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Theatre Communications Group Continues to Take the Fiscal Pulse of National Not-for-Profit Theatre

Snapshot survey results released today prove valuable to field

As an up-to-the-minute complement to the annual Fiscal Survey, TCG launched a program in 2008 to capture theatre's most current state of affairs through *Taking Your Fiscal Pulse* snapshot surveys. In light of the economic crisis, these surveys have been particularly useful to the field in keeping current about circumstances faced by many theatres. These surveys help managers to benchmark their theatre's condition relative to others' so that they, along with key stakeholders, can get a timely sense of how the field is maneuvering through this difficult time.

The *Taking Your Fiscal Pulse—August 2009* snapshot survey marked TCG's second collaboration with the Association of Performing Arts Service Organizations (APASO), the result of which was participation by over 465 not-for-profit theatres and a greater sense of the state of the national theatre field. This latest report relays national findings on the actual and projected activity for the involved theatres' fiscal years ending anytime between spring 2009 and winter 2010.

"Aggregating fiscal information from the field is one of the most important services that we offer our membership and we are so happy to be able to add these Snapshot Surveys to stay even more current with the economic climate," said Teresa Eyring, TCG executive director.

"We're dealing with a double-sided coin, of course," she continued. "Comparing this year's final or projected final budgets to original budgets, theatres are holding their own with respect to overall ticket sales, trustee contributions and non-trustee individual contributions, but continuing to suffer from diminished corporate and foundation support."

Other highlights of the survey include:

- Around half of theatres surveyed ended or anticipate ending their fiscal year in a deficit situation;

- For nearly half of the theatres, their year-end result was worse than their original budget (i.e., their surplus was less, their deficit was more or they thought they would break even and instead had a deficit);
- The majority of theatres reported that subscription and single tickets sales were similar to or higher than the previous year;
- Theatres are taking a wide variety of budgetary actions in response to the economic crisis. The top 5 are reduction or freeze of salaries (43%); new ticket discounting (40%); generation of additional income through non-ticket sales programming (36%); reduction in the numbers of paid artists, i.e. actors, directors, designers, etc.(36%); and reduction in traveling and conference fees (33%);
- Practices being implemented to address budget issues include 78% using more technology and social networking; 59% engaging in more communication with stakeholders; 51% conducting a revised internal planning process; and 43% sharing services, space and/or operations with other organizations.

“The overall condition,” said Eyring “is one of cautious optimism. 45% of theatres said that they are feeling the impact of the economic crisis, but think things will remain level and/or improve. Once again, on the other side of that coin, a much smaller percentage (22%) said that they are feeling the impact of the economic crisis and worry that an even worse condition is coming.”

The survey was designed to be completed in 10 minutes or less with multiple choice questions, checklists and rating scales. The data in this report was not verified against theatres’ audits. Each question in the survey was calculated leaving out theatres that skipped that particular question. The report was compiled by Zannie Giraud Voss and Glenn B. Voss, with Christopher Shuff and Ilana B. Rose.

For more information on TCG’s research efforts including the Snapshot Surveys, *Theatre Facts* and other projects, visit the [Tools & Research](#) section of the TCG website.

Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre, exists to strengthen, nurture and promote the professional not-for-profit American theatre. Its programs serve nearly 700 member theatres and affiliate organizations and more than 12,000 individuals nationwide. As the US Center of the International Theatre Institute, TCG connects its constituents to the global theatre community. In all of its endeavors, TCG seeks to increase the organizational efficiency of its member theatres, cultivate and celebrate the artistic talent and achievements of the field and promote a larger public understanding of, and appreciation for, the theatre. TCG is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. www.tcg.org.