



**For Immediate Release**

## **South Arts Launches “Be ArtsReady” Campaign**

*South Arts Promotes and Assists the Arts with Emergency Preparedness and Readiness Planning*

April 2, 2010 – Atlanta – Over 400 years ago Shakespeare’s Hamlet posed the question whether “to be, or not to be.” Today, South Arts is responding with an emphatic answer: “Be.” The nonprofit regional arts organization is encouraging and assisting artists and arts organizations to “Be ArtsReady,” for emergencies of all types by creating their own readiness plans that will help to ensure business continuity and long-term sustainability. South Arts has published extensive reference materials, guidelines and resources for readiness planning at [ArtsReady.org](http://ArtsReady.org).

“Emergencies are not always what you would expect. That’s why they’re called emergencies – whether it’s a hurricane, flood, pandemic or power outage, the message of the Be ArtsReady campaign is very clear: Be ready, responsive, and able to recover,” said Malcolm White, executive director of the Mississippi Arts Commission, and board member of South Arts.

ArtsReady.org is designed to equip arts organizations, as well as individual performing, media, literary, and visual artists, with the tools for a strategic preparedness plan that will include such tasks as: ensuring that all critical databases and documents, including works of art, manuscripts, etc. have been backed up and stored at a safe off-site location; emergency communication plans are in place; and virtual, or alternative workspace and technology recovery has been identified and arranged. ArtsReady will also be a community that connects artists and organizations for emergency assistance at a time when the difficult economy has restricted travel budgets and other resources.

“South Arts is committed to providing the readiness tools that are so vital to the long-term sustainability of the arts in the South,” said Gerri Combs, executive director of South Arts.

“When Hamlet posed the ‘to be’ question, he also pondered whether ‘tis nobler to suffer the

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slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.’ In this century, those ‘arrows’ are natural disasters and modern crises. We believe that it’s better ‘to take arms against a sea of troubles’ *before* they happen. ArtsReady.org will help our constituents do so,” added Combs.

South Arts, with funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Henry Morrison Flagler Museum, has developed the ArtsReady web-based resources and guides for readiness and business continuity planning. Additional partners for Be ArtsReady include the University of California/Berkeley, the Coalition for Artists’ Emergency Preparedness and Response; the Mississippi Arts Commission and South Arts’ other member state arts agencies: Alabama State Council on the Arts, Florida Division of the Arts, Georgia Council for the Arts, Kentucky Arts Council, Louisiana Division of the Arts, North Carolina Arts Council, South Carolina Arts Commission and Tennessee Arts Commission.

**About South Arts**

South Arts is a nonprofit regional arts organization and was founded in 1975 to build on the South’s unique heritage and enhance the public value of the arts. South Arts examines the arts environment and cultural trends from a regional perspective comprising nine states—Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. South Arts offers a portfolio of programs and services designed to address arts-related issues important to our region and to link the South with the nation and the world through the arts. For more information, visit [www.southarts.org](http://www.southarts.org).

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