



NEWS RELEASE

SALINA CELEBRATES A FLOURISHING ARTS AND CULTURE SCENE WITH A POSITIVE ECONOMIC IMPACT

(Salina, KS 10-23)

Salina, Kansas, renowned for its deep-rooted appreciation of the arts and culture, stands as a shining example of the profound influence the creative world can have on a community. With an enduring history from its founding, this vibrant city continues to nurture a diverse cultural landscape that enriches the lives of its residents and entices visitors from near and far.

In a recently published report, "The Arts in Salina: A Catalyst for Prosperity and Creativity," presented to the Salina City Commission by Salina Arts & Humanities Department Executive Director Brad Anderson, the report sheds light on the remarkable impact of arts and culture in Salina, both economically and socially. This comprehensive report delves into the city's current arts landscape, educational initiatives, public art programs, the importance of private and public support, and the economic contributions of the arts, highlighting the city's unique position as a standard-bearer for other communities.

Current Arts Landscape in Salina

Salina boasts a rich tapestry of cultural offerings, including the exceptional Theatre Salina, the Salina Symphony, and the Salina Art Center, among other gems like The Garage, Rolling Hills Zoo, Stiefel Theatre, and the Smoky Hill Museum, contribute significantly to the city's diverse cultural identity.

Public art initiatives, such as SculptureTour Salina and the Boom! Street Art and Mural Festival, have transformed Salina's public spaces, enhancing its visual appeal and infusing art into capital projects. Even the USD 305 school board has embraced the integration of art into their building designs, creating dynamic spaces for students and the public. Salina's exceptionalism lies in its establishment of a standalone department of arts and culture within the city government, a testament to the City's unwavering commitment to the arts, serving as an example for others to follow.

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CONTACT:
Brad Anderson
Executive Director
(785) 309-5770
brad.anderson@salina.org

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Cultural Services Build Community

Salina Arts & Humanities is a beacon of arts education, offering a multitude of initiatives and programs for the community. The Arts Infusion Program is a valuable resource for cultural education opportunities, benefiting students and businesses alike. “The breadth of offerings by Arts & Humanities and other cultural education partners featured in the guide serves as a nice tool for business and workforce recruitment,” said Anderson.

Initiatives such as the 7th Grade Culture Crawl introduce students to Salina's cultural venues, enriching their education and fostering an appreciation for the arts. Visiting artists and local teaching artists enrich the school curriculum and provide engaging programs for the community.

The public art program, known as Community Art & Design (CAD), has seen substantial growth, with an increasing number of privately and publicly funded murals and sculptures, enriching the city's landscape. These initiatives have been widely embraced by both residents and visitors, as survey results from late 2022 indicate. Seventy-three percent of the survey respondents reported that they felt their interests were reflected in the public artwork around Salina and ninety percent said they had seen the downtown murals. Public comments included critical and constructive remarks that the SAH staff will continue to review and address.

Economic Impact of the Arts

An analysis of economic contributions from arts and culture in Salina, based on data from Americans for the Arts recently released “Arts & Economic Prosperity VI” (AEP VI), and direct reporting from eight organizations receiving City of Salina funding, reveals the significant economic activity generated by the nonprofit arts and culture sector nationally. Audience spending, which is substantial, significantly contributes to the local economy, with out-of-county visitors representing half of the audience attendance.

The arts play a vital role in personal well-being, creativity, and the development of livable communities. They are integral to the community's quality of life and its economy. Half of local respondents in the AEP report stated they would have attended a cultural event in another community if it wasn't available locally. “This further illustrates the importance of arts programming in Salina which keeps residents spending locally”, said Anderson and he added, “Not only does it help the local economy, but strong arts programming also creates a sense of community pride.”

The Arts Are Significant in Salina's Future

The arts hold a cherished place in Salina's community, contributing to economic growth, community pride, and a unique sense of place. Collaboration among arts and cultural organizations is crucial, with funding opportunities expected to increase with state-level support. Post-COVID attendance numbers are improving for some organizations but have not fully returned to 2019 levels.

The arts will continue to play a significant role in shaping Salina's future. The city's creative workforce and diverse cultural offerings will attract and retain talent while enriching the community. Artists and arts organizations will collaborate to address challenges in workforce and community development and help keep Salina citizens spending locally. Private initiatives and public art projects have brought enthusiasm for Salina's future. The city recognizes the importance and value of the arts, setting an enviable example for other communities.

About Salina Arts & Humanities

Salina Arts & Humanities is a driving force behind Salina's thriving arts and culture scene. The department is committed to clarifying its role as a local and regional community resource partner to better serve the community. Their commitment to arts education, public art, and community service has a positive impact on the city's economy and quality of life. They will continue to advocate for the arts and humanities and foster the growth of the creative economy. Anderson's full report and links to the economic prosperity report can be found on the home page of www.salinaarts.com or by contacting Salina Arts & Humanities at 785-309-5770.

For needed accommodations, please call Amanda Morris at Salina Arts & Humanities at 785-309-5770 between 8:00 a.m. - Noon and 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. Every effort will be made to accommodate known disabilities. For material or speech access, please call at least five working days prior to the event.

Salina Arts & Humanities, a department of the City of Salina, has served a unique role as an arts advocate and resource partner since 1966. The Smoky Hill River Festival, Horizons Grants Program, Smoky Hill Museum, Arts Infusion Program in schools, Community Art & Design, and Creative Connections are among the programs of Salina Arts & Humanities, located at 211 W. Iron Avenue in Salina.

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**City of Salina
300 W. Ash
P.O. Box 736
Salina, KS 67401
www.salina-ks.gov**