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Center for Puppetry Arts Awarded \$50,000 NEA Stimulus Grant

ATLANTA, July 2009 – Earlier this week, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) announced that the Center for Puppetry Arts will receive a direct grant of \$50,000 as part of the American Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act to be used for the preservation of jobs in the arts. The Center is one of 9 nonprofit groups within Georgia and only 631 national groups to receive the national funds, which are in addition to state and regional sub-grants that were awarded in April. These funds are part of a \$50 million federal stimulus package allocated by the NEA in support of job recovery programs for nonprofit and local and state public arts agencies.

“Everyone is affected by the economic crisis within our country. This grant greatly helps the Center to continue its mission by preventing reductions in staff” commented founding Executive Director Vincent Anthony. Recently returned from a meeting at the White House Complex about Accessibility and the Arts, he continued, “Like most nonprofits, the Center operates with only essential staff and everyone frequently goes beyond the call of duty. This grant recognizes the work of all nonprofit workers and the role that we play within the arts and education of our country. Even more, this grant recognizes the important role that the arts play within our overall economy.”

According to a Creative Industries 2008 report, more than 2,430 arts-related businesses employ 23,198 people in Atlanta alone. Nationally, more than 612,000 people work within arts-related businesses. Arts-centric businesses account for 4.3 percent of all businesses and 2.2 percent of all jobs within the United States, illustrating the importance of the arts and arts workers within the national economy. The NEA contributes to the development and economic growth of communities nationwide. According to Americans for the Arts, the nonprofit arts industry generates \$166.2 billion annually in economic activity, supports 5.7 million full-time equivalent jobs and returns \$12.6 billion to the federal government in income taxes.

All of the Center’s positions retained by the economic stimulus grant are critical to the Center’s mission and were in jeopardy due to the current economic downturn. “It’s a big relief and a huge blessing,” commented Anthony. “These funds will allow us to continue to produce our shows, staff our museum, and provide educational workshops for our patrons. Our staff is great and when I asked them to reduce their budgets, in order to meet our financial challenges, everyone tightened their belts. While we’re not out of the woods yet, our reduced budget combined with this generous grant and the continued support of our donors helps us to continue to fulfill our mission.”

The Center for Puppetry Arts’ mission is to entertain and enlighten audiences, nurture the world community of artists, expand the puppetry art form, and explore its past, present, and future. The largest U.S. nonprofit organization dedicated to puppetry, the Center offers performance, museum, and education programming for all ages. The Center typically has 250,000+ annual admissions to its ticketed programs and serves an audience base which is 50% minority and which is state-, region-, and nation-wide as well as international.

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Center for Puppetry Arts is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization and is supported in part by contributions from corporations, foundations, government agencies, and individuals. Major funding is provided by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners under the guidance of the Fulton County Arts Council. Major support is provided by the City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs. This program is supported in part by the Georgia Council for the Arts (GCA) through the appropriations from the Georgia General Assembly (GCA is a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts). The Center is a Member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG) and of the Atlanta Coalition of Performing Arts. The Center also serves as headquarters of UNIMA-USA, the American branch of Union Internationale de la Marionnette, the international puppetry organization.