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COMMISSIONERS ANSWER CALL TO SUPPORT THE ARTS

The Franklin County Commissioners recognize the substantial and positive economic impact of the arts on central Ohio's economy. To that end, the Columbus Cultural Leadership Consortium (CCLC) has requested financial support from the County. Pending approval during Commissioners' General Session (Tuesday, March 11 at 9 a.m.), CCLC would receive up to \$600,000 in 2008 and 2009.

"We know how important the arts are to the cultural fabric of our community," said Board President Marilyn Brown. "Funding the Cultural Consortium will give our arts organizations the capacity to provide wonderful and enriching cultural experiences for our residents and visitors."

The Commissioners have already allocated a total of \$2.4 million to Consortium members: COSI (\$1 million), Franklin Park Conservatory (\$900,000), and Columbus Museum of Art (\$540,000) in this year's budget. Other arts organizations receiving funding from the county this year include: Greater Columbus Arts Council (\$400,000) and the Worthington Arts Council (\$50,000). Also, 2008 is the second year of a four-year commitment to fund the restoration of Lincoln Theater in the amount of \$1 million annually.

"As we have talked about what we need as a community to thrive and grow, the importance of strong arts organizations has become more apparent," said Commissioner Mary Jo Kilroy. "County support for the arts is demonstrated in our 2008 budget, with significant support for the Columbus Arts Museum, the Worthington McConnell Arts Center, the Franklin Park Conservatory and GCAC. Stable funding can make a huge difference for arts organizations. I applaud the campaign to see that our artists and arts organizations can thrive."

"This continues our staunch support of the Arts and fostering the Creative economy and its good jobs," said Commissioner Paula Brooks. "This public-private partnership through the CCLC will provide a way for many arts organizations to thrive and is necessary in this tough economy."

The CCLC was formed in 2006 to focus the energy and efforts of major cultural and artistic institutions in Columbus as they collectively address short- and long-term financial challenges. Sixteen organizations have come together under the CCLC.

The President of CCLC, and Executive Director of Opera Columbus, Press C. Southworth III said, “This Consortium is creating cooperation and collaboration among arts institutions and creating an environment of fiscal responsibility. Our goal is to forge a public-private partnership for the betterment of cultural arts in our community now and in the future.”

“The support provided by the commissioners will help us build stability for the arts community now,” said CCLC Treasurer and CAPA Columbus President and CEO Bill Conner. “We have been and will continue to bring in new private partners to build a more robust funding model for cultural arts in Franklin County.”

County support is contingent upon CCLC raising matching funds from the private sector. One million arts patrons attend performances annually, generating \$2 million in state and local tax revenue.