



Association of Professional Theatres of Newfoundland and Labrador Publishers Association of Newfoundland and Labrador

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Provincial sectoral arts organizations collectively highlight importance and economic impact of our diverse arts and cultural industry

Consortium gathered to identify key common messages, and call for professional artists and groups to stand with public to protect investment in arts and culture

February 18, 2016 (St. John's, NL) – The provincial sectoral organizations representing visual art, music, film and television, dance, writing, publishing, theatre, and craft recently met in response to the ongoing government renewal initiative. The groups gathered to share their collective experiences with one another, having attended public engagement sessions, and to outline a series of key points on the importance of the arts and cultural sector.

Each sectoral organization's executive director or designate presented the points they had made during the public engagement sessions they attended. Professional artists who are members of the organizations also attended the sessions to echo the importance and value of the arts and cultural sector in general, and as an economic driver.

Many highlighted the fact that financial investment in the arts and cultural sector is already low, especially when compared to similarly sized populations, and the impact of the professional output of the arts and cultural sector goes far beyond that investment in terms of returned provincial revenue.

Given how strategically stretched existing budgets in the arts and cultural sector already are, any further reductions would inevitably result in a spike of out-migration that would swiftly shrink our provincial professional artistic talent, drying up Newfoundland and Labrador cultural identity.

Emerging artistic talent must be nurtured in this province, otherwise those professionals will shift to other parts of Canada and the world where they will be supported with a network of people and resources that recognize and understand their significant value to industry development and society as a whole.

Emerging and established artistic professionals charged with the preservation, creation, and appreciation of Newfoundland and Labrador culture at home and abroad will move on to other places and fulfill those roles elsewhere – contributing to the growth of industry in other jurisdictions.

The export and recognition of Newfoundland and Labrador artistic talent has an indelible effect on our province's tourism industry, which as of 2011 was worth over \$1 billion according to the provincial government. As of 2010, the Department of Finance estimated that tourism activity supported \$204 million in labour income (or 1.8% of all provincial labour income for that year) for 10,760 people. Much of that tourism industry activity is catalyzed by the hard work and efforts of the arts and culture sector.

One of the reasons people come to Newfoundland and Labrador is because they read about it in a book, saw it on the big screen or television, enjoyed visual exhibitions or music by its artists, or saw a stage show about it in another country. All of that professional artistic content needs to be conceived, workshopped, created, and ultimately produced in a final version before distribution or export.

Once that arts and cultural product is out, it works for Newfoundland and Labrador – attracting local populations to explore new parts of the province, many others from afar to discover it, and assisting corporations in attracting and retaining professionals in various industry sectors.

The sectoral organizations support large memberships as they strive to create and share their artistic work, and agencies like ArtsNL are the research and development arm for our arts and cultural sector.

If sectoral organizations and ArtsNL are ill-equipped to foster and promote the creation and enjoyment of the arts, then a constantly renewable resource's potential will be limited and wither, leaving potential revenue and growth within other sectors stunted as a result.

The arts and cultural sector also has strong connections with sectors such as health and business. Partnerships that see arts-based creative and innovative approaches to team building, increased productivity, and sound management in the corporate community already exist. There are direct connections between an individual's quality of life and their health, both mental and physical, relative to their level of engagement with the arts. When the general public interacts with artistic content, it leads to a happier, healthier community and a stronger sense of identity.

The arts and cultural sector is a driver of provincial economic activity and revenue, and an industry in and of itself. An industry that is labour intensive, provides opportunity for youth, and creates job diversification in the province.

The consortium of provincial sectoral organizations calls upon their collective membership in partnership with the public to ensure these seven key points are brought to the forefront as the government renewal initiative continues to unfold:

1. Financial investment in the arts and cultural sector is already low and the impact of the professional work and output of the arts and cultural sector goes far beyond that investment in terms of returned provincial revenue.
2. Retention of our province's arts and cultural professionals, especially young emerging artists, is necessary to further economic development.
3. Leveraging organizational partnerships is important.
4. Export and recognition of Newfoundland and Labrador artistic talent and the impact it has on supplementing tourism is directly tied to the level of revenue tourism generates for the province.
5. Links between the arts and cultural sector and other sectors can and should be made to improve levels of efficiency and success in those other sectors.
6. Dollars directed to the arts and cultural sector are investments.
7. ArtsNL is the research and development agency for the arts and cultural sector.
(And, in the case of music, MusicNL)

These key points should be communicated to government representatives, and in response to the renewal strategy's opportunities for feedback whenever possible. Members of the provincial sectoral organizations and the general public are encouraged to visit <http://www.gov.nl.ca/ourfiscalfuture/index.html> for information on how to forward their concerns that the arts and cultural sector be protected, or email OurFiscalFuture@gov.nl.ca, call 1-844-805-3494, tweet @OPE_GovNL, or contact their MHA directly.

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