

Creston Valley Arts & Culture Community Scan



Created for the
Creston Valley Development Authority
by Kootenay Employment Services



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BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

Background:

The Creston Valley Development Authority (CVDA), in partnership with the Creston Valley Arts Council, set a strategy to determine the importance of the arts and culture industry in the Creston Valley, and to create a plan for optimizing the social, economic and environmental impact of arts and culture in the valley. The perception was that an increasing number of artists were depending partially or fully on art as their income, and that an increasing number of social, environmental and economic incentives in the community were inclusive of or dependent on arts and culture. To determine the significance of arts and culture in the valley, CVDA commissioned Kootenay Employment Services to conduct a survey of a representative number of valley citizens, organizations and artists. The goal of the research was to determine:

- a) What is the economic, social and environmental importance of the arts in the Creston Valley?
- b) What can the Development Authority do to help artists, and therefore the valley, prosper?
- c) What is the process of unifying the arts and culture sector?

Perceived Benefits of the Study:

- Opportunity to unify major industry sector
 - Strengthen ties within non-profit arts and culture groups
 - Strengthen ties between for-profit arts and culture businesses
 - Create linkages with regional incentives
 - Consolidate numbers for lobbying
 - Increase membership in Arts Council
- Opportunity to get information on the economic significance of the sector
- Opportunity to get information on the social significance of the sector
- Opportunity to create and market art products more effectively:
 - Contact information for sector, supplier, partners
 - Resource base for tourism – showcase art events
 - Ability (for local information sources such as the Chamber Info Center and Development Authority) to provide knowledge and information to local and distant inquiries regarding art/culture
 - Opportunity for individual artists to have listing on arts website and link to personal website
- Opportunity for the arts council and individuals to offer input into long-term plan for arts and culture in the community
 - Data to enact governing and bylaw changes to assist arts and cultural development
 - Data to develop education and training activities



Methodology:

1. Research Tools

To determine the answer to the questions, three surveys were developed: one for artisans, one for the general public, and one for cultural organizations. The questions focused on economic status, education needs, marketing methods, and the perception of the importance of arts and culture.

A grounding survey of 20 artists was used to develop and refine the survey tools. These artists cited their primary areas of art as: visual arts (those that create products principally for display such as paintings) (8), performing artist (those that dance, sing, act or play music) (5), artisan (those that create from sculpting or fashioning a medium such as glass, clay or fabric that may have a function of use as well as artistic value) (4), and literary arts (those that write music, poetry, drama, or literature) (3).

2. Surveys were completed by 345 community members, 112 artists, and 24 organizations connected with the arts community. Of the artists replying, 112 were visual artists, 72 performing artists, 58 artisans and 62 literary artists.

3. Community Involvement and Representation

Surveys were completed by residents of Yahk, Erickson, Creston, Wynndel, Boswell, Crawford Bay, Gray Creek, and Riindel. Surveys were distributed to local businesses, collected at the farmer's market, and at three local festivals – the Garden Festival, Starbelly Jam music festival and the Yahk Centennial celebration. Surveys were posted on-line and advertised through local newspaper, in-service and poster. Phone surveys were conducted for participating arts and culture organizations.

4. Focus Groups

Four focus groups were held to further explore questions of communications, marketing and arts center. A musicians' group, a visual artists/artisan group and two general public meetings answered questions about specific needs in the arts community.

“Culture is a dynamic system of acquired elements with values, assumptions, conventions, beliefs and rules through which members of a group relate to each other and the world. **Art** expresses those values, assumptions, conventions, beliefs and rules in a variety of forms”.

Cultural Organization: “One that advances the spiritual, physical, intellectual, social or economic well-being of the general public or a substantial and indefinite segment of the general public residents.”



SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Significant Results:

- Over 50% of artists say arts and culture is of financial value to them, and for 17% it is their sole income. However, 30% of artist's annual income is \$20,000 or less.
- 85% of community respondents say that art is important to their lives
- 50% of the general population have created art in the past year
- 82% of the population think that art is important to the economy, and 90% think art is important to quality of life
- 87% thought that art should be part of the core curriculum in education
- Fewer than 20% of artists have received funding of any sort
- Over 84% of all respondents think that Creston needs an arts & culture centre
- The majority of artists practice in more than one discipline

Conclusions:

1. The arts and culture industry is important to both the economy and the quality of life in the Creston valley.
2. The general public wants to promote arts incentives as part of the valley culture.
3. The arts community is willing to give time and talent to the development of a plan for optimizing the grass roots movement of arts and culture in the valley: coordination of information; identification and implementation of educational workshops for both artists and patrons; action steps for development of venues; and implementation of marketing plans.
4. The arts community would prefer that the arts development plan include the feasibility of creating a central building, developing several smaller available buildings in the community, or a combination of both to meet the needs of the artists, the visiting public and the valley patrons.
5. The arts community wants to redefine the valley culture, with art as a significant cultural factor.
6. The arts community wants to strengthen the Creston Arts Council.

Recommendations:

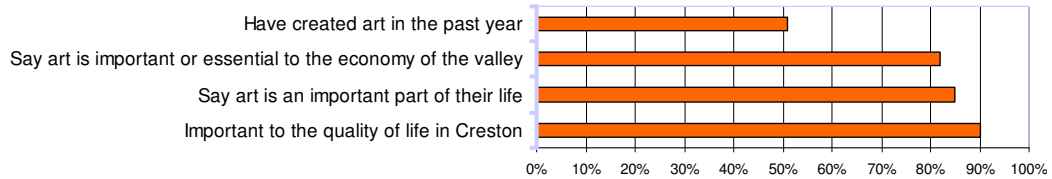
1. Engage in a series of discussions with community members to further define and include arts in our valley culture.
2. Engage in a feasibility study/plan to identify appropriate methodology to address the needs of the arts community by:
 - a) planning for appropriate venues for art creation and marketing, and
 - b) planning for increased educational opportunities.
3. Continue to gather information from artists for database inclusion.
4. Strengthen the Arts Council's ability to communicate and initiate.
5. Seek funds to carry out the results of the plan design.



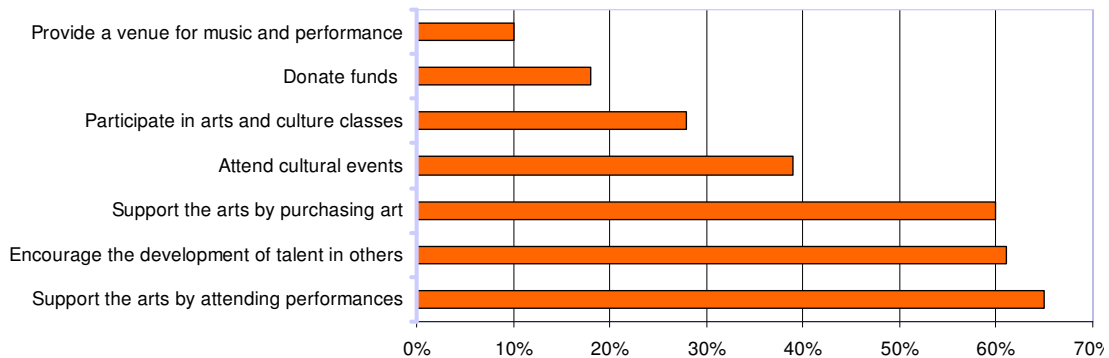
SURVEY FINDINGS

Community survey: 345 respondents

1. Importance of arts and culture



2. Support for arts and culture



Other respondents cited volunteering at art events, art marketing and sales, investing in art, and hobbyist as their involvement with the arts.

3. Perceived needs for arts and culture

87% of respondents thought that art should be part of the core curriculum in education

65% think that Creston needs more arts and culture services

65% thought that Creston needs to establish more arts and culture events

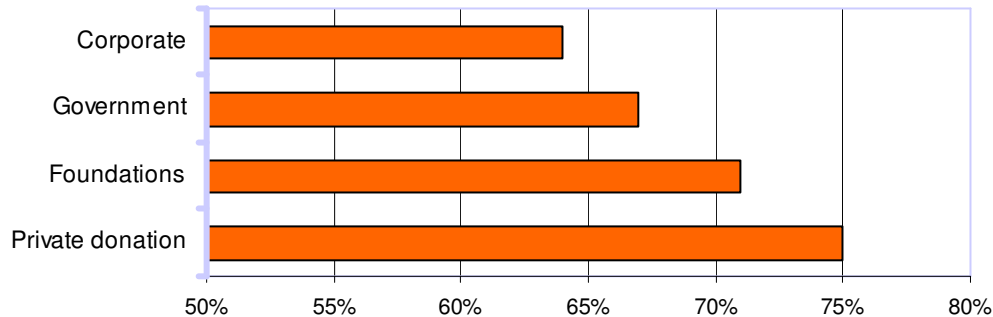
Suggested services were: an arts and culture centre (8); website; art programs; funding education; art gallery (5); retail shops for arts supplies (such as dance shoes); youth art centre; coordinated schedule so events do not conflict; and an artist show work area; art education and media education; centre for ongoing local and traveling art shows; a place for workshops and demos; youth workshops; more professionalism in arts; educate local government on importance of arts; greater support for professional artists.

Suggested events were: youth art camp; continue quilt festival; public revolving gallery; poetry readings; educational sessions for youth; pottery, stained glass and craft classes; art destination area; summer art showings; more local drama; public education about the arts; eastern art events; more public awareness of events; and alternative languages education; dinner theatre; street fest; more family dramas; more live performances; and more festivals.

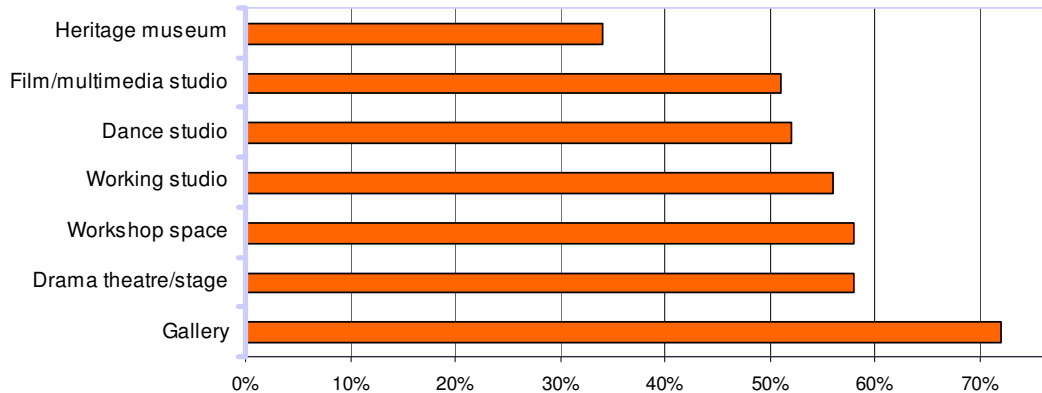


Community survey: 345 respondents (con't)

4. How should arts and culture initiatives be funded?



5. 81% of respondents believe that Creston needs an arts and culture centre which should include:



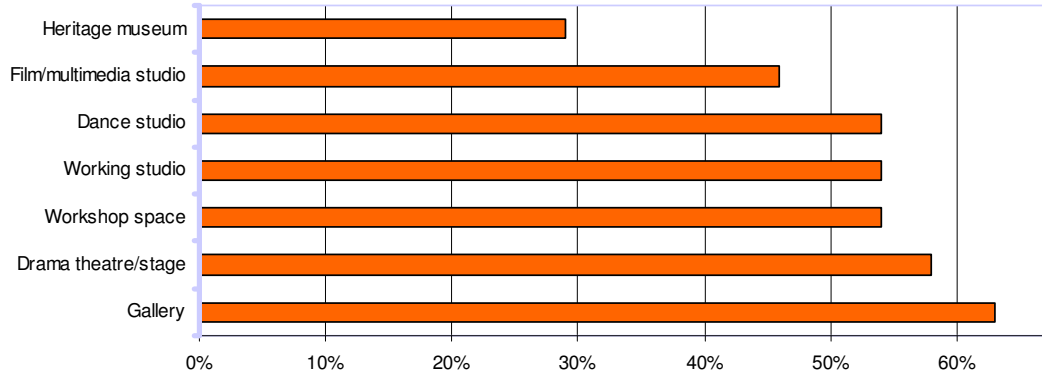
Organizations survey: 25 respondents

- 10 organizations are registered non-profit societies; 5 with charitable status
- 46% plan to expand services
- 83% have less than 5 employees; all others have from 6-10 employees
- 20% have more than 50 volunteers; 29% have fewer than 6; 18% have between 6 and ten volunteers; and 33% have between 11 and 50 volunteers
- Operating budgets ranged from \$100 to \$500,000 per year with \$24,700 being the average
- 21% could contribute to a cultural center
- 50% get funding from government; 18% get funding from corporations; 23% get funding from private donors and 9% get funding from foundations
- 47% get involved in five or less events or performances per year; 29% get involved in 6-10 performances or events per year; and 19% get involved in 11-15 events or performances a year



Organizations survey: 25 respondents (con't)

- 83% think Creston needs an arts and culture centre that would include:



Artists' survey: 112 respondents

Visual

Painting.....	54
Fabric.....	18
Photo/film.....	22
Mixed media.....	35

Artisan

Sculpture (including wood/metal).....	24
Pottery.....	10
Glass.....	11
Jewelry.....	17

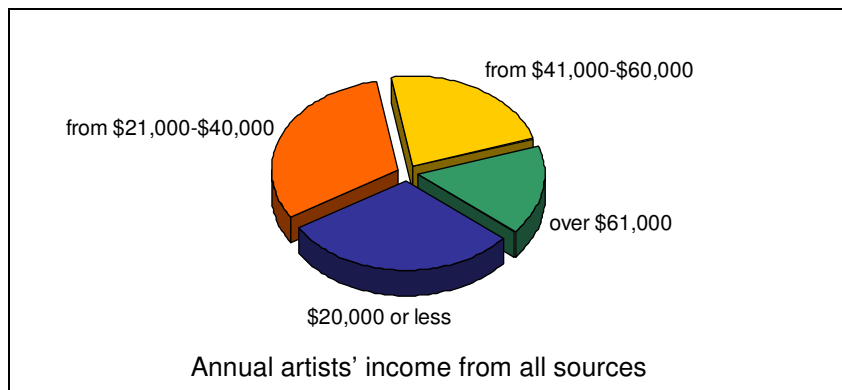
Performing

Acting.....	12
Music.....	32
Dance.....	7
Vocal.....	21

Literary

Writing.....	27
Poetry.....	15
Prose.....	10
Speaking.....	10

1. Economic importance of art



17% said that 100% of their total income is from arts; but almost double that number (35 artists) expect their primary support to be from arts in the next three years



Artists' survey: 112 respondents (con't)

- 63% say that art is less than 10% of their income; at least half of those (28 artists) predict that in the next three years their arts income will be 25-50% of their total annual income
 - 15% on average, of all total annual household income made by artists is gleaned from arts proceeds, which equates to approximately \$550,000 annually for the survey group
- The survey group is assumed to represent 1/3 of the population of valley artists; therefore the total annual income from art products could represent 1.5 million dollars to the valley economy.
- 58% of respondents said they were an art business; and
 - 22% consider themselves both hobbyists and income earners
 - 14% of artists have storefront operations/galleries; the rest are home-based
 - 9% have received private or corporate funds;
 - 5% have received arts grants;
 - 4% have received government funding
 - 52% of artists employ no one, including themselves
 - 28% pay themselves part or full employment wages
 - 19% employ 2-5 persons and only one respondent employs 6 or more persons
2. Values in art
 - 83% said that recreation and pleasure is the highest value of art for them
 - 66% said that social values were important
 - 56% ranked spiritual, social and financial as high values
 - 64% said they were hobbyists
 - 34% are patrons of the arts
 3. Marketing and education
 - 54% of artists have their primary market in Creston; 23% market regionally; and 12% in the Pacific Northwest. More artists (17%) market internationally than nationally (6%). Artists market as far away as Holland and Mexico, and as close as to their family
 - 23% of artists market on-line and another 37% would like to. 25% sell on consignment and 36% would consider hiring a professional to market their product. 21% have a studio open to the public. 35% teach and create art.
 - 33% of artists have taken courses in the past year. Of these, 4% were at the college; 2% at the rec centre; 4% at the quilt shop; 8% through private instruction; 4% through the Art Club and Arts council, and the rest through a variety of sources including Alberta College of the Arts, Emily Carr, Ktunaxa Band and UNBC.
 - 25% of artists want more information on financing; 14% on investment; 14% on infrastructure; 12% on human resources; 6% on marketing and 6% on customer service. Other requests were for help in applying for grants.
 - 49% of artists believe that we are lacking facilities; 28% say we are lacking education information; 28% say we are lacking an extensive directory of courses and 27% say we are lacking qualified teachers.



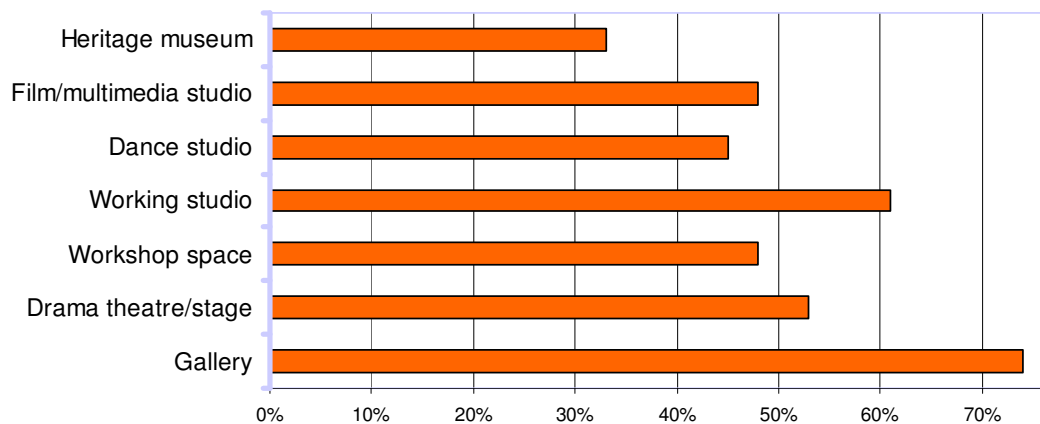
Artists' survey: 112 respondents (con't)

4. What do we have and what do we need?

44% of artists are involved in hosting arts events. 34% use churches; 22% use the recreation centre; 25% use their home; 9% use PCSS auditorium; the rest use a variety of venues including the Garden Festival, Rotocrest and Seniors' halls and Wynndel hall and local businesses for ArtWalk.

43% of artists belong to an arts, culture or heritage group: 36% of those to the Arts Council; 24% to the Creston Art Club; 7% to the Images Watercolour Group; 6% to the Quilters Guild; 4% to Footlighters; and the rest to a variety of groups such as Creston Figure Skating Club, Kootenay Kapers, 7 Studios, and the Blossom Valley Singers.

87% of artists think we need an arts & culture centre that would include:



Additional suggestions included a more effective marketing and branding system for art marketing in the valley, more workshop and display space, developing what we already have to meet the needs of artists, more effective communication between artists and more effective marketing of cultural events.

Focus Group Results:

A. What's Missing?

For performing artists:

Music/vocal

- a central communications system to let everyone know what is happening and where
- consistent remuneration for performing or recognition of craft
- quick access to a central list of musicians for filling performance needs
- a recording studio
- a good portable sound system and sound technician
- inspiring performance space

Actors/dance

- a place to store backdrops, costumes, etc
- a venue where they have control



Focus Group Results: (con't)

- inspiring performance space – e.g. dinner theatre
- good marketing of performances
- yoga/dance studio
- more community involvement
- a central place for directing people to functions
- retail space to purchase dancewear and shoes
- dance competitions/events

Literary Artists

- more workshops
- more performance venues
- access to information about funding, calls for entry

Artisans

- a studio/workshop for all ages
- funding
- more classes at reasonable prices
- central clearinghouse/information about supplies, buyers

Visual Artists

- better coordination of what we have
- gallery/studio (15)
- printer to reproduce large pieces
- juried shows
- showings
- exhibition workshops
- coordinated information about workshops and shows

B. What is the role of the Arts Council?

1. To support arts and culture in Creston through:
 - a) public education, research and advocacy,
 - b) finding and awarding funds and grants, and
 - c) the production and distribution of information on arts and culture.
2. Should be the same as BC Arts Council – provide support; provide opportunities to participate in arts and culture activities; and provide open, accountable management of funds.
3. Make sure members and the public know what events are happening and when – notice kiosks, posters, newsletters, email, notice boards.
4. Act as a central clearinghouse of information, calls for entry, and grant opportunities.
5. Ensure that there is a clear marketing plan/brand for valley artists.

In order to do these things, the Arts Council needs to:

1. get a central office and paid staff
2. consult with artists, arts and cultural organizations, governments and other interested communities on arts and culture issues, and
3. have a balanced board made up of business people; people knowledgeable in art branding and art marketing; people with strong organizational skills; people good at expediting; and people who are strong communicators.



Focus Group Results (con't)

- C. What do we need in an Arts and Culture Centre?
- arts and culture centre does not have to be a big building, could be a series of existing buildings developed appropriately
 - ensure input from all artists on the design
 - ensure entire community is aware and has opportunity for input
 - if a centre is built, location should be in the downtown area
 - a centre should contain:
 - culinary tourism, combined with a concession and dinner theatre
 - dinner theatre
 - music venue(s) – for intimate (dinner theatre) to large group
 - a space for artists to do demonstrations or rotating workshops: for example, stained glass, mosaics and lapidary artisans could share the same space and utilize storage, secure premises, etc. Potters, clay artists, and raku artisans could share the same space and share storage and equipment. Each artist could have a specific time of day or week to demonstrate or hold a class, so that there would be constant viewing and entertainment for tourists and citizens and the possibility of constant sales for artists
 - workshop for construction of backdrops for drama clubs. This working area could be shared with woodworking artisans
 - a specialized work room for local and visiting artists with reflective mirrors/technology to enable students to view the instructors work easily
 - gallery space for display of completed art objects. Display could be rotated monthly or quarterly
 - information area with directions to other galleries and arts and culture organizations and events
 - costume closet that would store costumes and could be a small rental income earning business

Additional Focus Group Comments:

1. Many artists are interested in showing their work and demonstrating their techniques, but not highly concerned with the sale of their art pieces. These artists believe that the creation of the art for viewing is the attractor that will draw outsiders to the valley and thereby enhance the economic picture in Creston.
2. Many artists believe that focusing on art education (for example, art camps) will draw people into the valley and thereby enhance the local economy.
3. Most artists preferred a simple listing (such as the KES web-based Business Directory) to an involved website; but,
 - most wanted a website for marketing, and
 - most thought that web marketing should be connected to the Creston Arts Council website
4. Artists described a variety of ways for communicating events – website postings, email, newsletters, radio, information kiosks
5. Suggestions were for a central “ticket” agency such as the Chamber of Commerce that would have information on all events in the community
6. We need to define our culture – is it agricultural, recreational, small town, scenic, wildlife, retirement town, arts town or a combination of the above?