When you mention South Carolina, some of the cities that most people think of include Charleston, Greenville, and Columbia. And some of the strongest identifiers for those cities are the arts, culture, history, and architecture. From Spoleto and the historic homes in Charleston, to the arts and culture renaissance and the new Peace Center for the Performing Arts in Greenville, to the renovation of the old Fox Theatre by the Nickelodian Theatre and the Columbia Museum of Art in Columbia, the arts play an essential role in establishing the images of cities and towns in South Carolina. Even more than that, the arts and culture create a tourism magnet, build communities, improve quality of life, provide amenities that help recruit and keep businesses, contribute to a holistic education for students, and represent the nonprofit, educational, and self-employed base of the creative economy.

The creative economy of South Carolina is significant. The creative industries represent more than 4,800 businesses, with 68,000 employees, earning $1.6 billion each year in wages, and generating almost $6 billion in annual revenue. This includes more than 6,300 independent artists, writers, and performers earning more than $90 million annually. The creative industries in total represent 4.8% of establishments, 3.7% of employees, at least 3.3% of payroll, and at least 2.0% of revenue generated by all industries in South Carolina.

At the core of South Carolina’s creative industries are the nonprofit arts, culture, and humanities organizations that provide support, leadership, education, training, community access, and advancement for the field. Of the 1,203 registered nonprofit arts, culture, and humanities organizations, (cont. on back)
448 filed form 990, representing $191 million in annual revenue and assets totaling more than $480 million.

The creative industries in South Carolina are led by the film and media sectors, with $815 million in annual payroll and $2.4 billion in annual revenues. The leading industries within the film and media sectors include software publishers, cable and other program distribution, advertising agencies, radio, television, and other electronics stores, video tape and disc rental, and television broadcasting.

In addition, the state is home to a sizable literary and publishing sector, with $488 million in annual payroll and $1.5 billion in annual revenues. The leading industries within the literary and publishing sector are newspaper publishers, commercial lithographic printing, independent writers, and book stores.

Other leading industry sectors include independent performers, jewelry stores, architectural services, florists, photography manufacturing and equipment wholesalers, photography studios, and specialized design services.

With 4,874 establishments, the creative industries are the third largest industry cluster in South Carolina – larger than information technology and telecommunications, forest and wood products, defense and security, biomedical and biotechnical industries, transportation and logistics, and education. This total number of establishments for the creative industries does not include the self-employed.

The creative industries employ the fifth-largest number of people with 68,416 employees, including the self-employed. This makes the creative industries employment base larger than advanced materials, information technology and telecommunications, defense and security, chemical based products, and transportation and logistics industry clusters.

---

Alternate formats of this publication may be obtained by contacting South Arts at 404-874-7244.