

Assembly 2007 Briefing Session Summary

Arts & Entertainment Districts: Fostering Commerce and Culture Friday December 7th, 2007

Presenters: Elizabeth Carven, Maryland State Arts Council
Andrew L. Vick, Alleghany Arts Council, Cumberland Arts & Entertainment District
Kyra Kristof Pincheira, Cambridge Arts & Entertainment District, Cambridge Main Street

Moderator: Jesse Rye, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

Several states have recently considered legislation designed to stimulate the establishment of local cultural districts or arts enterprise zones. Using Maryland's Arts & Entertainment Districts and Main Street initiatives as examples, this session explored how cultural districts work and presented a range of strategies that states can use as an example to stimulate local economic development, tourism and civic vitality.

Elizabeth Carven, Deputy Director of the Maryland State Arts Council, explained the background of Maryland's legislated Arts & Entertainment District program. The presentation began with an explanation of the district designation process that stated the benefits and incentives for participating communities. Carven then presented a map that illustrated the location of current districts and their coordinated efforts with Main Street Programs and Heritage Areas. Carven concluded her portion of the presentation by covering the overall goals of the program, indicators of a successful district, challenges districts face and the opportunities for future growth of the program.

The floor was then given to Andrew L. Vick and Kyra Kristof Pincheira. Representing the Cumberland and Cambridge Arts & Entertainment Districts, each spoke about the history, challenges, opportunities and structure of their respective districts. Andrew L. Vick spoke from the perspective of a district that has undergone tremendous growth and success since its designation. He spoke about Cumberland's artist relocation program and walked the audience through the district's website. Kyra Kristof Pincheira spoke from the perspective of a district and community that is growing and witnessing revitalization through the arts. She spoke about the challenges and rewards of reclaiming older buildings and working with building owners to provide temporary work space for artists.

The session concluded with a brief question and answer period that covered questions audience members introduced either about the state legislated Arts & Entertainment District program or about particular district programming or structure. The discussion was to provide participants a forum to discuss what roles state arts agencies could play in these initiatives and how local efforts can affect the arts environment statewide.

For more information please refer to the presentation and presentation handout in addition to the following:

Maryland State Arts Council: www.msac.org
Alleghany Arts Council: www.alleganyartscouncil.org
Cambridge Main Street: www.cambridgemainstreet.com

To be included in any further NASAA discussion groups on the subject of Arts & Entertainment Districts please contact Jesse Rye at jesser@nasaa-arts.org or 202-347-6352 ext. 118.