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**Riverside Arts Council Receives \$200,000 Grant
From The James Irvine Foundation**

Funding will be used for the licensing and development of InlandArts.com, a state-of-the-art website covering Riverside and San Bernardino Counties

The Riverside Arts Council was awarded a \$200,000 grant by The James Irvine Foundation in an announcement made on December 7. The funding will provide for the development of InlandArts.com, a two-county, interactive website that is designed to make a systemic change in the way arts are perceived in the Inland Empire.

Described as a “veritable metropolis of arts and culture,” the original Artsopolis website is the most visible product of the Artsopolis Marketing Partnership, a program of Arts Council Silicon Valley. The Partnership was established through a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation in an effort to establish a collaborative arts marketing effort in the Silicon Valley. Since that time, the group has developed a version of its state-of-the-art website for the Alliance for Audience in Phoenix, Arizona and will soon be in the early stages of development for the Cultural Arts Council of Houston/Harris County in Texas. The Riverside Arts Council will be only the third arts agency in the country to launch the site.

InlandArts.com offers features which include interactive calendaring, artist and organization profiles, ticket sales, and e-mail notification of special events and discounts. The website will affect 359 arts organizations in Riverside County and 218 in San Bernardino County.

“The major benefit to arts organizations is that they’re going to have a brand new promotional tool,” says Ed Sengstack, Director of the Artsopolis Marketing Partnership. “In turn, consumers will have a centralized location where they’ll be able to discover how much of a thriving arts and cultural community that the Inland Empire really has.”

“The need to do this grew very naturally out of another Irvine project,” explains Ellen Estilai, Executive Director of the Riverside Arts Council. “When we designed the Irvine Foundation’s Arts Build Capacity (ABC) grant program in partnership with The Community Foundation Serving Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, and the Arts Council for San Bernardino County, we knew that while we can give arts organizations money, we also need to give them the tools to make that money go as far as it can.”

The goals of the ABC program, which began in 2004, are to enhance the long-term capacity and self-sufficiency of small budget arts organizations in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties while making arts and culture more widely available to a growing and diverse population.

“The ABC grant program is allowing us to give not only grantees, but any interested arts organization, exposure to current marketing practices,” says Estilai. “InlandArts.com is yet another way that we can assist both established and emerging arts organizations in Riverside and San Bernardino counties expand their circles of awareness.”

In this latest round, The James Irvine Foundation awarded a total of \$20.2 million in new grants, bringing their total for grants approved in 2004 to \$53.7 million. The Foundation’s grantmaking is organized around three program areas: Arts, Youth, and California Perspectives, which focuses on increasing public understanding of critical issues facing the state and infusing new ideas into the policy development process. The Foundation targets these three programs because it believes that intervention in these areas can deliver strategic, long-term benefits to the state and its diverse and growing population. In addition, while a statewide funder, the Irvine Foundation focuses its grantmaking on selected regions of the state, especially those that are underserved by philanthropy, where major demographic shifts and rapid population growth are taking place, and where there are large numbers of low-income residents. As a consequence of these priorities, geographic focus areas for the Foundation include the Central Valley, Los Angeles County, and the Inland Empire.

“The Irvine Foundation’s mission as expressed in its trust document is to serve the people of California,” explains John Orders, Interim Program Director for the arts for The James Irvine Foundation. “There has been a huge population growth in the Inland Empire and we are looking

to partner with more and more organizations to help make arts and culture a part of daily life for the people in that region.”

“InlandArts.com is a wonderfully strategic way to serve two counties that make up a vast region of the West with up-to-date information and commentary that should help to stimulate both an awareness and ability to connect to the arts on many levels,” Orders continued. “It should make people more aware of what is present in their own communities and the tremendous resources that are available to them. We hope that people will realize that they don’t have to drive all the way to Los Angeles or Orange County to see really excellent work.”

The Riverside Arts Council will be holding informational and training workshops with arts organizations in upcoming months. The official public launch for InlandArts.com is scheduled for June 2005. For more information on InlandArts.com or other Riverside Arts Council programs, visit www.riversideartscouncil.org. To learn more about the James Irvine Foundation, go to www.irvine.org.