

An aerial photograph of a city campus. In the foreground, a large, multi-story brick building with a modern architectural style is visible. The building has several windows and a flat roof. To the left of the building, there is a paved area with some trees and a small circular garden. The background shows a cityscape with various buildings, including some taller ones, and a hazy horizon. The sky is clear and bright. The overall scene is a mix of urban architecture and greenery.

The Arts Economy in Clark County

Clark County Arts Commission
and Arts of Clark County
Vancouver, Washington

June 2013

Photo courtesy of Clark County

Finding a voice

In March 2012 a capacity crowd of 120 artists, art educators and community leaders interested in the arts gathered to explore the state of the arts community at the Clark County Arts and Culture Summit. This was a grass roots effort to explore challenges and opportunities the community faces in creating a unified and identifiable voice. The discussions were lively, the ideas of attendees were expressed, and Arts of Clark County came away with an action plan and a vision of where we wanted to go.



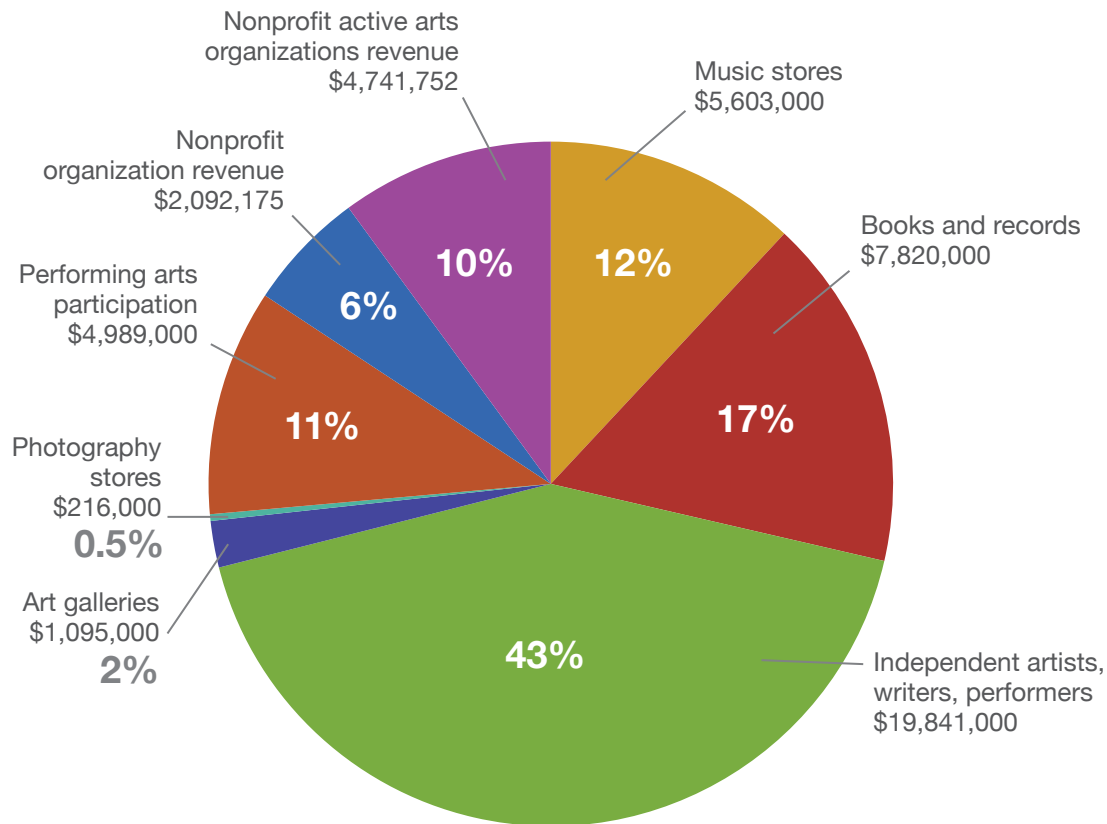
Mayor Tim Leavitt joins discussions at the Arts and Culture Summit. Photo credit: Cameron Suttles

Supporting the Vision

It was clear we needed more information to support our vision for a vital arts community in Clark County. Arts of Clark County, a nonprofit organization and the Clark County Arts Commission formed a partnership to apply for the Creative Vitality Index grant offered by ArtsWA (Washington State Arts Commission) and Art Works.(National Endowment for the Arts). This successful grant application gave us access to local financial data which allowed us to understand the value and contribution of our creative economy in a more tangible way.



Brainstorming at the Summit. Photo credit: Cameron Suttles



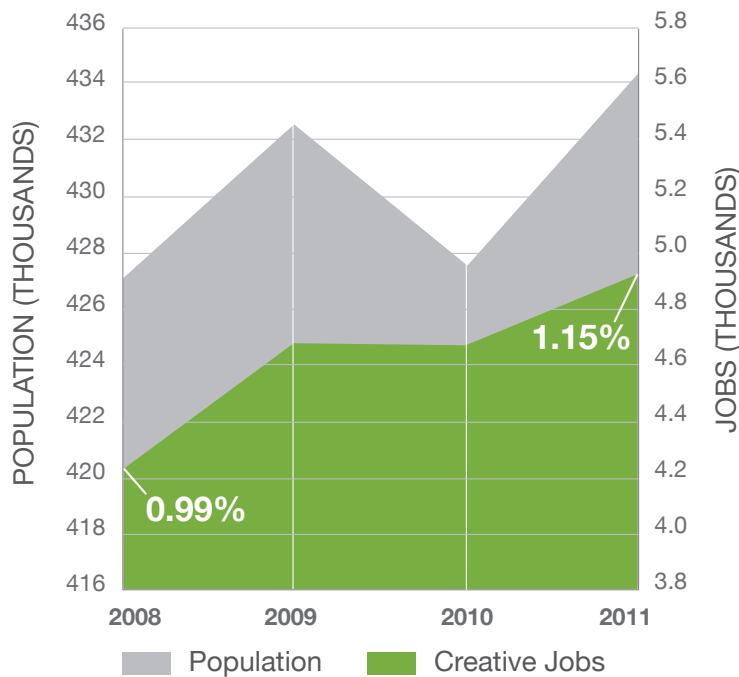
2011 Creative Vitality Index (CVI) summary, sales and revenue, Clark County, Washington

Creative Vitality Index

The Creative Vitality Index is a research tool that measures annual changes in the economic health of an area by using data streams from both for-profit and nonprofit sectors.

The CVI measures two major areas per capita: 1) sales and revenues of arts-related goods and services, and 2) jobs in the arts.

The CVI boils down to a number that reflects the relative economic health of the county's creative economy. The 2011 CVI for Clark County was .528, reflecting a value relative to a national baseline of 1.00. The county's creative economy is a little better than half the national average, and 89% of the state CVI.



Creative job growth is outpacing population growth in Clark County.

Cultural participation and the regional context

The numbers also indicate that Clark County residents are cultural participants. We play musical instruments, attend concerts and plays, and photograph our environment. We spent \$5.7 million on musical instruments and supplies in 2011, that's \$12.90 per capita. Musical instrument sales have an index value of 1.4, exceeding the national average by 40%. We also have 24% stronger musical instrument and supply sales than the state average. Yet performing arts participation had revenues of \$4.98 million in 2011, which is only 20% of the national average and 26% of the state average.

We have Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, the Sleep Country Amphitheater, historical museums, art galleries and film venues yet we don't have a visual or performing arts center. Theater, dance and music groups have a hard time finding affordable rehearsal and performance spaces. The Vancouver Symphony, the third largest symphony in the state, performs in a high school auditorium.

Art means business

David Schwarz, glass artist

Internationally recognized and exhibiting glass artist David Schwarz grew up in Vancouver and works out of a home studio on a property in Ridgefield that has been in his family since 1899.



Photo courtesy David Schwarz

Schwarz has been making his living as a glass artist since the 1980s, exhibiting in well-known galleries that specialize in high-end glass art. Recent work combines forged steel and glass. He also works in clay and precious metals. But, he says, "My living is with high-end glass." Schwarz's work features regularly in private galleries, and is also in the collections of many institutions, including Japan's Nijima Glass Art Museum, The Smithsonian National Museum of American Art, and The White House, as well as many corporate collections, including Boeing and Safeco.

As a working artist with many diverse clients across the country, Schwarz is a thriving example of Clark County's creative economy. Creating fine glass work is a deeply creative endeavor, but for Schwarz and other working artists, it's also a business. Schwarz enjoys conducting that business from Clark County because "It's a great location to support my craft due to availability of materials, convenience of travel, a wealth of opportunities, and open spaces. It is my home."

Columbia Dance Center

For 25 years, Columbia Dance has been Southwest Washington's leading pre-professional dance company, offering excellence in dance instruction and performance opportunities for serious dance students. The school



Photo credit: Troy Wayrenen

serves approximately 200 dance students of all ages each year, and regularly sells out its major performances, held at the Royal Durst Theater in the Vancouver School of Arts and Academics. Graduates of Columbia Dance have toured the world with professional dance companies, studied at Juilliard, and danced in the Beijing Olympics. Several of

One could reasonably assume that Clark County's CVI is negatively impacted by the share of arts dollars spent across the river in Portland, where there are many attractive, well-funded or larger venues. In comparing Clark County to the two suburban counties adjacent to Portland's Multnomah County, the 2011 CVI of Washington County is .891 and Clackamas County is .971. This means the creative economy of Clark County is 10% and 3% smaller than Washington and Clackamas Counties, respectively. Those counties, as members of Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC), are receiving the benefit of arts funding and support. Meanwhile, there are Clark County businesses supporting RACC that may not realize that Clark County artists cannot benefit because of the county's decision not to participate in funding RACC.

Another interesting difference between Oregon and Washington arts support is that Oregon requires that 1% of direct construction funds for new and remodeled state building budgets above \$100,000 be used for acquisition and conservation of artwork. Washington, on the other hand, requires half of 1% of new construction budgets for state buildings and schools be used for art acquisition, but not for transportation and utilities projects as does Oregon. Oregon will have money for aesthetic treatment of a transportation project like the new bridge, while Washington will have to find a new source of funding to do the same.

The business of art

Our economy gets a real boost from local arts events, even though we carry some of our cultural dollars to Portland. The Clark County Department of Environmental Services Recycled Arts Festival was a first in the region and has been copied nationally. The Bravo Vancouver Wine and Jazz Festival books national names and draws thousands during the weekend festival. Events like these and other cultural nonprofit events bring people and dollars into our community. Robert Lynch of Americans for the Arts says that, "...the typical arts attendee spends \$24.60 per person, per event, beyond the cost of admission on meals, local ground transportation, shopping and souvenirs, overnight lodging, and even babysitting."

We have several local artists who sell nationally yet they are not well known here. They spend their hard earned dollars living and working here. We have nationally known glass

Art means BUSINESS (continued)

these students return to Columbia Dance to teach and work as guest choreographers for the organization where they got their start.

The nonprofit is self-supporting through ticket sales, tuition, and the support of loyal donors who are committed to the artistic and economic vitality that Columbia Dance brings to Clark County.

Paul Quackenbush

Twenty years ago Paul Quackenbush started his photography studio in Vancouver. With college degrees in commercial photography and studio art he built a successful business,

and now has an established client base. His aesthetic philosophy is minimalist, eliminating fluff, "artiness", and pretentiousness. His business practices are also plain and simple, working hard to produce quality work, quickly and at an affordable price. It's worked well, and has enabled him to hold on to long time customers of ten years or more.

He recently moved to Vancouver Marketplace, "It's been an excellent transition resulting in much higher visibility, and an overall increase in business. It's great to be in a building with several other thriving businesses and lots of people passing through."

Paul has been the Vancouver Symphony photographer for over ten years. Because of his love of classical music, he provides all the photographs at no charge. "Even though, technically, I don't charge them for my work, they take very good care of me!"



Photo credit: Paul Quackenbush

Recycled Arts Festival

In 2005, Clark County's Department of Environmental Services started the annual Recycled Arts Festival, at downtown Vancouver's Esther Short Park over the fourth full weekend of June. Designed

to educate and get the community excited about waste reduction, reuse, and recycling in Clark County. It has grown into a huge family event, with more artists participating every year. All artwork displayed must be at least 75%



Photo credit: Laurel Whitehurst

blowers, sculptors, writers, photographers, composers and musicians. We also have over 400 graphic designers, 196 multi-media artists and animators, and 186 architects out of the 36 occupations tracked by the CVI. There were a total of 4,988 creative economy jobs in Clark County in 2011, a rise of 265 jobs from 2010. These are local jobs that cannot be shipped overseas.

We have a lot of local creative talented people making a living here. In fact, independent artists, writers and performers had sales of \$19.8 million in 2011, which was down from 2010 sales of \$21.7 million. Galleries had sales of over \$1 million. Dance companies sales were \$452,000, while musical groups and artists' sales were \$3.5 million. Between 2008 and 2011 theater companies and dinner theater sales averaged \$1.9 million. In the category of "other performing arts companies," sales averaged \$657,500 over those four years.

The nonprofit arts community

There are over 78 nonprofit arts-related organizations in the county from national organizations to community arts groups. In 2011 the CVI reports nonprofit revenues were \$6.8 million, down from \$12.3 million in 2009. The CVI tracks those reporting on IRS Form 990 or 990EZ, which includes nonprofit organizations with revenues over \$200,000. Groups like the Native Arts and Culture Foundation and Bravo Vancouver fit into this category.

Conclusion

The Creative Vitality Index for Clark County reveals that our arts community is engaged and productive, yet there are both challenges and opportunities as we strive for a vibrant arts culture. The CVI brings to light issues many of us have already been aware of—where we are making progress and where we need to find support to achieve our vision for the future. Our community recognizes the importance of a strong and growing arts community to attract both local and national recognition for artists who live here and those we can attract to relocate here to share their talents. With the data we have gleaned using the CVI, we can now pose new questions and find new ways to address the needs of artists and arts organizations while we define our unique voice in the region, the state, and the world.

Art means BUSINESS (continued)

recycled or reused materials. Steadily growing in popularity and impact over the last eight years, the 2013 event is slated to host 125 artists, up from 72 in 2009. In its first year, the event accommodated about 2,500 guests over the full weekend. 2012 saw approximately 20,000 guests. Visitors to the festival have come from out of state, and as far as Australia, England and France. Those international visitors didn't have the festival as their primary destination, but it contributed to their positive experience of the area. Unlike other festivals that operate from a profit perspective, the Recycled Arts Festival is a project of county government and uses a combination of sponsorships, booth fees and partnerships to cover festival costs. This event exists to educate and entertain, while also boosting the local economy by directing visitors to Vancouver's downtown and developing a receptive buying audience for local artists and artisans. Local hotels see a boost in occupancy, and local restaurants and businesses have greater foot traffic from the increases in tourism in Vancouver's downtown core.

Vancouver Symphony Orchestra

In September 2013, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra marks its 35th season bringing the world's greatest music to Southwest Washington. With an internationally known



Photo credit: Paul Quackenbush

conductor and guest performers, the symphony averages 800 guests at each of 12 performances per year, featuring 70-75 musicians. In addition, nine chamber music concerts per year feature up to 10 musicians.

Since 1999, the symphony has been performing in the largest appropriate venue in the community, Skyview High School's concert hall. The non-profit symphony is a vital part of Clark County's arts economy. In addition to the arts-related jobs and musical employment the symphony generates, its concerts are eagerly anticipated throughout the community and are the source of additional, hospitality-related income for businesses in the area.

A part of the symphony's mission is to share the joy of music with Southwest Washington's youth, helping them understand and appreciate classical music. They promote young musicians through a Young Art music competition, and bring Musicians in the Schools programs to more than 2,000 youth.

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