

## **Ottawa Festivals and AOE Arts Council – March 3, 2015**

### **Joint Presentation to the Finance and Economic Development Committee re: 2015 Budget Consultations**

**Presented by:**

**Carole Anne Piccinin, Executive Director, Ottawa Festivals & Victoria Steele, Executive Director, AOE Arts Council**

CAROLE ANNE: Hello, et bonjour. My name is Carole Anne Piccinin and I am the Executive Director of Ottawa Festivals.

Named by *Festivals and Events Ontario* as 2014's "Best Festival City", Ottawa delivers exceptionally executed events. Ottawa Festivals plays a major role to this end.

We are a not-for-profit, 100 member-based service organization that helps build a strong festival, special event and fair industry that contributes to positive socio-economic impacts within Canada's Capital Region. We are a community of high-performing, innovative, entrepreneurial and creative cultural and business leaders. We animate neighbourhoods and help brand Ottawa as a world-class tourism destination. In 2016, we will celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

VICTORIA: My name is Victoria Steele and I am Executive Director of AOE Arts Council. Our Arts Council has been working with Ottawa's arts community for 28 years to build a vibrant and sustainable sector. As a bilingual non-profit organization, we represent a membership of 400 artists and arts organizations from all arts disciplines at all levels of practice located across the City. We create opportunities for artists, provide promotional, professional development and shared resources and collaborate with partners to lead on key important city-wide initiatives.

Together, we thank the previous Council for their unanimous support of the City's 6 Year Renewed Action Plan for Arts, Heritage & Culture including the important infrastructure investments in Arts Court and La Nouvelle Scene. We strongly endorse this multi-year planning model consistent with the Mayor's desire for such planning throughout the City's departments. As we reach the third year of the Cultural Action plan, we look forward to working with members of Council and City Staff to ensure that this well-researched plan remains on track.

CAROLE ANNE: Ottawa Festivals commitment to keeping the Renewed Action Plan includes getting the word out about Ottawa's vibrant local culture.

To this end, Ottawa Festivals is continuing dialogue and action towards the feasibility of a centralized ticketing and information hub for the City. This initiative supports easier information sharing and ticket sales for events hosted by our many community partners, especially as we head towards 2017.

Ottawa Festivals is inspired by and committed to Mayor Watson's 2017 vision. And, as you know, the Mayor has encouraged our City and our network to "aim high" to support this vision.

Our members have much to create and accomplish as the City approaches 2017 celebrations.

Establishing a first-ever baseline of our members' economic impact in 2015, and measuring again post-2017 will help us understand the value of our contributions, and how we can maximize and leverage that value for the City beyond 2017.

Now is a pivotal time for the City to make investments in our industry and community, as we plan with vigorous momentum to animate everything in our orbit, and showcase our City to the world. Ottawa Festivals look forward to working together with the City, with Councilors, our members, service organizations, tourism and local business partners to this end.

VICTORIA: Our Arts Council just completed a survey of the local arts community to identify their needs and priorities for the future. It will come as no surprise that opportunities to promote the wonderful work that they are doing was right near the top of the list, promoting to both tourists and local residents. They are interested in providing incentives for people to discover the city's cultural assets beyond the national institutions, assets that exist throughout our region. Ottawa is geographically the largest city in Canada with a richness and cultural diversity that makes it in many ways a microcosm of Canada. Let's put our culture on the map.

We see in 2017 some unique opportunities to profile Ottawa's culture and have some strategic recommendations. We hope, as the Mayor has said, that 2017 will offer a year of Ottawa legacy building investments and not just a great party. But to present the best that Ottawa has to offer in two years from now, 2015 is a critical time to invest in those priorities in the Culture Action Plan that address marketing tools and cultural tourism. We wish to partner with the City's 2017 initiative to ensure that we avoid duplication and take full advantage of this strategic timing.

The Mayor has spoken about the importance of creativity and innovation as drivers of our local economy and these skills are at the heart of the arts community. Ottawa's cultural workforce represents 4.7% of Ottawa jobs and the cultural sector makes up 3.7% of Ontario's GDP. Ottawa is #1 in the Martin Prosperity Rankings for 'Rise of the Creative Class' and both Invest Ottawa and Ottawa Tourism cite cultural assets as reasons to visit or do business in Ottawa. Our city is full of entrepreneurs including the independent collaborative creators behind arts groups such as The Gladstone Theatre, Enriched Bread Studios, the Ottawa Fringe Festival and the new Megaphono music industry showcase. These are good investments - the City's own research demonstrates the leveraging power of its investments in the arts with one dollar generating between \$6 and \$12 from the private sector and other levels of funding.

CAROLE ANNE - We are confident that your 2015 Budget deliberations will be responsive and forward thinking. In the months to come, City Council will be identifying the Key Priorities and Strategic Initiatives for the full term of Council. We look forward to working in partnership with you to ensure that implementation of the Cultural Action Plan around 2017 will be among those Priorities.