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The University of Montana

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ARTS FUEL LOCAL AND STATE ECONOMIES, RESEARCHERS SAY

MISSOULA--

The nonprofits art industry has made surprisingly substantial impacts in Montana economies in the last several years, according to an article in the summer issue of the Montana Business Quarterly, recently published by The University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research.

Nonprofit art agencies support jobs, provide personal income, spend money in the community and generate revenue to local, state and federal governments, according to Barbara Koostra and Patricia Abdou-Diefenderfer, the authors of "Artful Business: Economic Impact of Local Nonprofits." Arts agencies also add economic value by enriching other businesses, revitalizing neighborhoods and drawing tourists, the article said.

The article was based on a study conducted by the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit organization that represents the nation's 3,800 local arts agencies. Investigators surveyed arts activities in 33 towns and cities across America -- including two in Montana -- tracking jobs, income, revenues, and expenditures over a three-year period. Missoula and Miles City were the two Montana cities represented in the study, which grouped communities by population. Missoula and Miles City were placed in Group 1, with populations under 100,000.

"In Group 1 communities, nonprofits generated an annual average of 34 full-time equivalent

-more-

jobs and \$637,589 in personal income, the article said. "That's an average annual FTE wage of just over \$18,700 -- hardly extravagant, but better than many service industries."

Group 1 communities also paid an annual average of more than \$22,000 in local and government taxes and locally spent \$1 million of their estimated total annual expenditures of \$1.3 million.

Arts jobs may not pay as well as mining or timber industry jobs, but they're in growing rather than declining sectors of the economy, the authors said. "Moreover, arts industry jobs are less likely to pollute, less likely to be exported overseas, and more likely to enrich the overall quality of life in Montana's communities."

Other topics in this issue of the Montana Business Quarterly include NAFTA and how Montana businesses can best take advantage of international trade, and a community profile of Lewistown. "Letters to the Editor" is a new feature in the magazine, and signed letters from 300 to 500 words are welcome. Send letters to: Marlene Nesary, Editor, The Montana Business Quarterly, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, The University of Montana 59812. The quarterly is available for \$6.

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