



MONTANA ARTS COUNCIL

AN AGENCY OF STATE GOVERNMENT

Strengthening the Creative Economy of Montana

Major transitions ahead for MAC in 2016

By Arni Fishbaugh, Executive Director

Arni Fishbaugh to retire in September and Carleen Layne to retire in April

For many years the Montana Arts Council's accountant Carleen Layne and I promised each other that when we retired we'd do so at the same time. We then came to our senses and realized that this was not the wisest move for the agency.

So, we're putting a six-month window in between our departure dates, with Carleen's retirement set for April and mine for September 30, 2016.

Executive Director search

The executive director of the Montana Arts Council reports to the members of the council, and as such, the council has the responsibility for hiring the new director.

The Montana Arts Council will open a national search in mid-January to fill the position. All applicants will need to apply through the Montana state employment website at statecareers.mt.gov/. The position will be posted mid-January through early May.

The council has developed a search committee that will review applications, and plans to conduct preliminary interviews with semi-finalist candidates in late May or June and interview finalists in-person in July. The new director will take the position in early October.

Accountant search

It will be very difficult to replace Carleen Layne. For the last 37 years she also served as the deputy director and covers many other bases in addition to her accounting duties. We have opened her position on the state's Job Service listing, and we will look to fill this position to enable several weeks of cross-over training between Carleen and the new accountant.

The legislative fiscal auditor told us that, although our agency is small,

Carleen's role as our accountant is one of the most complicated. She leaves very big shoes to fill in so many areas.

Kristin Burgoyne to serve as Deputy Director

Kristin Han Burgoyne, our grants and database director, will assume Carleen's deputy-director duties, which include political, legislative and policy arenas. Kristin has had solid experience in many facets of the agency, having done numerous jobs during her 17-year tenure here. Especially helpful will be her experience testifying in front of legislative committees and knowing how to maneuver through the intricacies, quirks and red flags of the political environment in which we live.

She has been involved in all of the agency's advocacy efforts in recent years. It is important that the deputy director reside in Helena, too, because that is the agency's base of operation. Carleen and I have been purposeful in structuring Kristin's duties during the past several years to include "Deputy-in-Training" roles, so this transition will happen smoothly.

Agency strength lives in many

Since taking this job in 1992, I know for sure that the arts council's strength does not reside in one, or even several people. It lies in the intrinsic leadership of ALL of its current and former staff, board and advocates across the state.

The agency is also vigorous because of the genuine, authentic and meaningful relationships we have with the many faces of the Montana public we serve. We listen, we learn and we try to make sure what we do each day is relevant and valuable to Montanans.

We've been there. We care. And we try to do our best. We have courage and tenacity, and we're not partisan.

We would not even be here were it not for the efforts of the Montana Cultural Advocacy and its chairman Paul Stahl of Helena. He has led the arts advocacy efforts for the agency for decades. There are no words that can aptly describe his value to the arts in the state.

Throughout the years, Paul and the lobbying efforts of the Montana Cultural Advocacy have seen us through countless storms and successes. Lobbyists who have worked for the Cultural Advocacy during my tenure include Gloria Hermanson, Keith Colbo, Chuck Hunter, Jackie Lenmark and Drew Geiger. All did incredible work. Thanks, too, to John Barsness of Montana Arts, the nonprofit arts organization in Bozeman that houses the Cultural Advocacy.

So, to all I say "thank you" for helping the Montana Arts Council weave such a strong pattern into the fabric of Montana. The logo for our agency was designed with this thought in mind ... many fibers woven together into a circle of all Montanans. When you see that logo, I hope you know that you are one of those threads that helps make us so strong.