

State of the Arts Survey - Summary

Summaries of comments and recommendations follow the posted question or request. For a full, unedited version of the results (SOTA Blended 3-10), please contact the WAC at 307-777-7742.

41 surveys (35 completed) from Survey Monkey 3/15/10
27 surveys from Arts Summit 9/09

How are you involved in the arts?

7 Local arts council member/board member

17 Arts Administrator

16 Arts Educator

4 non-Arts Educator

26 Representative of an arts or cultural organization

17 Patron

18 Volunteer

23 Visual Artist

9 Literary Artist

10 Performing Artist

Other: folk artist; gallery owner; tribal grants writer; Main street community; business consultant to artists; public library programmer; coloring book designer; studio space owner; WAV board; educator

List others arts opportunities that you would appreciate having in your community.

The principal request was for a designated year round inclusive arts center with spaces for performances and exhibits as well as rehearsal and studio spaces. The need for space went beyond presenting to include places to gather for meetings, informal/impromptu slams, living/working quarters and classes for all ages. A local arts council was the second most requested item. A council could meet some of the other listed needs: more opportunities for local performing and visual artists; film; community theater; better advertizing and coordination of local events; and more festivals, festivals and festivals. Finally, requests for more touring programs, traveling exhibits, 1% for art for school buildings, financial support to bring in more expensive touring groups, and partnerships with downtown business were mentioned to a lesser degree.

Describe the value of the arts in your community.

Answers were given in qualitative and quantitative styles. The quantifiable tended toward the negative including lack of attendance, limited variety, and little support for local artists. The qualitative examples were primarily positive as illustrated by this list of adjectives: incalculable; immeasurable; priceless; sacred; integral; god-like gift; invaluable; undervalued; and undeniably underrepresented. Many listed arts' value as building community by providing different perspectives, offering a chance to know one another, allowing for interaction, and reflecting the attitudes and imagination of various groups. Clearly those surveyed value the positive impact the arts have on Wyoming and are discouraged when those values aren't recognized and supported in their community.

What services and/or resources (other than money) should the WAC provide?

Recommendations came in four categories: services for artists; services for organizations; products; and events. Multiple people requested the following resources: hard data on the

economic impact of the arts to present to elected leaders and city officials; a listing of statewide art shows/festivals; a WAC-run gallery; links to additional local, regional and national granting or supporting agencies; and more opportunities to gather for brainstorming ideas and solutions. Artists need more time to connect with each other, better information about presenting venues, and professional development to compete on a regional and national level. One recommendation was to increase IAPD's (\$500) to the size of the McKnight Fellowship (\$25,000).

Several requested the need for more grant funds or easier web access to the grants system. Local/regional meetings and in-depth training were requested by both organizations and artists. The request for more arts to be integrated into city/county government appeared repeatedly.

Specific requests included: adding feedback about roster artists to the website; create a 'loan an artist' program linking visual artists to town projects; a database of artists traveling in the vicinity of Wyoming; encourage UW to develop a Missoula Theater program; and a Feast of the Arts – a festival template for communities to connect local arts with local foods.

Many suggestions were for services the WAC already provides, indicating that we may need to better articulate what we already do. These requests include: grants training; showcase venue for presenters/performers (WyAA); work across boundaries such as art/health; and art/diversity (Access); small grant category for small organizations (ongoing grants); increase board/staff visibility through travel; train arts specialist (summer AE classes); grants assistance to underserved organization/audiences (Access); recognized traditional Wyoming artists (Folk & Traditional Arts); decrease grant match (ongoing); develop a website for folk arts (Folk & Traditional Arts); and better communication to share knowledge and resources (blog, twitter).

1. Have the arts in your community have been impacted due to the economic downturn?

Yes -41 No – 11

Please explain.

Positive comments: Johnson Co. has OK funding, the recent jobless are now pursuing art careers, audiences are attending events closer to home, and this has been an opportunity to re-evaluate an organization's scope of work.

Negative comments: donations, sponsorships and city funding are all down due to the need to focus on basic needs; sales, attendance and volunteerism down as well; programs and staff cut, facilities/galleries closing; construction of planned facilities cut.

Of note: 3-4 responded that there is so little art in community to begin with, that there is little obvious impact.

2. Are the arts and creativity taken seriously in Wyoming? Yes – 32 No – 15

Please explain.

Positive comments: Wyoming has great art; lots of artists live in WY; WAC does great job; high number of artists per capita; we have kept arts in the schools; Governor's Arts Awards shows 'yes;' good in Weston Co.

Mixed: Little representation in smaller towns; not by economic and energy people; those who love art do; only a small dedicated group does; most are ignorant of the Wyoming arts scene; if

there is an arts center in a community, it is; quality can always improve; art administrators need to take it to the next level (grants for training needed)

Negative: arts treated as fluff, fringe, luxury, second tier; Wyoming is known only for western and wildlife art; arts take a backseat to sports

3. Are the arts considered valid economic development in Wyoming? Yes – 24 No – 28

Please explain.

Yes- many WY presenters bring artists from elsewhere; tourists visit museums/galleries; increasing awareness of economic validity; Arts Summit made it clear; a few towns get it; need to publicize the connection; statistics show ‘yes;’ it is valid on a small level locally

No- because arts need subsidies, they are viewed as not economically stable; arts are not being used for economic growth; lots of talk but no action; only for western and wildlife art; viewed as entertainment or hobby; civic leaders only recognize oil, coal and tourism; need to connect art with tourism

4. Are the arts valued in Wyoming schools? Yes - 35 No – 11

Please explain or make recommendations. Mixed comments!

Positive: Yes in Park Co.; good variety available; longstanding programs; part of curriculum in Teton Co; dedicated art teachers and are certified k-12

Negative: Needs more funding; not a core subject; individual impact not recognized; schools have too much paperwork not enough artwork; students are pulled out of art for tutorials; arts-in-the-schools needs to fit with writing, math and reading which takes away from creating; need 1% art for school buildings; Hathaway locks out art electives

5. Should the arts be included in the Hathaway Scholarship requirements?

Yes – 43 No – 9

Please explain.

Yes! Students exposed to arts are well rounded, better educated, more successful, with different desires and more drive. It should be option not requirement. Should be a fundamental, and arts will be cut if not included. Also, require art at the college level

6. Are there problems with the visibility of the arts and the Wyoming Arts Council in Wyoming, including issues with Wyoming media arts coverage? Yes – 38 No – 10

Do you have a recommendation or a solution?

Yes - Need better communication – radio, billboards, in town, off interstate; make personal visits with press; promote more arts businesses; add PR staff; create arts calendar; create listserv for artists, arts orgs (arts educator listserv great); only see direct mailings; create districts and target PR; local arts councils should become chamber members; have experts review local art shows; Wyoming has limited media outlets; help young artists (k-12) know about WAC; required more prominent acknowledgement; newsletter expensive-consider spending \$ in larger media markets; little local coverage about WAC programs; many presenters don’t know about WAC and grants available; can WAC help people get art-themed columns or arts section in local papers?

No- Publications sufficient; good print coverage; getting better; do good job getting out there; some communities have great coverage; website great; WAC is visible to arts community

Is more funding needed for grants and the WAC? Are more ways needed to help artists sell their work? Yes – 44 No – 4 Do you have a recommendation or a solution?

Amounts fine!

Grants/WAC/Organizations: Always need more funding; make more people aware of grants; create funding templates for business models and festivals; involve for-profit art businesses; \$10K for GTO; teach boards to fundraise; representative government should support arts; WAC grants too time-consuming to submit and manage; need organizational support \$

Artists: increase IAPD funding; need education in marketing; need more venues not money; assist artists with finding agents; start artist co-op; hold Business of Arts courses; increase in public awareness will lead to increase in sales; showcasing individual artists to increase exposure; WAC-run Wyoming arts market website; create 1% art projects for community arts (not just buildings); sponsor studio tours

Caution: WAC should not be responsible for selling/marketing artists, artists should invest in their own marketing, and artists should sell their stories along with their art

8. Is there a desire for more regional/local meetings during which organizations and individuals can share experiences and successful programs? Yes – 34 No – 11

Do you have a recommendation or a solution?

Meetings: Schedule shorter sessions; change local hosts; hold in different areas; get Summit info to city council, commissioners and legislators; host meet & greets for artists; divide into 4 county regions; host annual statewide meeting with specific agenda (advocacy, networking, marketing, training sessions, fundraising) and opportunity to share; local groups meet already-need statewide agency to network; want annual Arts Summit to share struggles and successes with more brainstorming sessions; reach out to local artists and arts groups; encourage attendance by providing a ‘free’ roster artist per organization; feature artists at meetings; general public would not attend an arts meeting

No meetings: webinars or web conferences; meetings expensive; use listserv; WAC should attend local arts groups’ meetings; convey topical information in newsletter; support project grants not conferences; no meetings: hate meetings, overbooked already

9. Is the content and length of the WAC newsletter appropriate? Yes – 42 No – 5

Do you have a recommendation or solution?

Positive comments: good topics; good to have print and online info; wonderful, well done, good length & excellent

Changes: several recommended a 8.5x11 size and noted that printing and postage is expensive (WAC could put money to different use); too tall and thick; a bit wordy; use new technologies instead of print; exciting website should be the priority; hard to find time to read it all; add “what’s going on – by region” section

Five respondents hadn’t seen one and requested to be added to the mail list!

10. Is there a need for more arts advocacy? Yes – 48 No – 4

Do you have a recommendation or solution?

Need: Arts mayors need to convince other mayors; need access to hard data; desire a clinic on how to approach officials; regional meetings with roundtables to bring artists, advocates & policy makers together; more face-to-face meetings with policy makers; develop talking points; local advocacy first (advocates must be from community); work with Small Business Development regional directors; push artists to be more vocal; letters to the editors with statistical and anecdotal content

Radical suggestion: Rather than have artists donate art to charity auctions, have professionals (drs, lawyers, etc.) donate their services to auctions!

11. Are you familiar with the technological aspects of the WAC's programs, including the web page, blog, Twitter, and Technology in the Arts grant program? Yes – 31 No – 23**Do you have a recommendation or solution?**

Recommend: Connect with Wyo Tourism; use group email more (miss wyolitmail); WAC website cluttered with poor links and large downloads; provide more PR about these
Comments: Love it! Several said 'Great blog'; more is not necessary

Six respondents don't use it (twitter, blog, facebook)

12. Is there a perception that the WAC does not do an adequate job with western artists?

Yes – 7 No – 41 **Do you have a recommendation or solution?**

This question caused confusion by what defines "Western Artist"

Comments: In some categories (writing and photo) but not others (crafts and visual arts); balance western with contemporary; serve more individual artists; working artists don't bother to apply because of academic/MFA slant of application and jurors; nice that roster heavy with Western artists

13. Is there a need for more outlets for the display/performance of artists' work?

Yes – 39 No – 7 **Do you have a recommendation or solution?**

Comments: Provide list of presenters; include arts space in community centers; place art in state visitor centers; get hospitals and banks to purchase work they display; counties could host forums for local roster artists; encourage more buildings like in Rawlins and Worland; WAC needs to connect with profit retailers; let artists be resourceful; WAC should be a clearing house for artist opportunities; assist communities with venues needed for programming; some programming staff need arts management training; increase Main Street; bring 20/20 to local chambers, Lions, Rotary; provide traveling exhibits; re-open WAC gallery; have artists brainstorm actions; provide showcases; need more performing arts venues; need statewide artist guild/website/market; don't need more venues but need better publicity; want temporary public art displays; offer Marketing Your Art seminar; statewide hands-on arts days; more arts centers; want a university press; produce a publication/cd of Wyoming art

Please list your concerns or issues:

Bring more artists from out of state to increase variety

Make arts more self-supporting (multiple listed)

Org now needs paid staff

Must lobby to fund own position

Decrease gap between business and art
 Connect contemporary art with community
 Arts should grow in an organic manner
 More professional development for artists
 Grants are difficult to access, WAC has “gatekeeper’ mentality
 Can’t convert chicken coop into studio because of local zoning
 WAC needs to better communicate vision and purpose to generate greater involvement
 Trying to re-energize local arts/humanities group
 WAC needs better visual arts representation on WAC staff
 Be aware of local theater scene in Cheyenne
 Don’t receive newsletter yet have written grants – why not?
 Review all grant programs to assess quality, outreach and success of funded programs.
 WAC has large staff for few programs and limited grant money
 How to connect with policy makers about the importance of the arts
 Change perception that WY is red-neck no-nothings (sic)

Do you have a recommendation or solution?

Provide more resources to bring culturally diverse groups to Wyoming
 Training
 Meeting and talking, brainstorming
 Ad campaign
 Use consensus and tolerance in assessing the WAC
 Include board development, volunteer utilization, and fundraising to help orgs stabilize
 Convince cities that small arts studios are not burden on roads, traffic, etc.

Please respond to the following draft vision statement for WAC:

WAC envisions a state where the arts are integrated into the economy, education and everyday life of all citizens.

Comments: Good, powerful, wonderful, succinct, reads smoothly, completes, concise, excellent, wholesome

Recommendations: Add **‘health’** after **economy**; Add **recreation** after **education** (better access local county funding); **Envision** not strong enough (start with ‘the arts..’) use **ensures, supports**; Change **integrated** to **integral** or to **inseparable**; **Integrated and recognized**; Drop economy and education; **State** has several definitions

Questions: Who on staff is focused on the ‘economy’ part? What about advancing the arts?

Please respond with thoughts, questions, and suggestions on the Three Es (Economy, Education and Everyday Life):

Focus: ECONOMY
Goal Statement: Strengthen the environment in which all artists’ work and creative contributions are valued and supported
Goal Statement: Increase public access, participation and investment in Wyoming’s arts and culture

Comments: Increase artist access, worth doing, tough in current economy, first statement includes the second, good, what does “strengthen the environment” & “valued and supported” mean, 2nd goal achievable, Great x Good, well done, ‘all artists’ work’ is the WAC open to forms they haven’t showcased, 2nd can be quantified, can’t expect all artists’ work be appreciated, excellent, need to add ‘by ...’ after each statement.

New statements:

1. “Develop methods to directly measure dollar value of: a) artists direct contribution plus their trickle down effect; b) arts & artists impacts on other econ dev attempts to bring/support business in Wyoming”
2. “Strengthen the environment so that all creative contributions are valued and supported”
3. “Wyoming will be known for the arts that are essential to creativity and to foster entrepreneurship, encourage study and presentation of the arts and stimulate public interest and participation; to foster public interest in the cultural heritage of our state and expand the state’s cultural resources.”

Focus: EDUCATION

Goal Statement: Incorporate the arts as an essential element in lifelong learning

Comments: Help local artists perform in schools, give as much \$\$ as possible to arts edu, love, like, yes, noble, worthy, lifelong learning crucial, will work only if funded, agree, can this goal be met, long term investment, amen, important, **incorporate** passive-find stronger verb, is this yet another unfunded vision?

Focus: Everyday LIFE

Goal Statement: Encourage and support diverse organizations and partnerships that produce, present and promote excellence in the arts.

Comments: Important, great, need to increase demand and desire, mushy, Amen, who would this look, how is art integrated into everyday life? New area for WAC with strong potential

Changes: drop ‘**excellence**’-overused, add individual artists, “Promote and expand...”; Change focus to **Quality of Life**; “Everyday life and Health”

General comments on focus and goal statement section: (NOT ON ONLINE VERSION)

Will specifics come later? How to measure? 3 Ps producing, presenting, promoting, love what you do!

Thank you to those who responded to the State of the Art Survey!