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### Cape & Plymouth Business upcoming events for 2010



## Cape Cod Commission releases guide to promote arts and culture to attract economic investment

Published on Tuesday, February 02, 2010

The Cape Cod Commission, Barnstable County's land use planning agency, released a new tool for municipal leaders seeking assistance with economic development.

The publication, *Leveraging Cultural Assets for Economic Development: A Practical Guide for Municipal Investment in Arts & Culture on Cape Cod*, lays the groundwork for towns to build new or to enhance existing cultural programs as part of a balanced strategy to attract high-wage jobs and increase tourism. Artists not only contribute to the stability of the economy, they help foster an environment that entices others from the "Creative Class" fields such as science, technology, design, business, and higher education, to name a few.

"With an economic contribution of over \$55 million dollars in the last fiscal year, we can hardly ignore the importance of arts and culture on the Cape Cod economy," says Paul Niedzwiecki, Executive Director.

Mr. Niedzwiecki is a board member for the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod and was the driving force behind the cultural initiatives in downtown Hyannis.

"The 'Harbor Your Arts' program revitalized downtown Hyannis and continues to attract new investment and increase tourism. Without the political leadership and support from the town, it never could have happened," he notes.

Richard Florida, renowned economist, cited the economic importance of arts and culture when he published *Rise of the Creative Class* in 2002. Since then, the importance of arts and culture has been noted in several other studies as well:

- \* The 2008 Survey of Cape Cod Second-home Owners produced by the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute found that 94 percent of those surveyed expect to attend music and theatre venues occasionally or frequently after moving to the Cape permanently.

- \* In a 2006 report by the Northeastern University Center for Urban and Regional Policy entitled, "Revenue Sharing and the Future of the Massachusetts Economy," the authors call on local municipalities to address the need for cultural amenities in attracting private investment and jobs.

- \* In 2005, the Cape Cod Commission conducted a survey of residents through the University of Massachusetts Center for Survey Research. The most supported type of development recorded was a cultural facility, which was 'strongly supported' or 'supported' by eight out of ten respondents.

- \* In 2003/2004, research conducted by Dr. Michael Porter, Harvard Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness, identified arts and culture as one of four emerging industries on the Cape with the potential to diversify and expand the region's economy. The other three include marine research and technology, information and related technology, and education and knowledge creation.

- \* According to a 2008 study by the National Endowment of the Arts, Cape Cod is ranked 18th in the nation for artists as a percentage of the labor force.

Funded by a grant from the Cape Cod Economic Development Council, the "Leveraging Cultural Assets" study was designed to aid land use and economic development planning. It targets municipal leaders and provides them with hard facts about the economic benefits of arts and culture, outlines step-by-step actions, and provides resources on how to finance and sustain cultural initiatives. Coming from an agency focused on land-use planning, the guide also includes a series of maps to help towns understand the relationship between economic centers, infrastructure, and cultural assets.

Elizabeth Dillen, private consultant, worked with Commission staff on the study. Dillen formerly managed the cultural initiatives at Barnstable's harbor and has presented on the topic at planning conferences and to community groups.

The Cape Cod Commission is delivering limited printed copies to each town in the care of the town administrator/manager. Notices have also been sent to boards of selectmen, the Barnstable Town Council, town planners, planning board chairmen, town cultural councils, and town historical commissions, as well as chambers of commerce. The full-color 60-page guide is available on the Cape Cod Commission's web site: [www.capecodcommission.org](http://www.capecodcommission.org).

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