County approves nearly $10M in ZAP funding for arts, culture

ZAP tax » Funding approved by voters in 1997 funnels resources to large
By Mike Gorrell | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Nov 12 2013 07:09 pm • Updated 3 hours ago

For its 30th anniversary of bringing art to people who are usually ignored, Art Access/VSA Utah received a welcome gift Tuesday — membership in 2014’s group of large cultural organizations that will divide the lion’s share of revenue from Salt Lake County’s Zoo, Arts and Parks (ZAP) tax.

"Happy anniversary to us. Happy anniversary to us," sang Art Access Executive Director Sheryl Gillilan after the County Council approved an advisory committee’s recommendation that included her nonprofit as one of 23 recipients of top-tier ZAP funding.

Based on projected tax collection trends, those large cultural groups will split about $9.8 million next year, a slight increase over what was available in 2013. In addition, Utah Zoological Society will receive $2.3 million to help operate Utah’s Hogle Zoo and Friends of Tracy Aviary will get $134,000 for its facility in Liberty Park.

Art Access’s share of the ZAP tax is likely to be $63,000 next year. That’s not a lot of money, but for Gillilan, being included among the large cultural organizations means "we have a chance for more stable contributions annually from the county ZAP tax."

And that stability, she added, probably will translate into more favorable responses from other philanthropic groups Art Access approaches to help underwrite its programs for people with disabilities, refugees, the elderly, homeless and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.

"We have a veterans program," Gillilan noted, in which military veterans are charged only $10 for six-week art workshops "because we want it to be accessible to vets who don’t have a lot of money."

Art Access also goes into special-education classes in schools and to centers for adults with disabilities to give people in those institutions a chance to be creative.

"Our philosophy is that art belongs to everyone, everyone can create it and everyone can view it," she added. "We make art extra accessible to people so we don’t charge much and we need to subsidize that with ZAP-tax money and foundation support."

The advisory committee received 25 requests for funding.
said its chairwoman, Stephanie Probst, who outlined a points system used to grade each application.

Art Access accumulated more points than Kingsbury Hall at the University of Utah, which fell out of the top group after having received $202,000 last year, she said.

The Leonardo, a science and technology-oriented museum in Salt Lake City, did not qualify as a top-tier ZAP tax recipient because it did not have three years of operating experience, Probst said. To be considered a large cultural organization, a group also has to have an annual budget of at least $319,000 for the past three years.

As usual, Utah Symphony & Opera was the largest individual recipient of ZAP tax funding, projected to receive $2.25 million next year. Ballet West will get the next largest share of the arts and culture share of funding ($950,000), followed closely by Hale Center Theatre ($928,000), Red Butte Garden and Arboretum ($867,000) and the Natural History Museum of Utah ($838,000).

In 1997, county voters approved ZAP, a sales tax of one penny on every $10 spent, to support arts, cultural and zoological organizations and park projects.

Large cultural organizations split almost 49 percent of the annual proceeds, parks and recreation gets 30 percent, Hogle Zoo and Tracy Aviary divide 12 percent, and a hundred-plus small arts groups subdivide the remaining 9 percent.
wow - - dietlan /’hales are going to have a great Christmas this year - sandy building them a new theater and $928,000 in Zap and not counting their incredibly expensive shows with the same cast over and over and over again.....

17 hours ago  10 likes

Why does Hale need a million dollars?

17 hours ago  8 likes

Why should the Hale family get one dollar of our tax monies?
i don’t have any problems with the zap tax. it gives a lot of opportunity to many youth in the valley to learn music and the arts. the arts add to our society. however, i would question funding the hale theater group. seems kind of fishy to me.

11 hours ago 3 likes

It was a gross misuse of funds when their animals exist in such poor conditions. Now that I see the Hale Theater getting so much help, lump them in as well.

6 hours ago 1 likes

Click here to read all comments  Click here to post a comment

About Reader Comments
Reader comments on sltrib.com are the opinions of the writer, not The Salt Lake Tribune. We will delete comments containing obscenities, personal attacks and inappropriate or offensive remarks. Flagrant or repeat violators will be banned. If you see an objectionable comment, please alert us by clicking the arrow on the upper right side of the comment and selecting “Flag comment as inappropriate”. If you’ve recently registered with Disqus or aren’t seeing your comments immediately, you may need to verify your email address. To do so, visit disqus.com/account.

See more about comments here.