

Input to Village of Webster Year 2030 Comprehensive Plan

Introduction: Congratulations to the Village of Webster for its hard work in assembling the Comprehensive Plan and for forward thinking. It is encouraging to note the inclusion of parks and recreation in the plan. Thank you for the opportunity to comment and provide input orally on July 7. In addition to that oral statement, I submit my written comments because I believe very strongly that the arts are a basic component of vital, healthy communities. I present my input in the format of

Issue

Discussion

Recommendation

Some of the discussion points include information and thoughts from arts organizations. I invite you to visit their web site for additional supporting information.

Wisconsin Arts Board <http://artsboardwisconsin.gov>

National Endowment for the Arts www.nea.gov

Americans for the Arts www.artsusa.org

Arts Wisconsin www.artswisconsin.org

Issue: The current Village of Webster Comprehensive Plan does not include a consideration of how the arts or the "creative economy" can or will impact the future of the community. The words "arts," "quality of life," or "creative economy" are not present in the document.

Discussion:

- The arts and the creative economy are included in the *Burnett County Comprehensive Plan – Vision 2030*.
- As of January 2010, Wisconsin is home to 10,207 arts-related businesses that employ 445,938 people (see enclosed comments/map from Senator Herb Kohl: *The Creative Industries in Wisconsin*)
- The arts generate jobs, create economic stimulus, and attract businesses and residents both permanent and seasonal.
- The Siren Chamber of Commerce now includes "arts" in their logo and their marketing platform.
- The Burnett Area Arts Group president has met with the Library Board and provided input to suggest a partnership that includes visual arts exhibits in the building design
- The arts generate tourism. A study shows that 65 percent of U.S. adult travelers (92.7M) included arts or heritage activities while on a trip of 50 miles or more.
- Artists represent a valuable community resource as creative and intellectual capital, with the ability to infuse a community with atmosphere, spirit, and physical beauty.
- Nationally, in 2005, non-profit arts and culture generated \$166.2 billion in revenue (Americans for the Arts study). In 2005, the University of Wisconsin-Superior and UW-Extension (Jerry Hembd) conducted a study of the economic impact of the arts in northwest Wisconsin. Mike Kornmann has the study results and figures on file.
- Many Wisconsin communities have made their locales attractive to artists and established themselves as and "arts destinations." Examples: St. Croix Falls, Superior, Mineral Point, and Bayfield.
- People who move here/retire in North Central and Northwest Wisconsin from urban areas are used to having the arts at their doorstep as critical component of their quality of life: theaters, museums, galleries, festivals, art shows, etc. They want the same access to the arts here, with the added benefits of being able to meet the artists and see them at work. This keeps dollars local – thus, the "creative economy."

•In 2009, the Burnett Area Arts Group and North Wind Arts sponsored the first-ever Burnett Arts Festival. Nearly 2,000 visitors attended. Responses to a guest feedback survey question "What did you learn about the arts in Burnett County" yielded comments such as

- A wonderfully diverse spot for art
- Many retired people do art
- How artistic our community is
- It [the arts] is attracting more people than I expected
- That Burnett County had so many artists
- There is a good arts scene here
- There is some hidden talent in the woods
- It's great to have culture in the area

•On page 6-7, in the discussion about Amenities and Beautification of the Downtown, there is mention of "public art." This is where arts groups and artists are currently an untapped resource that can be incorporated with such programs as "ghost galleries" – filling empty store fronts with works of art (this is being done in Superior) or placing public art (sculptures, kinetic art) in vacant spaces and lots, beautifying with planters, flags, and other colorful objects (examples: Spooner, St. Croix Falls). Municipalities need to use the creative capacity of local artists as a resource for designing interest and beauty into downtown spaces.

Recommendation: That the words "arts" and "creative economy" be included in the Village of Webster 2030 Vision as follows:

1-3 Goal 2; Maintain, preserve, and enhance the village's rural atmosphere, natural resources, open spaces, **quality of life**, and overall sense of community.

1-5 Economic Development Goals: **Add Goal 7: Develop and sustain an environment that supports the arts and encourages a "creative economy."**

1-5 Intergovernmental Cooperation Goals: **Add Goal 3: Encourage/ establish annual cooperative special event planning with municipalities throughout the county to maximize tourism flow during peak seasonal and holiday travel periods**

6.4 Downtown Development/Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources: Goal 10 Objective C: Support the efforts of Burnett County's villages to preserve a small town atmosphere including attractive community entrances, small business, a vital downtown, community culture, **the arts** and events.

6-11 Economic Development/Goal 1, Objectives. **Add E. Foster and support a creative economy that supports the arts.**

6-11 Economic Development/Goal 2/Objective E: Support agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, tourism, **the arts** and related support services as strong components of the local economy **that contribute to quality of life..**

Harriet E. Rice, President *HW 1/7/10*
Burnett Area Arts Group (2009-2010)
Webster • 866.8153
studio@nrthwds@centurytel.net