

Letter: Arts need more public support

Wednesday, February 07, 2018

I applaud the Greater Columbus Arts Council's recent proposal for a public/private partnership to provide financial sustainability for central Ohio's nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and Nationwide Arena ("Ticket tax proposed to help arts," Dispatch article, Jan. 27). A fee on tickets to profit and nonprofit entertainment and professional sports, with additional support from Franklin County, will enable the cultural sector to keep pace with our city's growth and increase Columbus' ability to compete with other cities for business, employees and tourism.

American Electric Power has a long history of philanthropic giving to the arts. We understand how critical a thriving creative sector is to attracting and retaining the best and brightest employees. For years, leaders of this city have researched and debated options to increase public-sector support for the arts and cultural institutions that enrich our quality of life.

The sector has made remarkable progress in growing its earned revenue — up 18.2 percent since 2013 — and in achieving efficiencies in operations and securing donations from individuals, corporations and foundations.

To ensure a truly sustainable cultural community, we must broaden the funding base. It's time for the public sector to step up more and provide additional support. Quite simply, we need to bring our public funding up to the level of the cities we compete with for business, employees and tourism, and this proposal provides the path to do that.

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