



## *Albertans spent \$2.5 billion on cultural items in 2003*

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Hamilton, ON – *Consumer Spending on Culture in Canada, the Provinces and 15 Metropolitan Areas in 2003*, a new report in the *Statistical Insights on the Arts* series by Hill Strategies Research, shows that Albertans spent \$2.5 billion on cultural goods and services in 2003, or 3.3% of total consumer spending in the province. The \$2.5 billion in consumer spending on culture is five times larger than the \$500 million spent on culture in Alberta by all levels of government in 2002/03. This is the highest consumer-to-government spending ratio of all the provinces.

On a per capita basis, Albertans' cultural spending is the highest of all provinces at \$838 per resident. In fact, Albertans' per capita spending is the highest of all provinces in three of the six cultural spending categories: art supplies and musical instruments, home entertainment, and photographic equipment and services.

About one-and-a-half times as many Alberta households spent at least some money on live performing arts (36% of households) than on live sports events (25%) in 2003, but total spending on these activities was essentially equal (\$90 million on live performing arts and \$89 million on live sports events). Albertans also spent \$140 million on books (excluding school books) and \$52 million on admissions to museums and heritage-related activities in 2003.

Albertans' spending on cultural goods and services grew by 34% between 1997 and 2003, slightly lower than the 37% rise in spending on all goods and services during the same period. These figures have not been adjusted for the 14% inflation in Canada between 1997 and 2003.

Compared to other metropolitan areas in Canada, cultural spending is high in both Calgary and Edmonton. Calgarians spent \$867 each on cultural goods and services in 2003, third among 15 Canadian metropolitan areas, while each Edmontonian spent \$865, fourth among metropolitan areas. Total cultural spending was \$870 million in Calgary and \$810 million in Edmonton in 2003.

The report examines spending on cultural items, not all those who attend cultural activities. Free cultural activities, by definition, are excluded from the survey on which this report is based (Statistics Canada's Survey of Household Spending).

Nationwide, Canadian consumers spent \$22.8 billion on cultural goods and services in 2003, an amount that is greater than consumer spending on tobacco, alcohol and games of chance *combined*. The \$22.8 billion in consumer spending is over three times larger than the \$7.4 billion spent on culture in Canada by all levels of government in 2002/03. The report also shows that consumer spending on live performing arts events (\$980 million) is nearly double the spending on live sporting events (\$530 million).

The \$22.8 billion in consumer spending on culture in Canada represents \$758 for every Canadian resident.

Nationwide, spending on cultural goods and services grew by 36% between 1997 and 2003, much higher than the 14% rise in the Consumer Price Index during the same period. After adjusting for inflation, cultural spending increased by 19% between 1997 and 2003, over three times the 6% growth in the Canadian population. The 36% increase in cultural spending is slightly higher than the 33% increase in consumer spending on all goods and services between 1997 and 2003.

Recent studies using Richard Florida's "bohemian index" have examined the impact of creativity on Canadian metropolitan areas' economic development. The cultural spending report compares the bohemian index ranking with two indicators of cultural spending in 15 Canadian metropolitan areas: per capita cultural spending and per capita spending on art works and events. Overall, it appears that the bohemian index and the two spending indicators do not follow a consistent pattern. Victoria, Calgary and Ottawa rank fairly highly on all three indicators, but the largest metropolitan areas – Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal – rank higher on the bohemian index than on the spending indicators. The reverse is true for Edmonton and Regina, areas that rank higher on the cultural spending indicators than on the bohemian index.

The full report, funded by the Canada Council for the Arts, the Department of Canadian Heritage (Canadian Cultural Observatory and Arts Policy Branch), and the Ontario Arts Council, is available free of charge on the website of Hill Strategies Research (<http://www.hillstrategies.com>) as well as the websites of the funding organizations.

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Hill Strategies Research is a Canadian company that aims to provide top-quality, highly-relevant and insightful research for the arts. For additional information, please contact Mr. Kelly Hill, President, Hill Strategies Research, Hamilton, Ontario – (905) 528-8891 [kelly@hillstrategies.com](mailto:kelly@hillstrategies.com) – <http://www.hillstrategies.com>