



Legislative Update

The Legislature returned at noon on January 12, to complete the 106th General Assembly. After opening formalities, both Houses recessed and were called into a special session by the Governor. Special Sessions are occasionally called by a Governor to address a single topic. This Special Session was called to address changes that the Governor felt needed to be made in the State's education law. The changes proposed by the Governor were recommended to the Legislature to improve the current education system and strengthen the State's application for "Race to the Top" grant dollars.

Since the "Race to the Top" proposal is due in Washington by "Close of Business" on Tuesday, January 20, the Legislature had to make the changes by then.

When the Legislature goes back into regular session, committees will get underway and begin to address proposed bills.

TFTA's main focus this session will be to protect specialty tag revenue. When the Governor presents his budget on February 1, it will show a 9% decrease in all state agencies including the Tennessee Arts Commission. Since license plate revenue is a designated revenue source, and is not subject to the 9%, it very important that its status as a designated revenue source continue.

The overall tone for this Session is a somber one. Revenue collections are under the projected estimates that were made for the current year and it is likely that additional cuts may be necessary to the current budget as well.

One advantage that we as arts advocates have that many others who depend on state resources do not have is the ability to promote and encourage the sale of specialty tags. Now is the time to do so.

SAVE THE DATE!!!

**Arts Advocacy Day on the Hill
Legislative Luncheon**

Wednesday, March 10, 2010



TFTA is making plans for an impactful Arts Advocacy Day on the Hill and we hope you will plan to join us for this important occasion. During this challenging economic time, the numbers are crucial in making a strong statement to our legislators about the importance of the arts to Tennesseans. We need you!

This year, we will be inviting our legislators to join us for lunch on the James K. Polk Theater stage at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center (just across the street from the Legislative Plaza). This will be a great opportunity to have quality time with your legislator in a relaxed atmosphere, with music, lunch, and time to thank our legislators and remind them of the importance of the arts in our communities.

Please plan to attend a legislative briefing beginning at 10:00a.m. in the theater. Following the briefing, you will have time to go escort your legislators back to the theater for lunch. Further details are being finalized and will be forthcoming in the days ahead.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Promote Plates for The Arts

The Tennessee Arts Commission and TFTA have worked together to produce three new ads to promote the sale of license plates. As mentioned above, the sale of these plates will be absolutely vital in order to continue to support the arts across this state. Please use these ads in your newsletters, programs, direct mail, and any other publication to help spread the word. To receive the artwork, contact Lydia Light at Lydia.Light@tn.gov or 615.741.1703.

A Call For Members

As you know, TFTA is an organization supported by memberships. We are only as strong as the number of Tennesseans we represent. When we are working with legislators, it is important that we be able to tell them we have strong support for the arts in their districts - not just a handful of members. Consider this:

- Individual memberships are only \$25. If you are with an organization that is already a member, that's fantastic, but your individual membership is also important. If you are not already an individual or family member of TFTA, please consider becoming a member yourself. TFTA's case for the arts in Tennessee is all about numbers!
- Ask your board of directors and staff to become members.
- Offer joint memberships. For example, some arts organizations have offered a small discount if people join both their organization and TFTA at the same time. (Contact Sameera at Sameera@comcast.net to work out details.)



Thank you for your support!



TFTA Announces New Membership Category for Teachers

In order to engage our educators and send the message of the importance of art education, TFTA has created a new category of membership solely for teachers. In addition to our current discounted rate for students, TFTA now offers a teacher membership for \$15. TFTA urges all educators to take advantage of this membership to access valuable arts education advocacy tools and send the message that educators realize the value of the arts for our children.

Please help us reach our teachers by spreading the word in your communities and within your local school systems. Tennessee's teachers are vital to making the case of the importance of the arts to Tennessee's children.

Teachers may become a member by [clicking here](#).

Tennesseans for the Arts ★ P.O. Box 158966 ★ Nashville, Tennessee 37215
www.tn4arts.org ★ (615) 440-9758

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