



DOUG ALLEN/THE ENQUIRER

Arnold and Rae Knack from Angola, Ind., enjoy Joshua Kronk's artwork displayed in Arcadia Brewing Company. The show was part of Friday's Art Walk in downtown Battle Creek.

More cultural events, healthier economy

Survey: Arts important in everyday life

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The Enquirer



HANNAH REEL/FOR THE ENQUIRER

Kindergarten students from Battle Creek Public Schools examine herbs during a nature hike at Lella Arboretum. The students rounded out their after-school trip with a visit to Kingman Museum.

STORYCHAT

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past three years.

- About 67 percent of Michigan respondents hold library cards and 59 percent visit a library annually.

- 66 percent of Michigan respondents who took a pleasure trip more than 50 miles from their home had in-state destinations. About 17 percent said cultural tourism was their only purpose for the trip.

sumerism is only skimming the surface of its economic potential.

"Much of the work that's done in this sector is pretty invisible in terms of not being documented," said Betty Boone, director of HAL's Office of Cultural Economic Development. "One of the things we're going to do is ... let people know that arts and culture represents another arrow in the economic quiver we can use to spur and drive economic wealth in their community."

Boone said she hopes the findings will become a valuable planning tool for arts organizations. Eventually, a component allow-

To the average arts supporter, a ticket to the symphony represents a night of auditory ecstasy. For local and statewide developers, however, the ticket represents a pass to economic revival.

The Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries (HAL) recently released findings that offer a comprehensive look at the effects of cultural consumerism on the state's economy.

The Great Lakes Arts, Culture, and Heritage Participation Survey of more than 6,000 households included residents from Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Minnesota and Wisconsin to better understand arts-related spending. Some key findings included:

- 70 percent of respondents participated in some type of visual, performing or literary arts or crafts lessons as children.

- 37 percent of self-identified professional artists said art was their only source of income.

- 44 percent of respondents attended at least one musical performance in the past year, paying for the trip.

Arts events could boost economy

ARTS, FROM 1A

will be implemented to help organizations better serve their target audiences.

Locally, amateur sports remains the most popular reason for visiting Calhoun County, but arts and cultural attractions play another important role, said Dwight Butt, president of the Calhoun County Visitor and Convention Bureau.

"If you're coming for a little league baseball game, you might spend four hours at Bailey Park, and what are you going to do with the other 10 hours in the day? That's where arts and culture or entertainment attractions come in," Butt said.

Much of the study parallels what the Arts and Industry Council already found to be true in Calhoun County, said AIC Executive Director Kathy Eftekhari.

The 2006 Awareness and Perception survey, conducted by the AIC, showed that 92 percent of Calhoun County residents felt art activities and cultural events were important to quality of life. Eftekhari said many residents were unaware, however, of the county's wealth of cultural opportunities, thus sparking a countywide marketing campaign in fall of 2006.

She said she hopes HAL's survey will draw statewide attention from residents, business owners and law-

PARTIAL RESULTS OF THE RECENT

ARTS SURVEY

To view full results of the Great Lakes Arts, Culture and Heritage Survey or the 2006 United Arts Council of Calhoun County Awareness and Perception Survey, visit this story online at battlecreekenquirer.com.

Attendance of Michigan respondents over the past year:

- 36 percent attended a theatrical performance.
- 15 percent attended a dance performance.
- 46 percent attended a musical performance.

Participation of Michigan respondents over the past three years:

- 13 percent participated in at least one type of performing art.
- 25 percent participated in at least one type of visual arts.
- 3 percent considered themselves professional artists.
- 78 percent of professional artists received some type of formal arts-related education.
- 29 percent purchased a piece of art.

Memberships, affiliations and donations to arts, heritage and cultural organizations of

makers in light of ongoing state funding cuts for arts and cultural programs.

"When measured on the state level, arts are perceived as a luxury, not a necessity," she said. "The average citizen doesn't recognize the true economic impact of arts and culture."

Friday night's "Fall into the Arts" art walk, sponsored by the Downtown Partnership and several arts organizations, is an example of how arts and businesses merge to boost the local economy.

Arts and culture has been a vital part of efforts to revitalize the downtown area for several years, said Kathleen Eriksen, downtown development director for the Downtown Partnership.

Craig Ruff, chairman of the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, said more than 100,000 Michigan residents are employed in the cultural sector.

Vibrant arts and cultural communities can be an avenue to keeping young, talented minds in-state, Ruff

Michigan respondents:

- 9 percent were affiliated with an organization.
- 15 percent donated money to an organization.
- 8 percent provided volunteer services.

Arts education and exposure during childhood of Michigan respondents:

- 60 percent participated in some type of visual, performing or literary arts or crafts lessons or classes as children.
- 17 percent live in households where children had taken any type of art lesson or class over the past year.

Arts and culture-related tourism of Michigan respondents:

- 64 percent took a pleasure trip to a destination more than 50 miles from home in the past year.
- 66 percent took a pleasure trip within the state and 71 percent went to another state.
- 17 percent said cultural tourism was the only purpose of their trip.
- 40 percent visited historical sites on a trip.

Source: *The Great Lakes Arts, Culture and Heritage Participation Survey*

said, because new businesses often want to locate in those types of areas as well.

"Michigan can't yet be Manhattan or Lincoln Park," Ruff said. "But to the extent that cities can provide some semblance, we know that we will retain more people put through colleges and that is a key factor in keeping talent in Michigan."

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