

NIAGARA ERIE REGIONAL COALITION

275 OAK ST. SUITE 150
BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14203
PHONE: 716-856-6525 x121 FAX: 856-6754
E-MAIL: tkniazuk@ecidany.com
www.erie.gov/regionalcoalition

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Tod A. Kniazuk

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**Contact: Tod A. Kniazuk, (716) 856-6525 x121
(716) 912-8236 cell**

ARTS & ECONOMIC PROSPERITY III REPORT SHOWS \$155.29 MILLION IN ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

*Non-profit arts and cultural organizations and their audiences a
major contributor to economy in Erie & Niagara Counties*

Released today, Americans for the Arts "Arts & Economic Prosperity III" report shows an annual economic impact of \$155.29 million by arts and cultural organizations and their audiences in Erie & Niagara Counties. This spending – \$92.97 million by the organizations and an additional \$62.33 million in event-related spending by their audiences – supports 4,740 full-time equivalent jobs, generates \$95.9 million in household income to local residents, and delivers \$24.05 million in local and state government revenue.

The Greater Buffalo findings were part of a national report that included 156 regions. The local project was managed by the Niagara Erie Regional Coalition, in partnership with the Arts Council in Buffalo & Erie County.

Locally, approximately 175 agencies were invited to participate, and 61 did so. This included all the large cultural organizations and a wide cross section of smaller groups in the two counties, making this the most comprehensive and inclusive effort of its kind in the region.

"The results of this report clearly show that arts and culture is a valid and valuable sector of our economy," said Niagara Erie Regional Coalition Executive Director Tod A. Kniazuk. "As such, you need a wide base of large and small organizations employing everyone from actors to technicians to playbill printers in order to sustain and grow the sector," Kniazuk continued. "Just like in any sector of the economy, a few large companies provide an anchor for the industry, but the majority of the firms are small businesses and

all of them combine to create a thriving sector; so it is too in the arts and culture industry.”

“The arts provide the key to economic development while still being true to their fundamental purpose: to delight, to inspire, to portray, and to provoke,” stated Robert L. Lynch, president & CEO of Americans for the Arts. “The arts are vital to our nation’s economy and to the economy in the Greater Buffalo region, and this research is essential in our efforts to advance the arts in America.”

The arts and culture industry is just as important at the local level. “As we develop a regional economic development strategy for Erie and Niagara Counties, we have identified tourism as one of our growth clusters,” said James Allen, executive director of the Amherst Industrial Development Agency and a member of the Regional Coalition. “The arts and culture industry needs to be viewed as an economic development sector.”

The Arts Council in Buffalo & Erie County secured participation of the region in the study. “As funding for the arts gets cut further and further, we need to be able to justify the importance of arts and culture to this community and its economy,” Arts Council Executive Director and ENRP member Celeste Lawson explained. “We convinced Americans for the Arts to waive its participation fee (\$6,000 per county) because of the importance and uniqueness of the cultural sector in our area.”

“The Niagara Erie Regional Coalition is about partnerships, and this project is a perfect example of what we do,” Coalition Co-Chair and Niagara County Legislature Chairman Clyde Burmaster said. Co-Chair and Erie County Legislator Barry Weinstein, MD agreed, saying “We have long been focused on improving the region’s economic development infrastructure, and the results gained from this project will enable us to make informed decisions about the arts’ place in our economy.”

The report will be distributed to arts organizations, economic development agencies, government officials and business leaders. It can be viewed at www.erie.gov/regionalcoalition