



NEWS AND INFORMATION

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Howard County, Maryland to be Honored With the 2007 National Award for County Arts Leadership

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Americans for the Arts, the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America, in conjunction with the National Association of Counties (NACo) today presented the 2007 National Award for County Arts Leadership to the Howard County Government of Howard County, Maryland at NACo's annual meeting in Richmond, Virginia.

The National Award for County Arts Leadership is part of a series of Public Leadership in the Arts Awards given annually by Americans for the Arts. The award honors an elected county board or individual leader who has significantly advanced the arts in the communities they serve. The Howard County Government was chosen for their dedication to supporting the arts in the area and incorporating culture into the county's economic development plan.

Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO for Americans for the Arts, stated, "The work of the Howard County Government on behalf of the arts has helped make Howard County a national leader in promoting strong arts and cultural programs. They have exhibited exemplary leadership in the state of Maryland by dramatically increasing funds to the arts and cultural sector, while funds on the state level are declining."

This year, under new administration led by County Executive Ken Ulman, the Howard County Government approved an 8.2 percent increase for the arts for FY 2008—increasing local public funding to \$440,100—an all-time high. This appropriation also raises Howard County's per capita support of the arts to \$1.63. Both Ulman and the County Council have publicly recognized the value of the arts and their impact on building stronger communities and increasing the quality and enjoyment of life in Howard County.

Only six months into his first year as Executive, Ulman is piloting an inter-agency community art program that will not only revitalize a non-descript public building located on the U.S.

Route 1 corridor, but transform it into a gathering place and source of pride for the community.

“We believe in the transforming power of the arts, particularly when it comes to art in public places. This increase in the arts budget not only continues the legacy of public support for the arts in Howard County, but is a signal that the arts will be a priority in the new administration,” said Ulman.

Since 2000, the Howard County Government has consistently ranked as one of the top three counties in the state for per capita operating funds designated for the arts and has provided a stable source of funding and significant in-kind services for local arts groups.

Americans for the Arts established the National Award for County Arts Leadership in 1999 to recognize the positive role county government leaders play in improving arts programs, increasing funding to the arts, and making the arts accessible in their communities. Past recipients include: Douglas M. Duncan, County Executive in Montgomery County, Maryland; the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors; County Commissioner Park Helms of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina; County Commissioner Betty Lou Ward of Wake County, North Carolina; the Broward County Board of Commissioners of Broward County, Florida; the Jefferson County Commission of Jefferson County, Alabama; and the Lackawanna County Commissioners of Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania.

Americans for the Arts is the leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education in America. With offices in Washington, D.C. and New York City, it has a record of more than 50 years of service. Americans for the Arts is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. Additional information is available at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.

NACo, the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States, continues to follow the traditions established by those early county officials. With its headquarters on Capitol Hill, NACo is a full-service organization that provides an extensive line of services including legislative, research, technical, and public affairs assistance, as well as enterprise services to its members. The association acts as a liaison with other levels of government, works to improve public understanding of counties, serves as a national advocate for counties, and provides them with resources to help them find innovative methods to meet the challenges they face. NACo is involved in a number of special projects that deal with such issues as the environment, sustainable communities, volunteerism and intergenerational studies. Additional information is available at www.naco.org.

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