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Focus: Arts & Entertainment

Corps. create a relationship between businesses and arts

By Ann Dunton

The Providence accounting firm of Paul Martin, Inc., is exhibiting fine art in its Colle Collection, a move by Rhode Island artists. The firm has established a program, called the "Arts Corps," to encourage the relationship between the state's businesses and cultural communities, something that is very important, "as the culture is the lifeblood of our state," according to Paul Martin, Jr., the firm's chairman.

"We think our program, which is a part of the Arts Corps, will help us to expand the business community that can be grown and expanded. Not a lot of attention has been paid to the business community, and we'd like to see what we can do to help it grow," Hagan said.

Other corporations have also sought to integrate Rhode Island artists into their culture, often through sponsorships. Some of the most prominent examples include:

- The Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, which awards grants to artists and arts organizations.
- The Rhode Island Business Council, which encourages partnerships between businesses and the arts.
- The Rhode Island Museum, which features exhibits on local artists.
- The Rhode Island Historical Society, which maintains a collection of Rhode Island arts.

Businesses are encouraged to consider the arts as a part of their corporate strategy. The Rhode Island Arts Department, for example, offers a "business art" program, which provides resources and support for businesses interested in integrating the arts into their operations.

"There are many ways for businesses to get involved," Hagan said. "They can support local arts organizations, sponsor public art projects, or even create their own art collections. The key is to find a way to connect with the arts that works for your company."