state legislatures appropriated a total of \$264.8 million to their state arts agencies, less than one-half percent (about 0.05 percent) of the \$547.3 billion expended from state general funds. Given the severity of the state fiscal downturn in these past four years, appropriations as a percentage of state general fund expenditures plunged precipitously from a high of 0.09 percent in fiscal year 2001 to 0.06 percent in 2003 to the previously mentioned 0.05 percent in fiscal year 2004.

Notwithstanding these steep reductions in state appropriations, the economic impact of the arts, both nationally and on a state-by-state basis, continues to notch remarkable numbers. According to the latest *Americans for the Arts** report, released in June 2002, touted as the most comprehensive economic impact study of the nonprofit arts industry ever conducted, America's nonprofit arts industry generated \$134 billion in economic activity, including \$24.4 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenues. This mammoth

*With more than 40 years of service, *Americans for the Arts* is the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America.

\$134 billion in economic impact comprised \$53.2 billion in spending by arts organizations and \$80.8 billion in event-related spending by arts audiences. Not only did the \$53.2 billion represent a 45 percent increase (up from \$36.8 billion) over the period of a decade (the previous *Americans for the Arts* study was conducted in 1992), this report also estimated that the overall economic impact resulted in 4.9 million full-time equivalent jobs; \$89.4 billion in household income; \$6.6 billion in local government tax revenues; \$7.3 billion in state government tax revenues; and \$10.5 billion in federal income tax revenues.

In March 2005, *Americans for the Arts* released another important report that gauged the number of businesses and employees in the nation's creative industries, i.e., establishments, both for-profit and nonprofit, involved in the creation and distribution of the arts (museums and collections; performing arts; visual arts and photography; film, radio and television; design and publishing; and, arts schools and services). According to this report, there were 578,487 total arts businesses with 2,965,893 employees. Table 2 provides this breakdown for the 16 SLC states. As indicated, the SLC states with the largest number of businesses and employees in the arts was Texas, with Florida coming in second. Nationally, the study noted that arts-centric businesses represented 4.4 percent of all businesses and 2.2 percent of all jobs in the United States.

Number of Business and Employees in the Arts in the SLC States

State	Businesses	Employees
Alabama	5,433	26,180
Arkansas	3,298	14,849
Florida	36,853	162,590
Georgia	16,263	84,131
Kentucky	5,085	22,625
Louisiana	6,229	28,942
Maryland	10,742	46,536
Mississippi	2,778	11,708
Missouri	8,966	55,307
North Carolina	13,648	63,590
Oklahoma	4,477	23,297
South Carolina	5,693	29,959
Tennessee	10,347	54,028
Texas	44,373	186,158
Virginia	12,418	66,894
West Virginia	1,682	8,432
SLC Total	188,285	885,226

Source: *Americans for the Arts*, March 2005

Recent data from several SLC states illustrates the impressive economic impact of the arts. For instance, according to a Florida Atlantic University January 2004 report, a total of \$1.2 billion was spent by the nonprofit organizations, universities and colleges that comprise the arts and cultural industry in Florida; when ripple or multiplier effects were included, this figure catapulted to \$2.9 billion in gross state product that resulted in \$877.8 million in income (primarily payroll) and 28,302 full-time equivalent jobs. In Maryland, the total economic impact of the arts industry amounted to an estimated \$911 million in gross sales, \$312 million in total employee income and 12,792 full-time equivalent jobs according to a Maryland State Arts Council study released in 2004. Then, in North Carolina, an Appalachian State University study released in 2003 estimated that the total economic impact of the nonprofit arts industry amounted to \$723 million alongside the fact that just under 2 percent of all jobs in the state were in the creative industry.

A major objective of this summary report (and the subsequent Special Series Report) is to review how the nonprofit arts sector in the SLC states fared during the recent fiscal downturn. As indicated, the severity of the fiscal crisis that states were plunged into resulted in state appropriations for the arts being slashed significantly. Several examples from around the region help illustrate how the SLC arts agencies coped with dwindling state appropriations during the lean fiscal years.

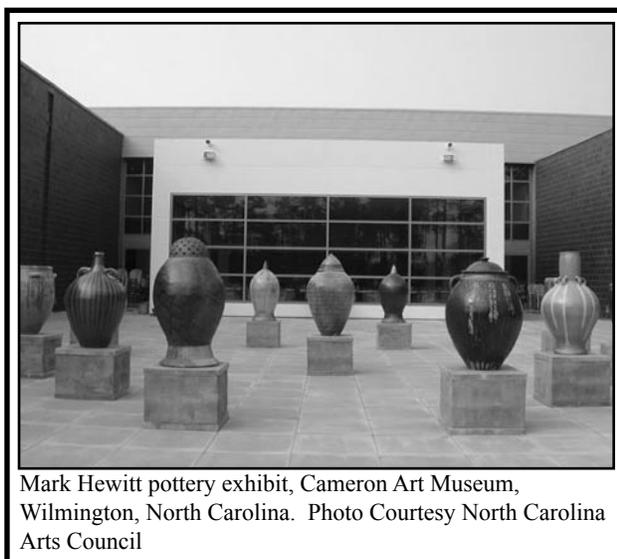
» In Florida, the cutbacks in state appropriations resulted in fewer and smaller grant awards and programs; there were no reductions in operational funding or staffing appropriations. For instance, in fiscal year 2001, Florida awarded funds to 49 of the 49 grant applications; in fiscal year 2004, the state did not award funds to any of the 48 grant applicants and, in fiscal year 2005, Florida only awarded funds to eight of the 42 applications. Also, in fiscal year 2004, the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs' (DCA) funding source was changed and the agency was required to compete with the rest of state government for general fund revenues.

» In Georgia, prior to January 2004, five consecutive years of reductions in state appropriations resulted in cuts to the state arts grant line in the budget, i.e., reducing funds distributed to state's artists and arts organizations. Since January 2004, all reductions (almost 25 percent over six years) have been made by arts organizations in administrative overhead in the areas of salaries, printing, and publishing. In fiscal year 2006, the state arts agency will partner with two other state agencies to broaden its marketing program across the state and seek additional grant funds to support arts programming.

» In North Carolina, the arts agency lost \$2 million in non-recurring funds in fiscal year 2002 that was available in the prior fiscal year. Then, in fiscal year 2003, the agency's budget was cut 8 percent, by cutting support, grants and special line items; staff positions were secured. Consequently, the agency applied and secured a grant from the Wallace Foundation (\$1 million over five years) in 2001, as well as grants from the Golden LEAF Foundation (totaling \$575,000) in 2003. While the former grant allowed the agency to help artists and arts organizations increase, broaden and diversify participation in the arts, the latter grant

allowed the state to create an agro-cultural tourism initiative in the eastern and Piedmont region of North Carolina.

» In Tennessee, the state arts commission secured a total of \$3 million from the federal National Endowment for the Arts during fiscal years 2001 through 2005. The agency also secured \$43,000 in private funds in fiscal year 2004 when Tennessee was selected to host the National Symphony Orchestra during its American Residency Program visit. In fiscal year 2003, like every other state agency, the Tennessee Arts Commission had to reduce its budget by 5 percent. However, the reductions in state funds for two grant programs were offset by a designated revenue source: specialty license plates. The arts commission aggressively initiated a marketing and education program (built around the slogan "Support the Arts: Bolt 'em to Your Car") to raise these dedicated funds.



Mark Hewitt pottery exhibit, Cameron Art Museum, Wilmington, North Carolina. Photo Courtesy North Carolina Arts Council

Cultural Tourism

A topic that has been gathering a lot of momentum across the region recently involves cultural tourism, i.e., tourism based on “the mosaic of places, traditions, art forms, celebrations and experiences that portray this nation and its people, reflecting the diversity and character of the United States.” Research indicates that an expanding number of visitors are ranking arts, heritage and/or other cultural activities as one of their top five reasons for traveling, a trend that has resulted in Southern states enacting specific programs to accommodate this burgeoning group. For instance,

» Florida’s Division of Cultural Affairs (DCA) works to promote cultural tourism via partnerships with corporations, nonprofit organizations and local governments. DCA partnered with the city of Tallahassee and local cultural leaders to develop a new *Cultural District* for the capital city. Then, in 2004, DCA established *Florida Heritage Month* (March 15 through April 15), an annual event that now raises awareness about the importance of culture and heritage to all Floridians. Also, in October 2001, DCA, working with the state’s tourism agency, initiated the successful marketing program *Culturally Florida*, an attempt to reposition the state as a unique destination that encompasses more than beaches and theme parks.

» In Georgia, promoting cultural heritage tourism was a key legislative priority for Governor Perdue and, under his leadership, the Georgia Tourism Foundation was established as a 501(c)(3) entity. The Foundation fosters a partnership between state funds and private contributions from for-profit and nonprofit heritage and tourism sites for marketing Georgia to the nation and to the world.

» North Carolina is another state that has sought to capitalize on its rich cultural heritage in promoting cultural tourism. After creating the position of marketing and cultural tourism director at the North Carolina Arts Council to fully respond to this growing segment, the state initially began promoting cultural tourism in five areas: Blue Ridge Music, Crafts,

Cherokee Heritage, African American Culture, and Summer Performing Arts. In subsequent years, the arts council expanded its focus on cultural tourism by collaborating with other organizations, including *Carolina Musicways* and *Handmade in America*.

» The Tennessee Arts Commission (TAC), as far back as 2001, convened a statewide meeting in Jonesborough to explore the many facets of cultural and heritage tourism. Based on these discussions, the TAC introduced a new grant category, *Cultural Crossroads*, to fund cultural tourism projects for arts organizations that partnered with other organizations, historic sites and festivals and promote cultural activities to attract more tourists to the state. This grant program continues in Tennessee and has funded a variety of projects.

Economic Activities and Impact Trends

Notwithstanding the downturn in the economy in the last few years, the SLC states continue to see a great deal of activity on the arts front, activities that result in an impressive array of economic benefits, direct, indirect and induced. The following is a small sample of these activities and, for some states, economic impact details.

Alabama: In an effort to guide the state in enhancing the quality of life through the arts in the 21st century, the Alabama State Council on the Arts issued “*A State Blueprint for Supporting the Arts*.” This document, compiled over a 24-month period, spells out in detail 10 goals to boost “the quality of life in Alabama culturally, economically and educationally by supporting the state’s diverse and rich artistic resources.”

Arkansas: In February 2005, Governor Huckabee signed landmark arts education legislation designed to ensure music and art instruction for all Arkansas school children. The legislation requires 40 minutes per week of music and arts in grades 1 through 6 and establishes Arkansas as the nation’s leading state in required elementary arts education.



The late Fiddler Bob Douglas performs as a special guest at the Grand Ole Opry in the Summer of 2000. The performance was to honor his 100th birthday. A master of a regional style with hundreds of traditional tunes in his repertory, Douglas was recognized by the Tennessee Arts Commission for his accomplishments during the 2001 Governor’s Awards in the Arts.

Florida: According to a January 2004 economic impact study, the cultural arts, historic preservation and library services industries in Florida generated a combined impact of \$19.5 billion per year on the state's economy. While more than 295,655 jobs were created by these industries, they resulted in over \$10.9 billion in personal income annually.

Georgia: In early 2005, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO) announced that significant donations had enabled the ASO to reach one-third of its \$300 million goal for its dramatic, new Santiago Calatrava-designed concert hall. Another arts venue in Georgia that generates a significant amount of economic impact is the High Museum of Art, also in Atlanta. Although there have been no blockbuster exhibitions funded directly with state funds recently, a number of major exhibitions featured at the High Museum involved a unique partnership with the Louvre Museum in Paris. While this arrangement will bring unparalleled visual arts to Atlanta and the South starting next year, the High has been actively pursuing loan agreements with other international museums.

Kentucky: Berea, in the southeast part of the state, "trumpets itself as the arts and crafts capitol of Kentucky." This claim is buttressed by the fact that Berea has 50 or so galleries and fine crafts studios operating in the city and generating millions of dollars in economic impact. In addition, the commitment to folk art preserves a tradition going back generations while economically vitalizing this segment of the state. Berea College remains the catalyst for this activity, having launched handcrafts instruction as far back as the late 1890s.

Louisiana: An economic impact study released by the state's Division of the Arts in June 2001 noted that the total economic impact of the nonprofit arts industry and art event attendee spending in the Louisiana economy amounted to \$934 million (including \$360 million in worker income) and generated 18,834 jobs. On the tourism front, the state's Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism reported in May 2005 that 24.1 million tourists visited the state in 2004, spending \$9.9 billion.

Maryland: In early 2005, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and cellist Yo-Yo Ma played in the inaugural concert at the Music Center at Strathmore, a \$100 million venue built largely with public funds in Montgomery County, Maryland. The 2,000-seat auditorium is one in an expanding list of sophisticated performing arts centers springing up around our nation's capital. Along with periodic performances by the Baltimore Symphony, the Music Center at Strathmore is the primary venue for a local philharmonic orchestra, dance company, youth orchestra, music school and the Washington Performing Arts Society. Analysts expect the Music Center at Strathmore to be the locus for substantial economic impacts.

Also, when the General Assembly passed legislation in 2001 (Senate Bill 586), authorizing the state Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED) to sponsor Arts and Entertainment Districts, Maryland became the first state in the country to deploy this strategy as a way to stimulate the economy and improve quality of life. This landmark legislation enables local jurisdictions, municipalities, counties or a combination, to apply for state designations for the Arts and Entertainment Districts within their boundaries and offer tax incentives provided by the new law.

Mississippi: A third special session in 2005 saw the Mississippi Legislature approve a number of bond bills that included \$2 million each for the proposed B.B. King Museum in Indianola and the Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Center in Meridian. In early June 2005, blues legend B.B. King joined several dignitaries for the groundbreaking of a \$10 million museum honoring him in the Mississippi Delta town where he used to live. Similarly, the Center in Meridian calls for public and private funds to develop a 175-acre site that includes a lakeside amphitheater, a Mississippi hall of fame, Choctaw Indians cultural center and conference facilities. Supporters of this \$70 million project estimate that the center will generate \$10 million annually in direct economic impact from visitors alongside showcasing the state's vivid artistic heritage.



Charlotte Symphony Pops Concert. Photo courtesy North Carolina Arts Council



The Thomas Hart Benton mural at the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum in Independence, MO.

Missouri-born Benton's works are scattered throughout the state, including at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, the Missouri State Capitol in Jefferson City and the Woodcock Museum in St. Louis.

Photo: Truman Presidential Library

Missouri: Missouri experienced the steepest reduction in state legislative appropriations among the Southern states during the recent fiscal downturn. For the current fiscal year (2006), the General Assembly approved a budget that includes \$500,000 to the Missouri Arts Council; \$600,000 transfer of the income tax from nonresident professional athletes and entertainers who work in Missouri to the Missouri Cultural Trust; and additional allocations to several Cultural Trust partners such as Missouri Public Broadcasting and State Library. A November 2004 Missouri Economic Research and Information Center study noted that the economic impact of Missouri's creative industries amounted to \$4.7 billion in annual income and 135,000 jobs, direct and spin-off, and that St. Louis ranked in the top 20 metropolitan cities with the most arts-related businesses.

North Carolina: In an effort to promote and market cultural heritage tourism in North Carolina, the North Carolina Arts Council has produced brochures and rack cards that promote cultural expeditions and trails and the economic benefits of the nonprofit arts sector. One such guidebook, *Blue Ridge Music Trails: Finding a Place in the Circle*, published with assistance from the North Carolina Arts Council, provides visitors with a fresh way to explore and appreciate the area's rich culture. This guide is a comprehensive traveler's guide to finding and enjoying the old-time and bluegrass music and dance that abounds in virtually every community in the Blue Ridge. The book leads readers to more than 160 venues and events within 25 miles of the Blue Ridge Parkway that are filled with bluegrass and string band music, ballad singing, fiddling, shape-note singing, gospel music, clogging, and other traditional forms of music and dance.

Oklahoma: A study released by Southwestern Oklahoma State University in December 2003 revealed that economic activity from public funding for the Oklahoma Arts Council stimulated \$270.2 million in output (business and consumer spending) and \$149.4 million in income (disposable income, federal and state income tax) in the state. While the yearly appropriation for the Oklahoma Arts Council has averaged about \$4 million recently, state tax revenues springing from the arts alone (\$8.2 million in income and sales) stand at nearly twice the average annual appropriation the agency receives. The study also indicated that funding through the Oklahoma Arts Council helps employ 4,519 Oklahomans per year.

South Carolina: The state's cultural industry supports about \$700 million in labor earnings, 30,000 jobs and \$1.9 billion in output according to an economic impact study released by the University of South Carolina in August 2002. While the earnings impact amounts to about 1.3 percent of total earnings statewide, the employment impact represents about 1.6 percent of total non-farm employment. Specifically, of every \$100 of wage and salary earnings in the state, \$1.30 can be linked to the cultural industry; of every 100 jobs in the state, 1.6 are directly or indirectly linked to the arts. The most famous arts-related event in South Carolina is the annual Spoleto Festival USA, the mix of dance, theater, opera, music and visual arts extravaganza that takes place in Charleston, a festival that attracts thousands to the city.

Tennessee: Over two-thirds of the Tennessee Arts Commission's grants budget flows from the sale of specialty license plates. In a pro-active marketing campaign, the Tennessee Arts Commission markets these unique and colorful specialty license plates as a way to provide the primary source of funding for the Commission's grant programs; fund projects in communities; enhance education and appreciation of the arts; build the next generation of Tennessee artists and arts audiences; generate tax dollars for the state; assist in training a qualified workforce; and leverage private dollars for local arts activities. In other arts-related news from Tennessee, a number of arts locations around the state currently are undergoing renovation, expansion and new construction, including the Kenneth Schermerhorn Symphony Hall, Vanderbilt University Studio Arts Building (both in Nashville); 21st Century Waterfront Project, Hunter Museum of American Art (both in Chattanooga); and Cannon Center for the Performing Arts, Playhouse on the Square (both in Memphis).

Texas: Art institutions in Dallas and Houston, Texas, were the beneficiaries of several substantial philanthropic donations recently. For instance, the Dallas Museum of Art announced a series of cash gifts and art bequests totaling some \$400 million that will enrich the museum's holdings by more than 800 modern and contemporary works. Then, the Houston Museum of Fine Arts increased the estimate of a gift from its largest benefactor, an oil heiress, who died in 2003, to about \$450 million.

Virginia: In December 2000, the *Virginians for the Arts Foundation* reported that the arts and culture in Virginia generated \$849 million in revenues for Virginia businesses plus \$342 million in revenues for Virginia tourism businesses; created \$447 million in value-added income for Virginia's workforce and entrepreneurs; produced \$307 million in labor compensation for Virginia's workforce; provided 18,850 full- and part-time jobs and benefited from 1.4 million hours of volunteer time; hosted nearly 30 million out-of-state visitors; and raised \$73.6 million in contributions and \$61.7 million in grant income.

West Virginia: A study sponsored by the West Virginia Development Office to measure the economic impact of the arts and crafts industry in West Virginia and released in November 2004, noted that the direct impact of the artists and craftspeople working in the state amounted to \$54.5 million annually. The estimated comprehensive economic impact of the arts and crafts industry, including crafts retailers, organizations and publications is \$81.2 million per year.

Conclusion

Beyond the intrinsic value of the arts—the manner in which the arts enhances the quality of life and the valuable role played by a thriving arts education program in fostering smarter, well-rounded children—

the impressive economic impact of the arts continues to be yet another reason for a thriving arts scene. As documented in numerous studies at the national, regional and state levels, the economic impact of the arts streams in billions of dollars and produces millions of jobs, cumulatively, though it generally is true that arts budgets, at every level of government, are the first to be slashed during lean fiscal times. The role played by the arts in attracting corporate relocations or expansions is another often forgotten factor in calculating the full impact of the arts.

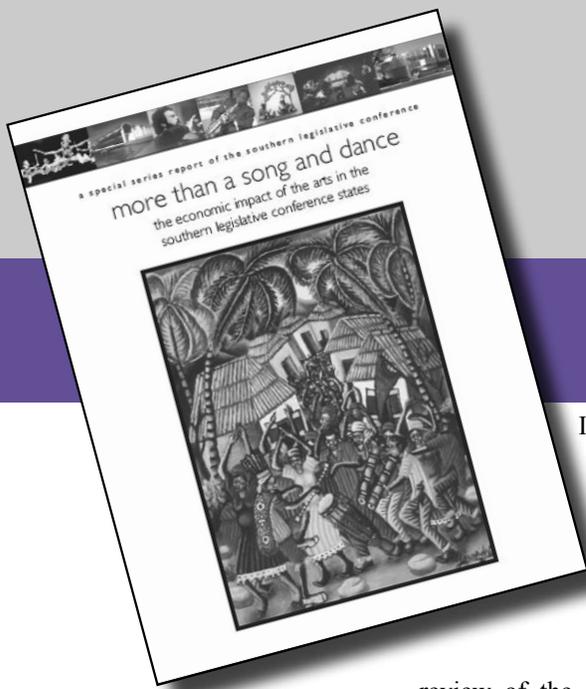
During the recent economic downturn, state arts agencies were forced to nimbly react to the reduced appropriations by generating alternate revenue sources to sustain the arts programs in their states. For instance, states have sought to issue bonds to raise funds for arts and cultural projects; in recent years, borrowing has become an increasingly popular strategy to fund a range of different state government projects. In 2005, bills were introduced in both the Virginia and North Carolina General Assemblies to raise \$86 million and \$50 million in bonds, respectively. While the effort failed in Virginia, the House Finance Committee in North Carolina supported the measure though Governor Easley indicated his lack of enthusiasm for this funding mechanism.

States also have begun promoting cultural tourism as a means to kindle interest in the arts and foster positive economic trends. Notwithstanding the reduced government contributions, the economic impact of the arts continued to be sizable from the \$270.2 million stimulated in business and consumer spending in Oklahoma (December 2003 study), to the \$19.5 billion economic impact generated by the cultural arts, historic preservation and library services industries in Florida (January 2004 study), to the \$4.7 billion in annual income created by Missouri's creative industries (November 2004 study). Beyond these sizable economic impacts, there is a growing sense that an animated and vibrant arts and cultural scene remains an essential element for a city, region and, even a country, to be considered a world class venue.

While the arts continue to struggle for recognition as an important economic and revenue generator in most states' budgets, the growing strength of their fiscal contributions—as proven admirably during the most recent downturn, when they continued to create positive economic flows despite depleted budgets—there soon will come a time when lawmakers may think twice about substantially cutting funding during the next economic downturn. 



The **International Storytelling Festival**, held every October in Jonesborough, Tennessee, is the first festival devoted to storytelling. The festival is listed as one of the top 100 Events in North America. Current attendance is estimated at 10,000, with around 30 storytellers participating.



The Economic Impact of the Arts in the South

In recognition of the economic importance of the arts to Southern states, The Council of State Governments' Southern office, the Southern Legislative Conference (SLC), has published several reports on the subject in recent years. In 2000, the SLC released *More than a Song and Dance*, an in-depth

review of the economic importance of the arts in the 16 SLC states. The report highlighted

the extensive contributions the arts make to the economy across the South. The report also illustrated the rich return communities and states received on their investments in the arts, with specific discussions of national trends, state legislative appropriations, and individual state profiles. The full report is available through the SLC website at www.slcatlanta.org/publications.

This August 2005 summary report is a precursor to a more detailed Special Series Report that will be published later this year.

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