Durham Arts Council & Durham Awarded SmART Initiative Pilot Program Grant
from North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources/North Carolina Arts Council
Durham is 1 of 5 Grants Awarded in State out of 18 applications

Durham, N.C. …Durham Arts Council has been awarded a $30,000 state grant for the SmART Initiative Pilot Program. North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources Secretary Linda A. Carlisle announced today that the communities of Durham, Burnsville, Greensboro, Wilson, and Winston-Salem are the 5 cities selected, out of 18 that applied, to be recipients of the state’s first SmART Initiative grants. The SmART Initiative Program has been developed by the NC Department of Cultural Resources to focus on creating arts-driven economic development in cities and towns, leveraging arts assets and public/private partnerships.

“The SmART program will influence business development, inspire downtown revitalization and historic preservation, build community pride of place and stimulate the growth of more creative businesses,” Secretary Carlisle said.

The Durham Arts Council is partnering with the City of Durham, Downtown Durham Inc., Scientific Properties/Golden Belt, Duke University, NCCU, Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau, Durham Area Designers, Museum of Durham History, and American Tobacco Campus/Capitol Broadcasting. The Durham project includes using wayfinding, public art in transportation and streetscapes, lighting, green spaces to stimulate connectivity, walkability and storyline between four informal cultural hubs anchored by major cultural facilities in the downtown: the city center (Durham Arts Council, Carolina Theatre and future Durham Museum of History); the downtown south edge (American Tobacco Campus and Durham Performing Arts Center); the downtown east side (Golden Belt); and the downtown west side (Duke University’s Nasher Museum of Art).

Tom Bonfield, Durham City Manager stated, “The City of Durham is proud to be a part of this exciting initiative with the Durham Arts Council and other project partners to take our downtown cultural districts to the next level. Arts-driven economic development is a key factor in making Durham an exciting place to live and work.”

“We are thrilled to be selected as one of the first SmART Initiative projects in the state. The pilot program grant provides the planning resources and initial project funding that will help DAC and all the project partners develop innovative components to enliven and connect all areas of downtown Durham through the arts,” said Sherry DeVries, Executive Director of the Durham Arts Council.
In the fall of 2010, Secretary Carlisle established a task force comprised of arts leaders, private developers, civic and government leaders, legislators, and tourism and chamber of commerce directors. The task force, chaired by Capitol Broadcasting CEO Jim Goodmon, conducted a series of meetings and comprehensive reviews of successful projects across the country, then issued a report of recommendations for a program in North Carolina. Most of the Task Force members have played key roles in arts-based economic development projects cited in the report, and all have a keen interest in the arts as centerpieces of community revitalization.

Links to the SmART Initiative Report and Summary:
Smart Initiative Executive Summary
Smart Initiative Full Report

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Durham Arts Council, Inc. (DAC) is a private, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that “promotes excellence in and access to the creation, experience, and active support of the arts for all the people of our community.” Each year DAC provides programs, services, and support for more than 60 arts organizations and 900+ individual artists in our region, plus more than 311,000 program participants and visitors to DAC that it serves through classes, artist residencies, exhibits, festivals, grant programs, technical support, arts advocacy and information services.

As one of the oldest arts councils in the United States, and historically one of the strongest in North Carolina, Durham Arts Council fills four major roles in the region through which it carries out its mission:

- DAC manages, programs and operates the Durham Arts Council building at 120 Morris St. in historic downtown Durham – this City-owned facility is an extraordinary community resource for Durham and the Triangle Region.
- DAC develops and delivers year-round, high quality, accessible arts programs, services and information for the public and arts community.
- DAC is the major service provider to the arts and cultural community as the local arts agency for this region.
- DAC conducts advocacy for the arts and builds resources for the arts in Durham. DAC operates the Durham Arts Council Annual Arts Fund which raises funds to support its programs and services for the community and funds its grants programs that support arts organizations and artists. DAC is a United Arts Fund and Business Committee for the Arts affiliate of Americans for the Arts.

More information about Durham Arts Council programs and giving opportunities are available by calling (919) 560-2787 or online at www.durhamarts.org.

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