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**Art and Culture Good for Business in Palm Beach County**

*Americans for the Arts Announces Economic Impact of Cultural Sector Tops \$633.4 Million;  
Arts Organizations Support 14,212 Jobs; 5.4 Million Annual Attendance*

Lake Worth, December 7 – Palm Beach County business and cultural leaders came together today to reveal that the cultural sector in The Palm Beaches attracts not only tourists, but also business. Americans for the Arts revealed findings from the national Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 (AEP5), at a luncheon at the Kravis Center co-hosted by the Cultural Council of Palm Beach County and the Business Development Board of Palm Beach County. AEP5 documents the economic contributions of the nonprofit cultural sector nationally, as well as in 341 study regions. The Cultural Council sponsored the study for Palm Beach County and for five of the county's largest cities: Boca Raton, Delray Beach, Jupiter, Lake Worth and West Palm Beach.

Randy Cohen, vice president of research and policy at Americans for the Arts, presented the data. "By every measure, the results of AEP5 prove that the cultural sector in Palm Beach County generates significant economic activity, serves as a cornerstone of tourism and is an employment powerhouse."

The AEP5 study includes data from 79 cultural organizations in Palm Beach County. These results were combined with data from the 2015 Biennial Audience Survey that the Cultural Council conducts with 19 of the county's largest organizations through its Tourism Development Council grant program (Category B).

"Collectively, all culture-related spending in Palm Beach County totaled more than \$633.4 million during fiscal year 2015," added Cohen. "These findings show conclusively that the arts mean business in The Palm Beaches."

Key findings:

- Palm Beach County's nonprofit arts and cultural organizations spent a total of \$184.3 million during fiscal year 2015 (AEP5)
- The County's nonprofit arts audiences spent an additional \$161 million during fiscal year 2015 as a direct result of attending a cultural event, performance or exhibit (excluding the cost of admission) (AEP5)
- Total spending by the county's art audiences swells to \$449.1 million when all spending by cultural tourists who visited at least one of Palm Beach County's 19 largest organizations is considered, including non-arts purchases made by tourists who visit Palm Beach County specifically to attend arts and cultural venues and events (Biennial Cultural Tourism Study, 2015)
- Collectively, all culture-related spending in Palm Beach County totaled at least \$633.4 million during fiscal year 2015
- The art and culture industry supports 14,212 jobs in Palm Beach County
- The economic impact of the arts is more than the monies spent by residents in the communities. Cultural tourists spend money, as well. Thirty-four percent of attendees traveled from outside of the county. Their event-related spending was more than twice that of a local resident (\$47.57 v. \$23.44) (AEP5)

“We are enthusiastic about these results,” said Rena Blades, president and CEO of the Cultural Council. “Over the last five years since the AEP4 study was done, Palm Beach County has enjoyed very robust growth in economic impact of the arts and cultural sector. Leaders who care about community and economic vitality, growing tourism and attracting an innovative workforce can feel good about choosing to invest in arts and culture.”

“Palm Beach County is a magnet for companies who want to relocate to a business-friendly area with an excellent quality of life,” said Kelly Smallridge, president and CEO of the Business Development Board. “The rich art and culture in our county plays a critical role in shaping the physical and social character of our county. It also brings people together and creates an energetic vibe.”

The Cultural Council celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2018. Alexander W. Dreyfoos founded the Council in 1978 with a goal to create a calendar of local arts events that he could provide to prospective employees of his growing electronics company. Over its history, the Council has played an integral role in creating many of the county’s cultural institutions, including the Kravis Center, Armory Art Center and Center for Creative Education. Today, Palm Beach County boasts over 200 arts and culture organizations that host over 42,000 events annually.

Nationally, the AEP5 study found that the arts and cultural sector generated \$166.3 billion in economic activity in 2015 - \$63.8 billion in spending by arts and culture organizations and an additional \$102.5 billion in event-related spending by their audiences. This activity supported 4.6 million jobs and generated \$27.5 billion in government revenue.

#### **Note to Editors**

A copy of the AEP5 survey findings in Palm Beach County and five of the county’s largest cities is available at [palmbeachculture.com/advocacy](http://palmbeachculture.com/advocacy).

#### **About the Cultural Council of Palm Beach County**

The Cultural Council of Palm Beach County is the official support agency for arts and culture in The Palm Beaches, Florida’s Cultural Capital®. The Council provides grants to cultural organizations and professional artists, advocates for art and cultural funding, enhances local arts education, offers support services to foster growth of the sector and promotes cultural tourism.

The Cultural Council also serves as a venue for exhibitions and performances featuring artists who live or work in Palm Beach County, and provides additional programming at its headquarters in the historic Robert M. Montgomery, Jr. Building in Downtown Lake Worth. Also on the property are the Roe Green Uniquely Palm Beach Store featuring hand-crafted items by local artists; the Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf Visitor Information Center, a VISIT FLORIDA-designated Florida Certified Tourism Information Center; and the Project Space, an open-air garden for live music and large-scale sculpture.

The Cultural Council is open to the public from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. For more information, including a complete calendar of cultural activities in The Palm Beaches, visit [palmbeachculture.com](http://palmbeachculture.com).