

At the recent 4th Annual Arts & Business Luncheon and Awards, our keynote speaker, Christen Boone, President, and CEO of Fund for the Arts, shared her perspective on how and why businesses should support the arts. In short, she said that a vibrant arts and culture sector is essential, not only for the community, but also for business. As we work to attract quality companies and talent to the region, our support for and investment in arts becomes increasingly important. So, what is the business community's role in supporting the Arts?

The arts and culture of a community add value in many ways. The Arts add creative and innovative jobs like those at the Generator, a makerspace for large-scale works include many for Burning Man, or the Philharmonic and Chamber Orchestras, two of Reno's professional ensembles. The Arts also drive tourism. The dust on the playa from this year's Burning Man festival has not yet settled and our region is expected to have generated \$60M from that single event. Additionally, visitors come into town to see a Broadway show at the Pioneer Center, to visit the Nevada Museum of Art, Artown, or other arts and culture venues and events throughout the region. Crucial to our long-term economic development success, art encourages creativity, innovation, problem solving, and critical thinking; some of the top in-demand skills for our region's employers. Communities that embrace the Arts have higher civic engagement, lower crime rate, and lower poverty rates, according to the University of Pennsylvania research.

So, what can the business community do to "embrace the Arts?"

Engage in the Arts. Actively encourage employee support for and engagement in the Arts. Consider offering tickets to a performance or event as a perk. Purchase and display art from local artists in and around your workplace. Offer a membership to a local museum or theater as part of your benefits package. By fostering a stimulating and welcoming work environment, you are encouraging innovation and increasing your retention. According to the 2016 Adobe State of Create, "76% of companies that invest in creativity have happier employees".

Invest in the Arts. Many businesses do financially support the Arts but, unfortunately, most do not. Add arts and culture as a line item expense in your business's budget. Before the Great Recession, companies were more involved and supportive of the Arts community. The economy has more than recovered but support for the Arts has not. Direct support in the form of donations, season tickets, memberships, board involvement, or just buying tickets for your employees, will help.

Believe in the Arts. As a business leader, you are telling others what is important by what you do and what you support. Your company culture will be increasingly important in the coming years as you fight to attract the quality employees who will lead your company to success. Your involvement in the Arts will send a message, not only to your employees, but to the community and our elected leadership that **you** believe in the Arts!

Arts and culture are more important than ever. Name one great city that does not have exceptional arts and culture. Reno-Sparks has a long history of support for arts and culture and as our cities continue to evolve, we can build upon this success. Let's seize this opportunity to embrace the Arts as an expression of "who we are" and support the Arts as something we value deeply. It's time for our business community to step up and **engage, invest, and believe in the Arts.**