



THE ARTS PART OF THE SOLUTION

ARTS COMMISSION OF GREATER TOLEDO

Transforming Downtown Toledo

After years of facing economic challenges, Toledo is undergoing an amazing economic transformation. Part of the credit for this transformation goes to Toledo’s arts and cultural sector. The Arts Commission of Greater Toledo, with support from the Ohio Arts Council, has been especially effective at using the arts as a tool for economic development and community revitalization. Two of its programs provide an innovative example of arts-based community impact.



Artomatic 419 is a month long, annual, non-juried exhibition featuring hundreds of local artists in underutilized or vacant buildings in the city’s urban core. In its first year, more than 5,000 citizens attended this free event, and owners of surrounding businesses reported increased activity and a direct financial benefit. Within two months of the completion of the first event, the entire 12,000 feet of the building that served as the venue was occupied by new tenants. The building had previously been vacant for four years.



Another initiative, *Live Work Create Toledo*, attracts the creative talents and energy of artists to revitalize the downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods. The program facilitates the development of incentives to leverage the creative talent of individual artists and the city’s cultural assets to spur economic growth, build community prosperity, and transform central city neighborhoods. In a short span of time, this initiative has resulted in the creation of an Arts Zone in the city’s core and the collective promotion of the more than 40 artists who have studios in the area. The initiative has also spurred the creation of a monthly Third Thursday Art Walk, and established relationships with private developers to build artist live/work spaces to repurpose vacant buildings with private investment.



This arts-based economic impact is not limited to Toledo, or even just Lucas county, but has a positive effect on the entire region. A 2007 Arts and Regional Prosperity study conducted by Bowling Green State University’s Center for Regional Development concluded that the region’s creative industries generate an annual \$2.4 billion dollars in northwest Ohio, as well as support 33,000 jobs. With such research documenting that the arts stimulate job creation, serve as a major economic engine and promote cultural tourism, it is little wonder that Mayor Carty Finkbeiner declared in his 2009 State of the City address, “Toledo’s art and creative culture will also play a vital role in our city’s transformation.”

Economic
Development

Downtown
Revitalization

LUCAS COUNTY
Arts Commission of
Greater Toledo
Toledo, Ohio



*“Toledo’s art and creative culture will also play
a vital role in our city’s transformation.”*

Mayor Carty Finkbeiner, City of Toledo