Did you know...?
By Jennifer Laine, Executive Director
San Benito County Arts Council

Did you know that April marks “Arts, Culture & Creativity Month” in California? In California, arts & culture is a $186 billion industry—7.0 percent of the state economy (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis). The nonprofit arts industry alone generates $166.3 billion in economic activity annually—spending by organizations and their audiences—which supports 4.6 million jobs and generates $27.5 billion in government revenue. The arts improve individual well-being, support academic performance and unify communities - it is only fitting that the arts has its own month, where it is recognized as a major force in economic, community and personal development.

Locally, we are celebrating Arts, Culture & Creativity Month in a few targeted ways. We have launched the first annual San Benito Dance Week, April 23-29th with over 15 local dance studios and dance groups who have come together to offer free public workshops, classes, performances and happenings to highlight the dance talent and resources that we have in San Benito County. Arts, Culture & Creativity Month also gives new meaning to some of our standing events, like the annual Open Studios Art Tour, April 13th-14th, where we have a record number of talented and dedicated participating artists in Hollister, San Juan & Arroyo. There has never been so much art to see & do! Visit www.sanbenitoarts.org to see a full calendar of events.

Along with Californians for the Arts, a statewide arts advocacy organization, we are sending a delegation of local arts advocates to Sacramento on April 23rd to lobby our legislators to support public funding for the arts. While Governor Newsom recently included a $10M permanent increase to the California Arts Council’s budget, which directly benefits San Benito County through a myriad of grant programs, this still ranks California in 20th place nationally in per capita spending in the arts. As the state with the largest creative economy, should we be #1 in arts funding? What would that look like in our towns, in our schools, in our communities? Together, we can make this happen! Call your representatives today and tell them your arts story: Assembly member Robert at (916) 319-2030 or Senator Anna Caballero at (916) 651-4012. For more information on Arts, Culture & Creativity Month, please visit www.californiansforthearts.org.