

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

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HOUSE BILL 2664*

Short Title: Asheville Art Museum Expansion Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Fisher, Goforth, and Thomas (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Appropriations.

May 28, 2008

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO EXPAND THE ASHEVILLE ART
MUSEUM'S FACILITIES.

Whereas, founded in 1948, the Asheville Art Museum's mission is to engage and inspire individuals and enrich the community through dynamic experiences in American art of the 20th and 21st centuries. The museum's vision is to transform lives through art; and

Whereas, the museum promotes the integration of the arts into the daily life of Western North Carolina and the Southeast, provides opportunities for access to, experience with, and enjoyment of, the finest visual arts through meaningful programs and provides professional stewardship of its collections and its other resources. It is a place of education, exploration, and inspiration, an advocate for the arts and artists, an economic engine, and the preeminent arts resources for the city, county, region, and across North Carolina; and

Whereas, the museum is the only art museum serving the 24 counties of Western North Carolina. Between 2006 and 2007, 88,635 people participated in museum programs, including visitors from 49 states. Last year, the museum provided residents, visitors, cultural tourists, students, and teachers with more than 41,000 contact hours of arts programming. Over 15,700 children in grades K-12 from across Western North Carolina were served by the museum's valuable and otherwise unavailable programs. The museum partners with Asheville City Schools and the county school systems of Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Macon, McDowell, Mitchell, Transylvania, and Yancey to provide programming, which promotes the arts in and of themselves and as viable and successful means of teaching core competencies. In some cases, museum educational programming is the only arts education these students receive; and

Whereas, data gathered through a 2004 study commissioned by the museum indicated that at that time the museum annually generated an average of \$2.7 million in

1 local economic impact, including \$63,000 in local government revenue, a positive
2 impact that benefits Western North Carolina each and every year; and

3 Whereas, total museum participation exceeded 1.2 million people between
4 2001 and 2007. The museum's permanent collection grew from 900 to over 2,200 works
5 of art between 1996 and 2008, yet only 3% of the work held on behalf of Western North
6 Carolina can be exhibited at present because of space limitations; and

7 Whereas, the museum has outgrown its current facility in Pack Place and
8 must increase public education and exhibition space to continue to meet the region's
9 needs. This is crucial if the museum is to continue in a leadership role in the
10 developmental, educational, and economic health of downtown Asheville, Buncombe
11 County, and the Western North Carolina region; and

12 Whereas, the planned expansion project, with a preliminary construction cost
13 of \$18 million, will have a significant positive economic impact. It will generate as
14 much as \$31.7 million in regional economic impact, with up to 80% of construction
15 funds spent locally. Direct spending in the community by museum participants on
16 parking, meals, and retail is anticipated at \$4.7 million in the first year following
17 expansion and at similar levels in subsequent years. The expanded museum will be a
18 new cultural destination for important special exhibitions, education programs,
19 entertainment, retail, and dining – an education and economic engine in the heart of
20 Asheville; and

21 Whereas, the museum is working with renowned architect James Stewart
22 Polshek, local architects, and community members to design a dynamic facility that will
23 preserve the historic Pack Library Building, create a destination for the State's best-
24 known arts region, and anchor the new Pack Square Park; and

25 Whereas, the museum has already received gifts and pledges totaling \$4.7
26 million, including vital support from the Buncombe County Tourism Development
27 Authority, planning grants from both Buncombe County and the City of Asheville, and
28 has been named a priority project in the Hub Project plan and by the Asheville Area
29 Chamber of Commerce; and

30 Whereas, the State demonstrated commitment to the project with an initial
31 appropriation of \$25,000 during the 2005 legislative session. The museum has also
32 received \$11,300 in planning grants from the North Carolina Arts Council; Now,
33 therefore,

34 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

35 **SECTION 1.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Asheville
36 Art Museum Association, Incorporated, a nonprofit organization, the sum of two
37 hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) for the 2008-2009 fiscal year to help the
38 museum complete the schematic design phase of the expansion project. Expansion of
39 the museum's current facilities will provide the museum with additional space for
40 changing and permanent collection exhibitions, educational public programs,
41 community meetings, media presentations, lectures and performances, retail sales, and
42 storage. The Asheville Art Museum is the only visual arts organization of its kind
43 serving the 24 counties that comprise Western North Carolina, an area of 10,601 square

1 miles with a population of 1,386,871, representing sixteen percent (16%) of the State's
2 population and twenty-two percent (22%) of the land area in North Carolina.

3 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2008.