

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Study Demonstrates Link Between Vibrant Creative Sector and Strong Texas Economy

***Create Texas* Campaign Makes Case for Investing in Arts Education and Cultural Arts for a Strong Workforce**

Austin, TX – May 1, 2009 – The nation's economy may be stalled but there's a bright spot in Texas. An economic study released today shows that the creative sector of the Texas economy is growing faster and paying higher wages than jobs in the non-creative sector. According to the data, creative sector industries such as digital media, film, music, visual arts and arts-related tourism have become a cornerstone of the state's economy and are on a trajectory for continued growth.

The data demonstrates a clear link between the cultural arts, a vibrant creative sector and a strong economy. But the study's findings also imply that the bright spot in Texas won't last forever if the state stops investing in arts education and the cultural arts.

Texas schoolchildren need to develop skills like creativity, innovation and critical thinking in order to prepare them for the highest wage jobs of today and the future. And the cultural arts are an economic development engine for Texas cities that want to attract and retain workers qualified for high-wage jobs in creative industries.

The study was conducted by TXP, Inc., an economic analysis and public policy consulting firm, and commissioned by the Texas Cultural Trust for its *Create Texas* campaign. *Create Texas* is a statewide effort to:

1. Highlight the importance of arts in education in order to maintain a strong workforce and vibrant state economy
2. Increase funding for the arts to support economic development and promote a high quality of life for knowledge workers in communities across the state

"We've all seen the growth in digital media, music, film, creative arts and innovation-driven industries," said Texas Cultural Trust Executive Director Amy Barbee. "But with this study, we finally have hard numbers proving the strength of the creative industries and their importance to the long term growth of our state economy. Now the question is, how are we going to sustain that momentum?"

Supporters of the *Create Texas* campaign believe the answer lies in two important initiatives. The first is integrating arts across the K-12 curriculum. The second is increasing funding for arts in Texas by dedicating one dollar per capita for grants awarded through the Texas Commission on the Arts.

The Importance of Integrating Arts Across the K-12 Curriculum

In late-January, Sen. Florence Shapiro (R-Plano) and Rep. Rob Eissler (R- The Woodlands), chaired a special briefing in the Senate Chamber on the role of arts in schools as an important part of preparing a creative and innovative workforce for the jobs of the future.

During that briefing business and technology author Daniel Pink told legislators that many white-collar jobs requiring rote skills are moving overseas while today's employers are seeking people who have the ability to create, communicate, innovate and adapt quickly to a changing economy.

- more -

"Those are the sorts of abilities that kids learn in the arts," Pink said at the January briefing. "Being successful in the future will require creativity, innovation and empathy – all attributes embodied by artists. Yet schools by and large are not fostering those talents."

Sen. Shapiro co-chaired the briefing to help legislators understand the importance of preparing Texas schoolchildren for a changing economy where the creative industries are providing the greatest opportunities – now and in the future.

"The future of our state economy depends on schools promoting creative thinking with arts integrated across the curriculum," Sen. Shapiro said. "It's not either math or the arts. It's both. We need our children to develop critical thinking skills with the ability to innovate and solve problems in new ways. That's what employers are looking for."

Cultural Arts as Vital to Economic Development and Quality of Life

The *Create Texas* study also shows that arts are an economic engine for cities that want to attract and retain workers for the creative sector. Successful cities focus on three areas they can directly influence: vitality and diversity of nonprofit cultural arts, a well-rounded curriculum in public schools and economic development efforts that emphasize quality of place.

All of these factors add up to the kinds of communities where knowledge workers tend to locate which then attracts high-wage employers. The report's data shows that in an economy where it is tempting to cut back on investing in arts and arts organizations as a "luxury item," in fact the opposite is true. Cultural hubs with nonprofit arts business are helping cities attract tourism, investment, workers and employers.

"The arts not only enrich our lives; they also help us understand and appreciate Texas' rich heritage and the many cultures and communities of our state," said Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst. "But the arts play another important role, which this report underscores, by creating jobs and contributing to the strength of our economy here in Texas."

###

About Create Texas

Create Texas is a strategic marketing and public relations campaign to promote the arts across the state of Texas. The goal is to highlight the importance of the arts in educating our children and sustaining our vibrant Texas economy by elevating arts education to the level of core curriculum and increasing funding for the arts for economic development and quality of life. For more information please visit www.createtexas.org

About the Texas Cultural Trust

Established in 1995, the Texas Cultural Trust is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that raises private dollars statewide to elevate the importance of art education and heighten arts awareness. The Texas Cultural Trust supports the programs of the Texas Commission on the Arts and other qualifying state agencies. In addition to the biennial Texas Medal of Arts Awards, some of the Trust's other programs include the Young Masters Scholarship Program, Adventures in the ARTS children's book, Texas Women for the Arts, Founders for the Arts, and strataTX. For more information please visit www.txculturaltrust.org