

## **State Arts Funding Dilemma Subject of NET Television Special**

LINCOLN, Neb. (Dec. 5, 2007) -- Omaha has the Holland Performing Arts Center. In Lincoln there is the Lied Center for Performing Arts. Even the south-central Nebraska community of Minden has a newly restored opera house. To the casual observer, the arts scene in Nebraska seems to be thriving.

But there is a dark side. Over the past decade the number of arts organizations has increased far faster than available funding, leaving numerous nonprofit arts entities struggling to survive.

"State of the Arts: A Nebraska Connects Special," airing Thursday, Dec. 20, at 7 p.m. CT on NET1, takes a look at the current state of the arts in Nebraska, immediately followed by a round-table discussion of the situation.

The first half-hour is a documentary exploring how different arts organizations are dealing with this dilemma, including innovative fundraising and novel performance interpretations. It looks at how larger arts organizations such as Opera Omaha and the Holland Center, as well as smaller organizations like Lincoln's Meadowlark Music Festival, have a better chance of surviving the funding crisis. It is the mid-size organizations that are the toughest hit by the funding shortfall.

Omaha's Blue Barn Theatre is cited as one example of a mid-sized arts organization having problems. Succeeding in this difficult time is Omaha's Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts which is attempting to solve its financial hardships through a variety of inventive techniques including kick boxing exhibitions to attract a new and younger audience that might not ordinarily go to an art gallery.

Following the documentary portion of the program, NET Television's Mike Tobias moderates a panel discussion about the state of the arts in Nebraska that will touch on topics like public vs. private funding of arts organizations and who controls what we get to see and hear in Nebraska.

Scheduled to participate in the half-hour dialogue are: John Heaston, publisher/editor of *The Reader*, an Omaha publication that emphasizes arts coverage; Dave Nabity, an Omaha businessman who was a Republican candidate for governor in 2006 and is a jazz drummer; and Deb Weber, executive director of the Lincoln Arts Council.

"State of the Arts: A Nebraska Connects Special" can also be seen on NET1 on Sunday, Dec. 23, at 11 p.m. CT and Thursday, Dec. 27, at 10 p.m. CT. The program will air on NET2 on Sunday, Dec. 23, at 1 p.m. CT; Wednesday, Dec. 26, at 8 p.m. CT; and Monday, Dec. 31, at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. CT.

The documentary portion of "State of the Arts: A Nebraska Connects Special" was funded in part by the Nebraska Arts Council. The program is a production of NET Television for broadcast on NET1 and NET2. NET Television is a service of NET. For a complete program schedule, visit NET's Web site ([netNebraska.org/television](http://netNebraska.org/television)).

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**NET Television:**

**NET1** is Nebraska's first public television broadcast service and includes PBS and award-winning, locally produced public television programming; **NET2** offers live coverage of the Nebraska Unicameral, Spanish language programming and other acquired or locally produced programs; **NET3** is a 24-hour channel featuring the most popular how-to, travel and lifestyle series; and **NET-HD** presents high-definition digital broadcast programming displayed in a wide-screen format.