

Local arts benefit Clatsop County

Study says arts, culture brings in millions in household income, supports hundreds of jobs

By **KALIA NEAL**
FOR COAST WEEKEND

A study reveals the nonprofit arts-and-culture sector was a \$13.7 million industry in 2015 for Clatsop County, generating almost \$1.3 million in local and state government revenue and \$6.7 million in household income for local residents, while supporting 359 full-time equivalent jobs.

The 2016 Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 study was conducted by Americans for the Arts to document the economic impact of the nonprofit arts and culture industry in 341 communities and regions nationwide, according to its website.

The Arts Council of Clatsop County, formed in 2014, conducted the Clatsop County study.

"This survey was suggested to help us get a handle on what we were trying to accomplish," said Robin Risley, Cannon Beach representative for the Arts Council of Clatsop County.

"Our goal was trying to find a way to quantify the arts," said photographer Don Frank, Chair of the Arts Council of Clatsop County and Seaside representative. "We actually put a value to it, which shows it's contribution to the community in dollars."

This was the first time that rural areas participated; therefore, this was Clatsop County's first time conducting this study.

"At the time, I didn't know what to expect. I'm pleased the results show what a lot of us believe," Frank said. "It's not just being a painter or a potter," he continued. "There are almost 400 jobs in the county for non-artists that the arts and the supporters of the arts help create."



PHOTO BY ERICK BENGEL
Robin Risley



FACEBOOK.COM
Don Frank



FILE PHOTO
Dwight Caswell

Representatives of the Arts Council of Clatsop County, including Astoria representative Dwight Caswell, said it is important to note that only nonprofit arts and cultural organizations participated in this study. If for-profit organizations were also included, he said, it would be a "reasonable assumption" to say the figures in the findings would be at least double.

"We're no longer just a fishing and logging area. Arts are making an impact," Caswell, a photographer and Coast Weekend contributor, said.

Of the 27 nonprofit arts and culture organizations in Clatsop County, 22 participated in the study. Among them were Cannon Beach Arts Association, Astoria Visual Arts and the Seaside Museum & Historical Society. Seven hundred eighty-seven audience-intercept surveys were collected from attendees to nonprofit arts and cultural events, exhibitions and performances.

In every category the study analyzed, Clatsop County was above average compared to the median of similar regions.

Of the 22 nonprofit arts and culture organizations, the aggregate attendance to their events was 160,816 during 2015, and of those attendees, the total audience expenditures for events related to the organizations was \$10.8 million, excluding the cost of

admission.


The study also reveals that tourism has a positive economic impact on Clatsop County. Total event-related expenditures for nonresidents was \$8.4 million while local residents was \$2.3 million. "Nonresident attendees spent an average of 327 percent more per person than local attendees," according to the study.

"We didn't have any idea at all what the results would be, because there's so many different areas of the community," Risley said. "I think the art culture in the whole county is pretty lively right now."

Risley said she hopes that, with the survey results, community members will know the real value of what the arts bring to Clatsop County.

Caswell said art "improves the culture of the area" and "makes more opportunities for enrichment for our lives."

In 2015, the Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 found that the nonprofit arts industry generated \$166.3 billion of economic activity nationwide, according to the Clatsop study. A result of that was \$27.5 billion generated in revenue to local, state and federal governments while supporting 4.6 million jobs.

"What I love about the arts is that it's an expression of ideas," Frank said. "It's a dialogue that is happening, and it's really strong in Clatsop County." 

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Carr has served in various volunteer roles — actor, janitor, set painter, stagehand — and even directed "Junior Shanghaied" for kids, "Sleeping Beauty" and "The Jungle Book."

"The beauty of community theater is that everyone gets involved. Theater lets you think on your feet and act independently but also within a group," Carr said. "And when you nail it on stage, there is nothing like hearing the applause. Nothing like it."

New visions

Dena Tuving, an Astor Street veteran and the company's new board president, is another volunteer who has helped keep the theater alive.

Tuving acts in the show as well, sharing the role of "Vivian" with Patricia "Trish" Von Vintage. Doubling up certain roles — some-



PHOTO BY JOSHUA BESSEX

The 2015 cast of "Shanghaied in Astoria" lets out a cheer on stage.


times even triple casting them — prevents the actors from getting burned out during the 10-week season.

Asked what keeps her involved, Tuving said: "The people."

"It's a family. It's the arts — the right brain / left brain outlet," she said. "We need the arts in our community."

The company has new

leadership and fresh ideas, and hopes to diversify its productions, Brown said. "But 'Shanghaied' will always be the backbone of this theater."

The show runs through Saturday, Sept. 9, with performances Thursday through Saturday, and a few Sunday matinées. For more information, visit astorstreecompany.com. 


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