



**To: Local Arts Network Members**

**From: Jay Dick, Senior Director of State and Local Government Affairs**

**Re: Public Partnerships End of Year Update**

**Date: January 14, 2020**

I hope everyone had a wonderful Holiday Season and a great New Year! Before we get into 2020, I wanted to give you an update on Americans for the Arts public partner program for the last few months of 2019.

It has been a busy year with some great expansion of activities. Americans for the Arts has reconnected with ICMA, the International City/County Managers Association and has formed a new partnership with the Western Governors Association. More on these later.

Americans for the Arts continues to be the only nonprofit arts and cultural organization to partner with these groups of elected officials representing the interests of you, our members. These groups represent all levels of government and Americans for the Arts is pleased to be able to impact their decision-making processes around the arts and culture. Further, we stand out in comparison to the corporate and other major organizations that work with these organizations and even then, we have a larger, more public role than most of these other companies/organizations.

So, as our members, thank you for your support of these activities which not only brings greater visibility to the arts and culture, but more resources.

## Western Governors Association



*Governors at the WGA Winter meeting in Las Vegas from L-R: Hawaii, Utah, Oregon, WGA Staff, North Dakota, Nevada, Idaho, and Colorado. Not pictured: Arizona, Oklahoma and Montana.*

I am pleased to announce our most recent partnership, the [Western Governors Association](#) (WGA). WGA represents the 20 states and territories west of the North Dakota/Minnesota line drawn south to include Texas.

Earlier this year, Americans for the Arts began a dialogue with WGA staff to identify ways to partner together around a topic. Currently WGA does not have any formal statements or resolutions regarding the arts and culture. Americans for the Arts will correct this in 2020.

The WGA Foundation, a subset of WGA manages "[Celebrate the West](#)," a regional art competition that challenges high school students to create works inspired by their state. The annual visual arts challenge, which launched in 2016, is open to high school students in the states and territories served by WGA. Winning artists receive cash prizes and their work is displayed at WGA's Annual Meeting and on the association website. Americans for the Arts and WGA seek to build off this project by identifying and seeing funding for a program(s) to use the arts and culture to benefit the residents of our western states. I encourage you to stay tuned as 2020 gets underway and we are able to identify specific projects to pursue.

I was though, able to attend my first WGA meeting which took place in Las Vegas on December 13 and 14<sup>th</sup>. Twelve of the 20 Governors attended this meeting and I was able to speak to 11 of them.

I want to point out Oregon Governor Kate Brown who lamented from the podium about how groups talk about STEM and not STEAM. I was able to thank her that evening at the reception and she thanked Americans for the Arts for getting involved in WGA. I also had great conversations with the Hawaii,

Utah, Nevada and Colorado Governors. Each of the 20 governors from WGA states received a welcome packet from me that contained a personalized letter, information about the arts in their states and general research, etc. If you live in one of these states, please feel free to follow up with your Governor and give me a call if you want more information.

**Coming up:** Americans for the Arts will work with WGA staff to identify projects that we can partner with each other. Additionally, Americans for the Arts will attend the WGA Annual Meeting in Medora, ND June 29 – July 2.

### **National Lt. Governors Association**



*Lt. Governors pose for a group photo at their Business Meeting in Kansas City, MO.*

NLGA hosted their Winter/Business Meeting in Kansas City, MO in early December. As usual, the arts and culture made several appearances.

Nineteen Lt Governors attended the conference including two new Lt. Governors. Alabama Lt Gov Will Ainsworth, who was elected last year, attended his first NLGA meeting. Kentucky Lt. Governor Jacqueline Coleman was elected last month. I made welcome packets for them which included information about Americans for the Arts, our research, Creative Forces/AFTA Military and Arts Program, our social impact explorer, etc. Lt. Gov Ainsworth is a small business man who is all about jobs and the economy. Lt. Gov Coleman is an elementary school teacher. I was able to have conversations with all of the Lt. Governors updating them on our work.



For the second year, AFTA had a color ad on the back cover of the meeting agenda book. It is a nice addition and multiple Lt. Governors mentioned it to me. The ad highlights the public leadership in the arts award winners for 2019

Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser of Louisiana gave an update to the group about our State Arts and Humanities summit which occurred in October in New Orleans. I prepared talking points for him and put together a little slide show of photos. Both SD and DE Lt Governors were there to hear his report (and hopefully feel the pressure to put on a fabulous state summit themselves.)

**Coming up:** Americans for the Arts will attend the NLGA Federal/State Legislative Conference which will be in Washington DC on March 25-27. Further, we continue to work with Delaware and South Dakota to plan their state's Arts and Military Summit which is part of our NLGA Arts Initiative.

## **National Association of Counties**

As you know, Americans for the Arts and NACo recently concluded our two-year Creative Counties Initiative that was supported by an National Endowment for the Arts' Our Town Grant. NACo and Americans for the Arts Staff worked with 6 counties across the county and held two workshops for any NACo member/conference attendees. As I mentioned in my last memo, we have been awarded a second Our Town grant and are happy to continue this program.

The Creative Counties Placemaking Challenge **invites counties with populations of less than 150,000 to form multidisciplinary teams** to compete in a challenge competition to identify and strengthen ways to integrate arts into solutions to local challenges. If you would like to put together a team with your county's elected officials, please fill out this [application](#) before March 13<sup>th</sup>. As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

**Coming up:** NACo will host its 2020 Legislative Conference in Washington, DC next February where Americans for the Arts will participate in their Arts and Culture Committee meeting.

## **National Conference of State Legislatures**



NCSL held its Fall Forum in Phoenix, AZ with about 1,500 attendees. I had the pleasure of presenting the 2019 Public Leadership in the Arts Award to Virginia Speaker-Designee Eileen Filler Corn at their plenary lunch session. Alas the Speaker was not able to join us but did send a video. NCSL and I will be traveling to Richmond for Virginia Arts Day on January 29 to re-present this award. During my 10 minutes, I talked about the arts as part of the economy and as part of many different topics that legislators are concerned (our social impact explorer). Further, while at their meeting, I was able to connect with their newish Executive Director, Tim Storey, their DC Office Director Molly Ramsdell, NCSL President Robin Vos (Wisconsin Speaker) and Martha Wigton, NCSL Staff Chair and Director of the Georgia House Budget and Research Office. I always try very hard to maintain great working relationships with association staff and member leaders alike to ensure strong, lasting partnerships.

**Coming up:** Americans for the Arts will participate at NCSL's Annual Conference in Indianapolis, IN August 10-13.

## ICMA (City/County Managers Association)

### ICMA/Brownfields Conference



As I reported last time, Americans for the Arts was invited to organize a panel discussion at the ICMA/ EPA Brownfields Conference which was held in Los Angeles in early December.

The panel was on using the arts for economic development, specifically how the arts can bring people back to previously contaminated/condemned areas. Joining me was Danielle Brazell, our board member and the General Manager of the Los Angeles Office of Arts and Culture along with Christopher Hawthorn, Chief Design Officer for the City of Los Angeles.

I thought this was a great panel as I started off with a 20,000 foot view of the arts, then Danielle offered a 1000 foot view with Los Angeles specific examples and then Christopher talked about a specific project, the Taylor Railyard remediation program and the city's plans on turning that area into greenspace with a heavy arts and culture overlay.

Additionally, ICMA had asked me for ideas for a keynote speaker, one from the cultural world who was a dynamic, inspirational speaker. I recommended our board member, Vijay Gupta who accepted and spoke on the next day. While I was not able to be in the audience for his keynote, ICMA staff reported that Vijay gave a powerful presentation leaving many with tears in their eyes.



In addition to our well-attended panel and an arts general session speaker, we also got a feature article in their monthly magazine which was in each of the 2,000 attendee's bags. The photo to the left is the first two pages of the 5 page article which talked about how the arts are an economic development tool.

**Coming up:** I will be working with ICMA to establish an award for a city/county manager.

## **The United States Conference of Mayors**

Americans for the Arts and The United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) will host the annual Mayors Arts Awards Breakfast at USCM's Winter meeting in Washington, DC on January 24, 2020, where we will co-present the 2020 Public Leadership in the Arts Awards. We will be honoring a Governor, two Mayors and citizen artists. Stay tuned for the winners.



In other mayor related news, I got the chance to meet Quinton Lucas, the new mayor of Kansas City, MO. Mayor Lucas spoke at a recent NLGA meeting I attended. I was able to talk him about our work with USCM and showed him a copy of our Public Leadership in the Arts Awards ad and told him I hope to see him listed in the future. To my surprise, he showed a lot of interest and took the agenda/ad with him. "Mayor Q" as he is known, is a young, dynamic leader, whom I think we will be seeing a lot of in the future.

For more information, please contact **Nina Ozlu Tunceli**, our Chief Counsel of Government and Public Affairs at [ntunceli@artsusa.org](mailto:ntunceli@artsusa.org).

### **Coming up:**

Mayors Arts Breakfast at the USCM's Winter meeting in Washington, DC, which takes on January 22-24, 2020. Additionally, USCM will be again joining Americans for the Arts and the Arts Action Fund in presenting ArtsVote 2020 forums at both the Democratic National Convention in Milwaukee and the Republican National Convention in Charlotte in the summer of 2020.

## **National League of Cities**

No major news for this edition for NLC

**Coming up:** I continue to work with NCL leadership to establish an award honoring a city councilperson in 2020.

## An Emmy?



Lastly, Americans for the Arts was awarded an Emmy for our work...

Well, not really, but it was a fun photo to hold one of the Emmys that the Hallmark Channel has received over the years. This one was on display at the Hallmark headquarters in Kansas City which NLGA visited.

Thanks for reading and never hesitate to reach out should you have any questions. -Jay

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