

# ***Colorado's Creative Economy Advisory Panel***

***November 2009 – January 2010***

## ***Recommendations***

### **Panel Co-Chairs**

***Lieutenant Governor Barbara O'Brien***

***Don Marostica, Director, Colorado Office of Economic Development***

***Brian Vogt, Director, Denver Botanic Gardens***



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**Background**

Colorado's natural beauty and creative spirit provide an economic advantage unmatched by any other state in the country. From its original Native American and Mexican settlers, to 19<sup>th</sup> century pioneers and homesteaders, and more recent immigrants from every corner of the globe, Colorado attracts those who embrace the new frontier. We are passionate about preserving and enjoying our environment, we share an entrepreneurial mindset, and we are committed to ensuring a healthy and more vibrant future.

Not only are we ranked number one in mountain peaks and fitness, Colorado consistently ranks near the top as a place to innovate and succeed in business. This includes measures like Venture Capital per Capita, Entrepreneurial Activity, Percent of Population with a Bachelor's degree, and Patents per 1,000 Workers. (Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade [www.advancecolorado.com](http://www.advancecolorado.com))

It should therefore not be surprising that our state has become a magnet for creative enterprises and creative workers. We are 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation in per capita concentration of artists, including architects, designers, writers and authors, photographers, producers, directors and musicians. In fact, with 186,000 jobs, the creative sector is Colorado's 5<sup>th</sup> largest employment cluster. (Colorado Council on the Arts [www.coloarts.org](http://www.coloarts.org).) But what also makes Colorado special is that our creative economy is not only based in conventional artistic fields such as design, film, literature and the visual and performing arts, it extends to new media technologies, outdoor clothing and equipment design, green products, and craft food and beverages.

From November 2009 to January 2010, an advisory panel of over 60 creative industry leaders met to recommend strategies to make Colorado's creative economy a significant driver for economic growth in our state. This report shares the panel recommendations.

The panel co-chairs were Lieutenant Governor Barbara O'Brien, Don Marostica, director of the Colorado Office of Economic Development, and Brian Vogt, director of the Denver Botanic Gardens. Facilitators were Bill Fulton and Drew O'Connor of The Civic Canopy, and the Colorado Council on the Arts provided background research and logistical support. (See Addendum #1 for list of participants.)

To set the stage for the panel, Lieutenant Governor O'Brien directed the advisors to look for practical ways to develop our workforce and prepare our students so that when we come out of the economic downturn, we have a plan for success. Don Marostica emphasized that the Governor's top priority is job growth, and he asked the advisors to recommend specific strategies that could increase the number of businesses and jobs in the creative sector. Brian Vogt reminded advisors that to convince policy-makers to make the conscious choice to invest in our creative assets, we need strategies that will net positive financial returns on that investment over the long term.

## Defining The Creative Economy

The advisory panel was first tasked with defining Colorado's creative economy. Advisors felt strongly that Coloradoans' eagerness to embrace the unknown – to tame the wild west – is a unique economic asset. This risk-taking attitude and our outdoor splendor are major draws for creatives, and are at the core of Colorado's creative economy. In considering the types of business activities that make our creative economy stand out from those in other states, the advisors believe our creativity includes not only the conventional artistic fields such as design, literature, film, and the performing and visual arts, but also extends to new media technologies, aesthetically pleasing "green" products, outdoor clothing and equipment, craft beverages and locally grown food products. (See Addendum #2 for a more detailed description of the industries included in the panel's definition of Colorado's creative economy.)

## A Vision for the Future and Six Strategies for Success

Over the course of three meetings, the advisors developed a vision statement to describe what Colorado will look like when we are recognized nationally and internationally as a premiere creative economy:

*By leveraging our unique lifestyle and entrepreneurial spirit, Colorado cultivates a creative workforce and attracts and fosters clean and sustainable creative enterprises, resulting in job growth, a stronger tax base, improved cultural awareness, and an outstanding quality of life for our residents.*

To track progress towards achieving this vision, the advisors identified six indicators of success:

1. There will be a **strong brand identity** for Colorado-designed and produced creative products and a **thriving export market for our creative goods and services**.
2. Colorado will have a **national reputation as a "Top 10"** place to experience high quality and diverse arts and cultural events, exhibits, performances and productions.
3. There will be **significant and sustained investment** in Colorado's nonprofit and commercial creative enterprises from public and private sources at the local, national and international level.
4. **Creative enterprises will flourish and more artists will move here** because there will be access to extensive networking, and adequate professional and financial support.
5. **Colorado will "grow its own"** creative workforce and our students and workers will be sought after for their creativity.

The advisors recommended six strategies that must be pursued to achieve this vision, and offered several suggestions for specific actions or tasks to implement each strategy.

**Strategy #1:** Existing business financing and support mechanisms must be made more accessible to creative businesses to help them start-up or grow, and to recruit new creative businesses to our state.

### **Actions**

- Existing loan funds and venture capital funds learn more about the unique risks and rewards from investing in the sector and expand their portfolios to include more creative businesses.
- Chambers of commerce, downtown development authorities and economic development councils enlist more creative business owners as members and leaders.
- Small Business Development Centers and community colleges reach out to creative businesses to help them develop business plans and obtain financing.
- Tourism bureaus do more to highlight local creative assets in their promotional materials.
- State and local economic developers do more to identify and promote existing tax incentives and other funding opportunities to help grow emerging creative businesses and attract creative businesses that are considering relocation.

**Strategy #2:** New economic development policies and funding sources must be developed at the local and state levels to provide support for both nonprofit and commercial creative businesses and artist-entrepreneurs.

### **Actions**

- The Colorado Office of Economic Development pursues a statewide public-private funding source that offers grants and/or loans, significant in both size and volume, to help promising nonprofit and commercial creative enterprises thrive and grow.
- The Office incentivizes innovation, convenes a regular summit of innovators and promotes our innovators.
- Economic development agencies, chambers of commerce, foundations, and local arts councils recognize and foster early and mid-career creatives who have the potential for significant and sustained career growth.
- The State's "Council on the Arts" becomes the "Council on Creative Industries" and takes the lead on proposing new and improved funding mechanisms to support creative industries, such as job training incentives and tax incentives.
- The Council develops standardized criteria and an approval process to establish a network of local "creative districts".

**Strategy #3:** New and improved networking and professional development opportunities must be developed to encourage and support creative enterprises and creative workers.

### **Actions**

- The creative sector launches a new "Creative Chamber of Commerce" that includes nonprofit arts-related organizations, commercial creative businesses, and trade and labor unions.

- Individual creative businesses and entrepreneurs become more visible and more active in existing chambers and other business support groups.
- A statewide public or private entity inventories the resources available to support creative enterprises and creative workers, such as production, marketing, technical support, legal support, etc. and develops a web site and/or regional conferences to provide better access to those resources.
- Small Business Development Centers and community colleges develop training workshops and courses targeted at creative businesses.
- In general, communication among artists and creatives is strengthened.

**Strategy #4:** Improve and expand the promotion of Colorado's creative businesses and creative destinations, raising visibility for the sector within the state as well as nationally and internationally.

#### **Actions**

- The Colorado Office of Economic Development creates a brand that incorporates the concept of "Colorado Creatives" and our "you can do it all here" lifestyle, including sports, arts, and culinary, and develops a national and international awareness campaign using multiple media.
- The Office of Economic Development and local convention and visitors bureaus attract more creative expos like the SIA Snow Show to draw attention to the link between creativity, Colorado's unique outdoors/active/innovative culture, and economic benefit.
- Local government agencies and tourism agencies develop and promote their unique creative brands, such as Loveland's "Where Art and Science Meet".
- Creative businesses, particularly nonprofit arts organizations, work to engage people who don't normally identify with the "Creative" or "Artist" label, targeting Colorado's traditional iconic assets (e.g. mountains/sports teams/skiing) and develop collaborations, such as bike trails and arts tours.
- Convention and visitors bureaus and chambers of commerce acquaint front line and hospitality people with local creative assets, similar to the Denver campaign of "Smile" Denver.
- The Office of International Trade uses international trade missions to create awareness of our creative assets, based on strongest potential markets for Colorado creative industries.

**Strategy #5:** The P-20 educational system must take an active role in preparing creative workers and creative entrepreneurs.

#### **Actions**

- The legislature requires arts education credits to graduate from high school and state-funded higher education institutions require arts education credits for admission.
- Individual schools better integrate creativity, arts learning and aesthetics into the teaching of all disciplines, throughout P-20 coursework.

- Creative businesses offer mentorships and internships to both students and teachers.
- High schools, community colleges and higher education institutions develop entrepreneurship courses that introduce creative students to basic skills and talents needed to develop a small business around their creative endeavors.
- School boards, superintendents, and principals maintain or increase funding for arts in the public schools.
- The Colorado Department of Education implements regular collection and evaluation of data on the impact of arts education on student success and disseminate best practices in arts education for replication.
- School districts and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services invest in recruitment, preparation and professional development of qualified arts educators.
- Teachers and students enlist student advisory groups to better showcase creative activities.

**Strategy #6:** Stakeholders from the creative sector must develop a “call to action” that advocates for policies and programs to grow the creative economy.

### **Actions**

- The creative sector identifies and empowers a leader or leaders to carry the messages and stories of the creative economy.
- Each of the creative industry sectors writes a white paper on their sector’s economic drivers and impediments to growth, and the future potential for their industry in Colorado.
- The sector determines policy priorities, lobbies government agencies to collect the necessary metrics, and disseminates via a communication pipeline that spans all segments of the sector.
- Stakeholders create policy partnerships with other growing or potentially booming segments of our economy, such as renewable energy and tourism.

### **April 2010 Update**

In January, prior to the final advisory panel meeting, Governor Ritter introduced three pieces of legislation to target the creative sector as a strategy for economic growth. The bills establish the Creative Industries Division of the Office of Economic Development, update the state’s Public Art Statute to apply to new methods of financing, and improve the competitiveness of the state’s Film Incentives. All three bills have passed the House and Senate and now await the Governor’s signature.

*Thanks to the following persons who provided significant presentation, facilitation, writing, and administrative support for the advisory panel process: Pam Breaux and Scott Hutcheson of the State of Louisiana; Bill Fulton and Drew O’Connor of The Civic Canopy; Jeanette Albert, Maryo Ewell, Jil Rosentrater, Sheila Sears, and Ronna Lee Sharpe of the Colorado Council on the Arts; Laura Grey, Marcia Morgan and Kevin Shand of the Office of Film, Television & Media; and Leanne Goebel.*

*Report was authored by Elaine Mariner, director of the Colorado Council on the Arts, with assistance from Laura Bond, Bridget Coughlin, Elisabeth Glass, Portia Prescott, and Charles Wright.*

**Addendum #1**  
**Participants in the Creative Economy Advisory Panel**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>L Name</b>	<b>F Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Arvada Center	Sobczak	Gene	Executive Director
Aspen Art Museum	Schaefer	John-Paul	Development Director
Boettcher Foundation	Schultz	Tim	President
Bohemian Foundation	Zimlich	Cheryl	Board Member
Bonfils-Stanton Foundation	Horrell	Dorothy	President
Cherry Creek Arts Festival	Adams	Terry	Executive Director
City of Fort Collins	Freeman	Mike	Chief Financial Officer
College in Colorado	Stanford	Gully	Director of Partnerships
Colorado Ballet Company	Sanderson	Denise	Board Chair
Colorado Business Comm for the Arts	Jordy	Deborah	Executive Director
Colorado Community College System	Jirous	Jennifer	Program Director
Colorado Council on the Arts	Castilian	Chris	Council Chair
Colorado Council on the Arts	Harrell	Kim	Council Member
Colorado Council on the Arts	Rael	Joshua	Council Member
Colorado Department of Education	Gates	Karol	Art Discipline Consultant
Colorado Film School	Lahey	Frederic	Director
Colorado Historical Society, Inc.	Nichols	Edward	President & CEO
Colorado House of Representatives	Gerou	Cheri	State Representative
Colorado House of Representatives	Massey	Tom	State Representative
Colorado House of Representatives	Roberts	Ellen	State Representative
Colorado Office of Economic Devel	Marostica	Don	Director
Colorado Office of Lt. Governor	O'Brien	Barbara	Lieutenant Governor
Colorado Senate	Spence	Nancy	State Senator
Colorado Senate	Steadman	Pat	State Senator
Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center	Gappmayer	Sam	President-CEO
CoLours TV	Thomas	Art	Executive Vice President
CSU School of Fashion Design	Engel-Enright	Carol	Faculty
Denver Art Museum	Aybar Sterling	Vicki	Assistant Director
Denver Art Museum	Finlon	Cathey	President
Denver Botanic Gardens	Vogt	Brian	Executive Director
Denver Center for the Performing Arts	Weeks	Randy	President
Denver Museum of Nature and Science	Coughlin	Bridget	VP Strategic Partnerships
Denver Office of Cultural Affairs	White	Ginger	Senior Econ Devel Specialist
Denver Public Schools	Wright Jr.	Charles	Chief Strategy Officer
Dewey-Obenchain Films	Dewey	Donna	Owner
Erion Family Foundation	Erion	Doug	Founder
Flobots.org	Bond	Laura	Executive Director
Gates Family Foundation	Kaesemeyer	Thomas	Executive Director
HDNet Movies	Glass	Elisabeth	General Manager
Imagination Celebration	Thornton	Deborah	Executive Director
JA Worldwide	Box	John	Senior Vice President
KCEC TV Univision - Channel 50	Carrera	Mario	General Manager
Kress Cinema & Lounge	Thompson	Linde	Owner
Moonscapes 3-D, Inc.	Moon	Dave	Owner
Museo de las Americas	Salazar	Maruca	Executive Director

Museum of Western Colorado	Perry	Michael	Executive Director
Newman Center for the Perf Arts	Seifert	Stephen	Executive Director
RNL Design	Salgado	Tania	Design Principal
Rocky Mtn Public Broadcast Network	Price	Doug	Executive Director
Sangre de Cristo Arts Center	Valenzuela	Cathy	Board Chair
Sculptural Pursuit Magazine	DeCamillis	Nancy	Publisher
SCW Art Consulting	Campbell Wells	Shanan	Owner
Simple Brown Design PC	Wineman	Chris	Principal
Slifer Designs	Jacobs	Yvonne	President
Slifer Designs	Slifer	Beth	Owner
Something Independent	Sullivan	Chuck	Founder
TPG Solutions	Prescott	Portia	Vice President
Tryba Architects	Tryba	David	Owner
Unbridled Books	Ramey	Fred	Co-Publisher
University of Colorado at Denver	Dynak	David	Dean
University of Denver	Hansberry	Jane	Professor
University of Northern Colorado	Svedlow	Andrew	Dean
Venture West Partners	Meis	Craig	Founder

**Addendum #2**

**Detailed Definition of Colorado’s Creative Economy Enterprises and Occupations**

- **Design** The design firms and design professionals that apply artistic and aesthetic content to commercial products, marketing services, and the environment, including architecture, landscapes, advertising, fashion, websites, office and home interiors. This includes a unique advantage in recreational equipment design such as ski and snow gear, technology products with a green aesthetic, and custom designed furniture.
- **Film, Media and Cable** The production and distribution elements of the entertainment sectors, including sound, lighting, digital art, and animation studios, motion picture films, video and music production, radio and television broadcasting, cable distribution, software game development and multi-media production.
- **Heritage** Historical and archeological sites, science, history museums, and botanical gardens.
- **Literary and Publishing** Authors, poets, journalists, editors, book and magazine publishers, printers, libraries, and bookstores.
- **Performing Arts** Actors, musicians, dancers, promoters, producers, and directors, sound, lighting, costume and stagecraft professionals, and the venues at which they perform, including theatres, concert halls, clubs, fairs and festivals.
- **Visual Arts and Crafts** Painters, photographers, sculptors, potters, glassblowers, metal artists, jewelers, paper artists, carvers, and other artisans who create products as well as the museums, shops, galleries, festivals and markets that show and sell them.
- **Craft and Micro-Brewed Beverages and Locally Grown Food Products** Independent brewers and bottlers of locally-produced beer, wine and spirits, organic farms, food and beverage -container and label designers, brewpubs, tasting rooms, tasting festivals, and farmers markets.