

NEWS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SLIGHT MAJORITY OF PHOENIX MAYORAL, COUNCIL CANDIDATES FAVOR RESTORING ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING TO 2003 LEVELS

Most Candidates Support \$1 Per Capita For City Arts Grant Budgets

PHOENIX, Ariz. (July 27, 2011): A slight majority of Phoenix mayoral and city council candidates responding to a survey gauging their support for arts and culture were in favor of restoring arts and culture funding to 2003 levels for the next fiscal year.

The six-question survey developed by Arizona Action for the Arts, a statewide arts advocacy agency, was distributed to all 21 candidates for mayor and council seats. Ten candidates – three running for mayor and seven vying for council seats – responded to the survey. Eleven candidates, including mayoral candidates Peggy Neely, Anna Brennan and Jennifer Wright – did not respond.

Of those responding, mayoral candidates Wes Gullett and Greg Stanton supported an increase in funding to 2003 levels. Claude Mattox opposed the idea.

Council candidates Thelda Williams (District 1), Steven Gross (District 3), Brenda Sperduti (District 5) and Michael Nowakowski (District 7) were in favor of restoring to 2003 levels while Bill Barker (District 1), Bryan Jeffries (District 2) and Eric Sloan (District 5) were not.

The three candidates for mayor responding to the survey and most council candidates were in favor of supporting an increase in the city's arts grants budget to a level based on a national metric of \$1 per capita. The current Phoenix population of 1.4 million suggests an arts budget of \$1.4 million.

Mayoral candidates Gullett, Mattox and Stanton supported the idea. Council candidates Williams, Jeffries, Gross, Sperduti and Nowakowski were in favor. Barker and Sloan opposed it.

Every candidate supported continuation of the City of Phoenix-managed public art program which is funded by 1 percent of the city's capital improvement budget. The

program has earned international recognition for enhancing public facilities and spaces and for creating the city's identity and attractiveness as a desirable place to live.

"We were both encouraged and disappointed by the mayoral candidates' support for restoring the budget to 2003 levels," said Catherine "Rusty" Foley, executive director of Arizona Citizens/Action for the Arts. "At the same time, we believe the stronger backing for the concept of \$1 per capita bodes well, particularly as the economy improves. But, we were very disappointed that more than half of the candidates who received the survey did not take the time to respond. There's an interesting message there that the arts and cultural community should note."

[The entire survey can be reviewed by visiting the Arizona Citizens/Action for the Arts website.](#)

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About Arizona Citizens for the Arts and Arizona Action for the Arts

Arizona Citizens for the Arts (AZCA), formerly Arizonans for Cultural Development, is the nonprofit charitable arm of Arizona Action for the Arts. Arizona Citizens for the Arts increases discussion and awareness of the importance and impact of the arts in achieving quality of life, educational excellence and economic health for all Arizonans and Arizona enterprises. AZCA presents the annual **Governor's Arts Awards** in partnership with the Arizona Commission on the Arts and the Office of the Governor.

Arizona Action for the Arts incorporated in 2005 to promote public dialogue, public policy and legislation favorable to the arts to ensure and increase state funding for the arts, and to serve as a resource for expanding other public arts funding sources. For more information, visit www.azcitizensforthearts.org or call (602) 253-6535.