

For more information contact:

John Divine
Former Chairman of the Kansas Arts
Commission
785/826-6849 (cell)
jmdivin@aol.com



700 SW Jackson Street, Ste. 1004
Topeka, Kansas 66603-3774
<http://arts.ks.gov>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 28, 2011

Statement from Former Kansas Arts Commissioners regarding
**GOVERNOR SAM BROWNBACK'S ELIMINATION OF
THE KANSAS ARTS COMMISSION**

Topeka, Kan. – As former Kansas Arts Commissioners and current citizens of Kansas, we wish to state our desire to help Governor Brownback achieve his goal of a balanced state budget.

However, we strongly believe that **abolishing the Kansas Arts Commission, and creating a private, nonprofit corporation will not help the Governor in his efforts.**

Cutting state funding will jeopardize direct federal dollars and indirect programs and services that go to small businesses, not-for-profit and for-profit, throughout the state. **The loss of these dollars on top of the loss of state funds will mean a smaller rate of return to state and local governments, thereby contributing to the deficit in the long run.**

Arts organizations will decrease their services to their communities and people will lose jobs. **It will have the opposite of the desired effect, and will end up costing the state far more than the \$575,000 in savings that are described in the Governor's executive reorganization order.** The Kansas Arts Commission has been a successful investment, helping generate a large percentage of the \$15 million in revenue generated by the Kansas nonprofit arts and cultural sector, for the low cost of 29 cents per Kansan.

In addition, a private corporation for the arts will then compete with other arts organizations in Kansas for funds. Eighty-five percent of arts organizations have seen private contributions decrease in the last two years; **it would be wrong for the designated state arts agency to compete with the organizations it serves merely to provide minimal services.**

As Kansas communities strive for economic growth, particularly in rural Kansas, it is essential that communities offer a quality of life that appeals to businesses. **Businesses want to relocate to communities with a strong arts base, and young workers with families want to live in communities that offer arts opportunities. Without support from the Kansas Arts**

Commission many rural communities will not be able compete with larger cities. This is a direct conflict with the Governor's goal of attracting business to our state.

The quality of life for rural Kansans should not be disproportionately sacrificed. For many rural communities, the Kansas Arts Commission's support, with its matching requirements, is vital to attract local funding, which is very limited. The Kansas Arts Commission makes it possible for many small communities to offer arts education programs and summer and afterschool activities to children as well as keep senior citizens active and engaged. Without state funding, many of these activities will simply disappear.

Therefore, we, former Kansas Arts Commissioners, strongly support level-funding of the Kansas Arts Commission and its retention as a state agency that serves the entire state.

Former Kansas Arts Commissioners:

Leah Ann Anderson, Lindsborg	Don Lambert, Topeka
Clark Balderson, Wamego	Judy Langley, Hutchinson
Martin Bauer, Wichita	Alberta McGrath, Prairie Village
Jennie Becker, Wichita	Ellen Morgan, Salina
Julie Britton, Elwood	Harolyn Clark O'Brien, Leawood
Ruth Browne, Clay Center	Martha Rhea, Salina
John Divine, Salina	Elwanda Richardson, Kansas City, KS
Christine Downey-Schmidt, Inman	Callie Allen Seaton, Winfield
Ann Evans, Lawrence	Denny Senseney, Wichita
Joshua Garry, Leawood	Lemuel Sheppard, Pittsburg
John Hunter, Topeka	Jill Warford, Fort Scott
Sharon Kriss, Manhattan	Anita Wolgast, Topeka

The Kansas Arts Commission is a state agency, funded by the State of Kansas and the National Endowment for the Arts, dedicated to promoting and supporting the arts in Kansas. Its mission is to provide opportunities for the people of Kansas to experience, celebrate and value the arts throughout their lives. For more information on the Kansas Arts Commission, please visit the KAC website at <http://arts.ks.gov>.

###