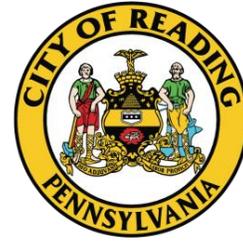


*Contact Information:*

Jessica Didow  
610.655.6304  
media@readingpa.org



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Arts-based Community Development Investment for Reading, PA**

***City of Reading one of 66 National Endowment for the Arts Our Town projects selected nationwide***

READING, PA – August 4, 2014 – The City of Reading will receive \$75,000 in an National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant to implement a public art initiative in downtown Reading. NEA Chairman Jane Chu announced plans to award 66 Our Town grants totaling \$5.073 million and reaching 38 states in the Our Town program's fourth year of funding.

Projects that are awarded funding through the NEA's Our Town program illustrate that excellent art is as fundamental to a community's success as land-use, transportation, education, housing, infrastructure, and public safety, helping build stronger communities that are diverse in geography and character.

The Our Town Program funds arts-based community development projects in a way that is authentic, equitable, and augments existing local assets. Since Our Town's inception in 2011 and including these projects, the NEA will have awarded 256 Our Town grants totaling more than \$21 million in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The City of Reading was awarded \$75,000 to implement The Downtown Reading Creative Placemaking Project. This project, which is comprised of two components, THIS IS READING and the Main Street Public Art Initiative, seeks to foster community interaction while building upon and shaping a sense of community identity.

"These public art projects add excitement to the ongoing momentum that's underway in Downtown Reading," commented Mayor Spencer. "They give our citizens the chance for their story to be told by the City's own artists, in a dynamic environment."

THIS IS READING is a free, multimedia art exhibition that blends live performance, audio, and visual media that explores the stories of Reading residents. Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Lynn Nottage is at the helm of New York-based Market Road Films, which is working in partnership with LAByrinth Theater Company and other partners on the THIS IS READING installation and the play that will complement it.

The Main Street Public Art Initiative is an ongoing art program that includes the work of local artists. The City of Reading, GoggleWorks Center for the Arts, and Downtown Improvement District will conduct a call for public art and manage a juried competition to select pieces for installation in Downtown Reading.

"The City of Reading demonstrates the best in creative community development and whose work will have a valuable impact on its community," said Chairman Chu. "Through Our Town funding, arts

organizations continue to spark vitality that support neighborhoods and public spaces, enhancing a sense of place for residents and visitors alike."

The City of Reading will work in partnership with several organizations in order to implement THIS IS READING as well as the Main Street Downtown Public Art Initiative. Our local partners include The Downtown Improvement District, GoggleWorks Center for the Arts, and the Reading Film Commission.

For questions about The Downtown Reading Creative Placemaking Project, please contact Crystal Edwards, Community Development Manager, City of Reading.

# # #