

Enriching Lives



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LAURA ZUCKER TAPPED TO DEVELOP ARTS + CULTURE LA -- NEW CULTURAL TOURISM MARKETING EFFORT

LOS ANGELES, CA, January 25, 2005 – Laura Zucker, Executive Director of the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, has agreed to develop and launch a new nonprofit that will be responsible for marketing the arts and culture offerings of the Los Angeles region to domestic and international tourists. While maintaining limited but key responsibilities in her role at the Arts Commission during her six-month consulting assignment, Zucker will develop an organizational structure for Arts + Culture LA, identify new funding sources, and finalize a marketing plan. Arts + Culture LA's plans will be guided by an advisory board currently being assembled. Ms. Zucker's consultancy will run January 31 through July 31, 2005.

The formation of "Arts + Culture LA" was catalyzed by last October's report issued by Mayor Jim Hahn's Arts Council that addressed arts and culture priorities for the City of Los Angeles. That report recommended establishing "an independent, non-governmental entity funded by a variety of private and public entities to market LA's cultural assets to domestic and international cultural consumers." In his response to this recommendation Mayor Hahn said, "I am supportive of the work being done by a group of entrepreneurs and cultural leaders who are researching the potential development of a strategy that would help us aggressively market Los Angeles to a national and international audience."

Zucker's six-month assignment with Arts + Culture LA will be funded by a grant from The Eli and Edythe L. Broad Foundation. Philanthropist Eli Broad has been a proponent of the creation of an organization to formally market Los Angeles' cultural offerings.

“Los Angeles is one of the four major cultural capitals in the world, along with Paris, London and New York,” said Broad, who was honorary chairman of the Mayor’s Arts Council. “I am pleased that Laura will get this new organization off the ground to tell the world what we already know: that Los Angeles is home to world class museums, symphony, opera, festivals – in short, the most amazing visual and performing arts in the world.”

A study on the impact of cultural tourism on the economy of Los Angeles County prepared by the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation in November 2004 found that 2.58 million cultural tourists visited Los Angeles County during 2003, spending \$535 million beyond their cultural activities, with an associated economic output of \$1.1 billion. In addition to arts institution employees, these cultural tourists sustained the full-time equivalent of 10,500 jobs in Los Angeles County and generated tax revenues of \$54 million for the state, county and city governments. The potential to increase these revenues is enormous: Compared to Los Angeles, on an annual basis London attracts 10.45 million cultural visitors; New York, 15 million; and Paris, 15.65 million. Doubling the annual number of cultural tourists to Los Angeles County to just over 5 million would leverage a double-fold increase for all measures: economic output, jobs, and tax revenue.

Ms. Zucker said, “This is an exciting opportunity to work with a group of visionary leaders to create what cultural tourism will look like in the next decade, continuing Los Angeles’ leadership in the design and execution of cultural tourism initiatives. I look forward to working closely with Michael McDowell, the recently appointed senior director of cultural tourism for LA Inc., as well as our region’s policy makers, to create an infrastructure that will support our arts organizations and help drive our economy.”

Arts Commission President Carlos C. Barrón said, “The Arts Commission has been a leader in cultural tourism and we are happy to loan our resident expert to help in the development of this important next phase. Cultural tourism benefits not only the arts community, but the community as a whole.”

Ms. Zucker, as executive director of the Arts Commission, a post she has held since 1992, has played a major role fostering cultural tourism in the region. In the 1994 she secured seed funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and matching funding from the County of Los Angeles, the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, and the Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau (LACVB) to create the first director of cultural tourism position in the LACVB, now known as LA Inc. In 1996, the Arts Commission, in concert with the LACVB and the arts commissions of San Diego and San Francisco, launched the first-ever national campaign to promote the rich cultural diversity of the state,

“California: Culture’s Edge.” This campaign, which she co-chaired, was the largest cultural tourism promotion domestically of its time. Under Ms. Zucker’s leadership, the Arts Commission also secured the funding to create, and continues to guide, the online Los Angeles County Cultural Calendar, part of ExperienceLA.com, the region’s leading cultural web portal; the calendar launched in April 2004.

The **Los Angeles County Arts Commission**, Laura Zucker, Executive Director, provides leadership in cultural services of all disciplines for the largest county in the United States, encompassing 88 municipalities. The Arts Commission provides leadership and staffing to support the regional blueprint for arts education, *Arts for All*; administers a grants program that funds more than 250 nonprofit arts organizations annually; funds the largest arts internship program in the country in conjunction with the Getty Grant Program, programs the John Anson Ford Theatres and supports the Los Angeles County Cultural Calendar on ExperienceLA.com. The Commission also produces free community programs, including the L.A. Holiday Celebration broadcast nationally, and a year-round music program that funds more than 60 free concerts each year in public sites. The 2004-2005 President of the Arts Commission is Carlos Barrón.

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