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PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

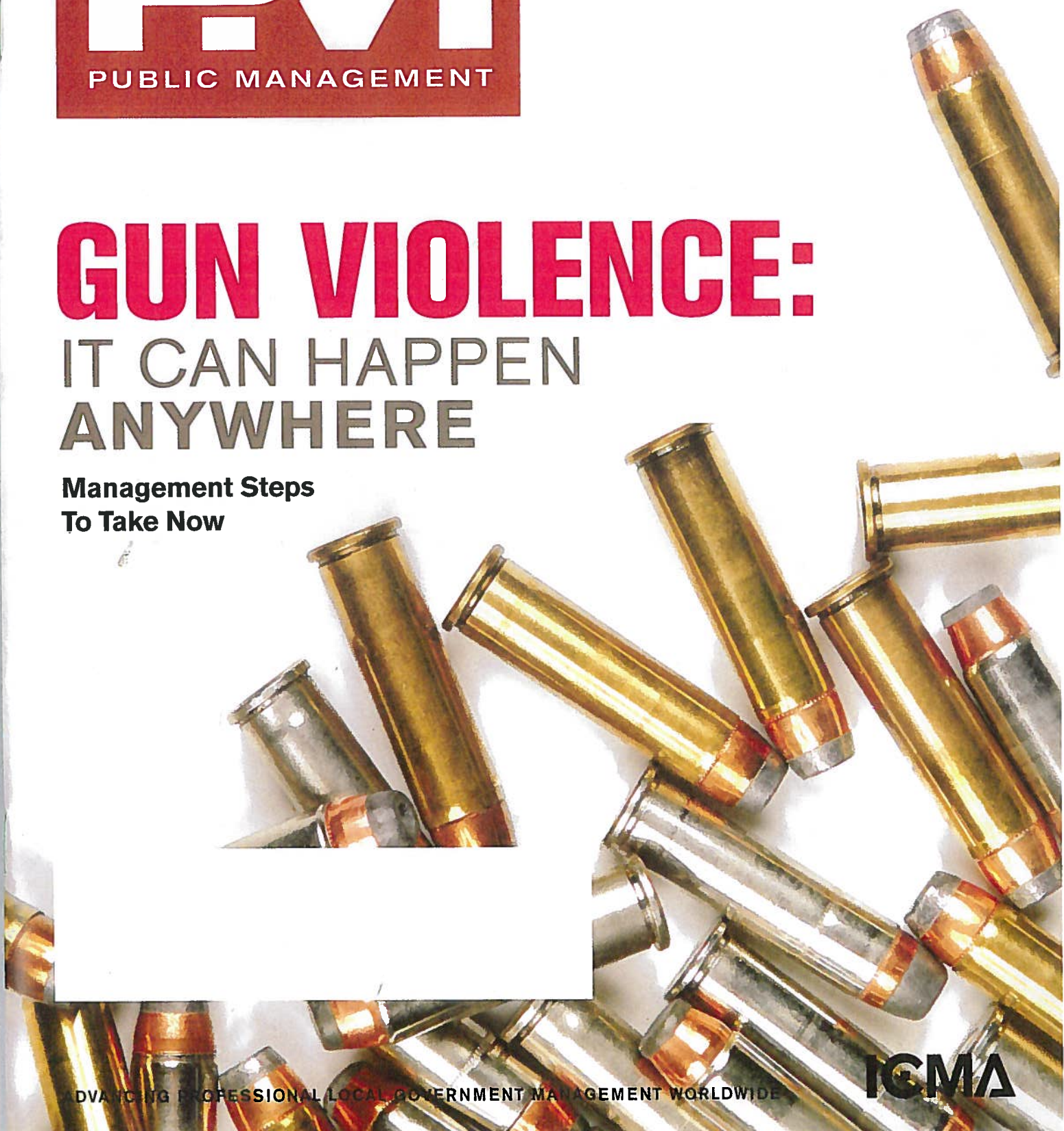
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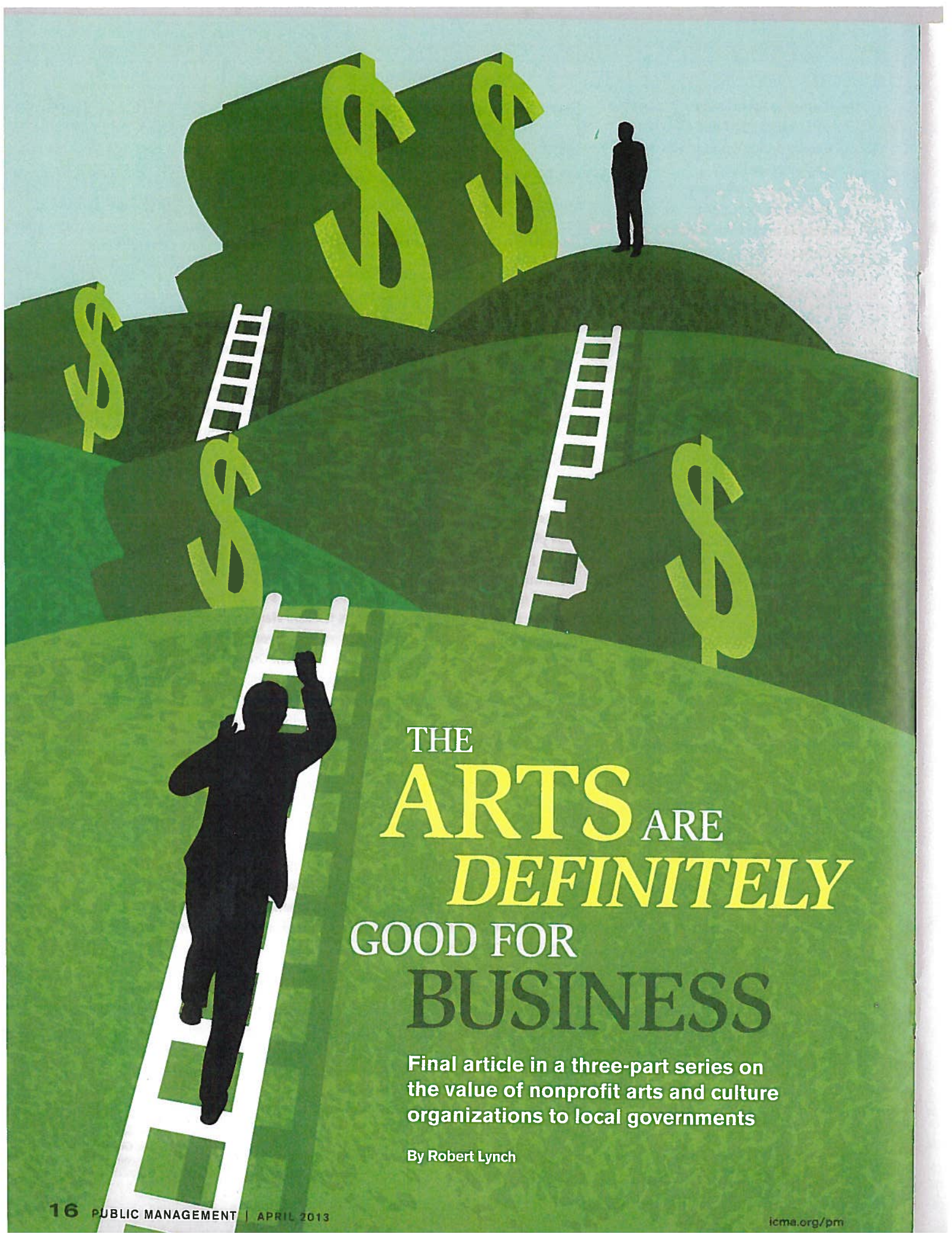
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GUN VIOLENCE:

IT CAN HAPPEN ANYWHERE

**Management Steps
To Take Now**





THE
ARTS ARE
DEFINITELY
GOOD FOR
BUSINESS

Final article in a three-part series on
the value of nonprofit arts and culture
organizations to local governments

By Robert Lynch

In previous articles published in the January/February and March 2013 *PM* magazines, I wrote about how nonprofit arts organizations contribute to a local government's economy and create jobs, economic impact, and tax revenue. For this final article, I am going to switch gears and discuss how the arts are used to attract non-arts businesses to communities, how they help keep skilled employees at those businesses, and how they improve local schools.

As local government managers, you work to attract major corporations and small businesses to open up shop in your community. You know that a new factory employing 100 people will generate hundreds of thousands of dollars in economic activity and tens of thousands in tax dollars.

I suspect you have a standard presentation that you use to demonstrate why a business should locate in your community. The attractions might include low tax rates, cheap real estate, or quality schools. But does your standard pitch include a robust arts and cultural scene and substantial arts education in local schools? If not, it should!

TAKEAWAYS

- › To be successful when attracting new businesses, a manager needs to be prepared to sell a community, including its cultural resources.
- › Business leaders overwhelmingly want creative employees. A manager needs to make sure a community has a robust creative economy to train and keep these highly sought-after employees.

CEOs Value Art Skills

More and more CEOs are looking for more pluses than just tax breaks. They want happy employees who are creative and are good problem solvers. More often than not, business leaders say creativity is of high importance when hiring.

The arts are about critical thinking, solving and reframing problems and facts in ways that reveal insights and opportunities. Music, creative writing, drawing, and dance provide skills sought by employers of the third millennium. In fact, a 2010 Americans for the Arts survey found that 72 percent of companies contributing to the arts recognize that art skills stimulate creative thinking, problem solving, and team building.

The Boeing Company exemplifies this principle. When considering this company's history—from designing and building the earliest biplanes to creating and supporting today's supersonic aircraft and spacecraft—you might think it would be content with how far it has come. But a company of its size and scope doesn't succeed by resting on its laurels.

It is constantly reexamining its capabilities and processes to ensure that it is as strong and vital as its heritage. In fact, its culture mirrors the heritage of aviation itself, built on a foundation of innovation, aspiration, and imagination. To help foster

a culture of innovation and imagination, Boeing has turned to the arts.

George Roman, vice president, state and local government operations and regional executive, at Boeing, sums it up nicely: "We have long held that investing in the arts positively impacts economic development and growth, produces a creative and diverse workforce, and nurtures the imagination and self-reflection needed to solve complex personal and community issues."

Christopher "Kip" Forbes, vice chairman of Forbes, Inc., echoes this sentiment. "The success of my family's business depends on finding and cultivating a creative and innovative workforce. I have witnessed firsthand the power of the arts in building these business skills. When we participate personally in the arts, we strengthen our 'creativity muscles,' which makes us not just a better ceramicist or chorus member, but a more creative worker—better able to identify challenges and innovative business solutions. This is one reason why the arts remain an important part of my personal and corporate philanthropy."

A Quality-of-Life Indicator

If you ask CEOs what their most valuable resource is, savvy executives will say the organization's employees. The problem is that each night, employees go home.

The challenge of a CEO is to make the company such that they are happy and want to continue to come back each day and work there. CEOs are realizing that employees become dissatisfied when the area where they live (this could be your city or county) does not offer them adequate leisure activities. In other words, people want things to do.

So, when a company is looking to open a new factory or office, more and more it wants to know what types of cultural activities exist for employees. If your answer is none or a few, then the CEO is liable to keep on looking.

The concept of city livability is becoming more and more common. People



Scottsdale, Arizona's public arts program has been in existence for some 27 years. For more information on the city's robust program, visit www.scottsdalepublicart.org.

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want to live, work, and play in one area. Communities without a modest arts scene not only miss out on economic benefits but also risk losing residents, and thus, businesses who can't find enough qualified employees.

"The arts are critical to the quality of life in our communities and to attracting people to our communities to create a high-quality labor pool. Hanesbrands and its employees are proud to be strong supporters of the arts and contributors to the vitality of our communities," according to Hanesbrands Chairman and CEO Richard Noll.

Hanesbrands donated \$2 million to create the Hanesbrands Theatre in

the Sawtooth Building, which was a former Hanes Hosiery Mill in downtown Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

The black-box theatre was built in a way that easily allows the space to be reconfigured to accommodate theatre, dance, and film presentations, meeting the needs expressed by more than a dozen arts

groups for space in the downtown area for performances and other events.

Respondents to The Conference Board's *CEO Challenge 2013* ranked innovation as their third greatest challenge overall. When CEOs were asked to rank their top innovation challenge, human capital was their top concern.

In the Classroom

How does one get innovative, creative employees? The most recognized way is having a great school system, including one that has a robust arts education program. Did you know that a student who has taken an arts education class at least once a school year is:

- 4 times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement.
- 3 times more likely to be elected to class office within their schools.
- 4 times more likely to participate in a math and science fair.
- 3 times more likely to win an award for school attendance.
- 4 times more likely to win an award for writing an essay or poem.¹

Not everyone who takes an arts or music class will become a professional artist. Actually, few do. But, students can use the skills they learn in their arts class and apply them to a work setting. This is why students with an arts education background go on to be productive, creative employees.

So a local government with creative students fosters business that by its very nature is becoming more and more creative and innovative by necessity. Communities that have a modest-to-thriving arts scene have one more amenity to attract business—and keep the ones that are already there.

I hope that this series has expanded your view of the value of arts and culture in local communities. In these times of tentative economic recovery, managers must use every available avenue to stabilize and improve the local economy. **PM**

ENDNOTES

- 1 Brice Heath, S. (1998). *Living the Arts through Language + Learning: A Report on Community-based Youth Organizations*. Americans for the Arts Monograph, 2 (7).

This three-part article series concludes in this issue. The January/February *PM* article, "The Arts Mean Business," online in the Archives tab at icma.org/pm, examines the value of nonprofit arts and culture organizations to local governments. The March article "Arts Mean Economic Revitalization," also online in the website Archives, shows how arts patrons give strong support to local business.



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