

During these tough economic times, I have seen several news articles about arts organizations making budget cuts or going under. Being in the cultural arts industry as an audience development consultant, I am extremely saddened by this news. In the history of the arts, cultural arts events used to be received much like sports are today. The arts were in the news constantly, discussed thoroughly and were highly honored and valued.

In a workshop I was presenting, the words "I live for the day the news has an artscast similar to the sportscast..." came to fruition. Between the 19th and 21st Centuries, the arts has been put on the back burner. The arts are severely underfunded, under appreciated (reviews are being cut from newspapers across the nation), and under covered (there is no artscast). In this day and age of wanting balanced news, wouldn't it be a great idea to have an artscast as a regular feature? The arts employ a fair percentage of our population and contribute to our economy in positive ways. On a national level, the arts generate \$166 billion in economic activity and employs more than 5.7 million people. Artists and arts organizations fuel the economy in other ways such as supplying the creativity for the marketing efforts of other businesses. The arts also contribute to our humanity by expanding us spiritually, mentally and emotionally. There are documented educational benefits. Not to mention the fact that the arts are a big part of how we record our cultural history, what would we do without the arts?

According to John Villani, author of the travel book, "The 100 Best Art Towns in America," Boulder is ranked the sixth best art town in the nation for towns with populations between 30,000 and 100,000. Many artists and arts organizations are small businesses that have a direct, positive impact on their local communities. The arts make a community more interesting to live in, which is a valuable consideration for the people and the businesses that move here.

In the Denver/Boulder area alone, there are hundreds of arts organizations, not counting the several hundreds of artists that reside here. On a local level, the arts contribute to our economy at an average of around \$28 per person each time a person goes to see an arts event (before and after food, drinks and social activities). This number adds up, and the more coverage the arts have, the more of an impact the arts can have for our local economy. In these times, people are cutting back, but most people continue to keep the arts in their lives so everything is not so

dreary and hum drum. Remember what people spent their money on during the depression? Food and local entertainment!

People need the arts in these challenging times and the arts need people. I ask that 9News considers adding a regular artscast to support the arts. An artscast would make a positive statement that the arts are a major part of our community and deserve our support.