

St. Croix Valley groups will assess the need for 'art space'

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A coalition of arts groups in the St. Croix Valley area plans to explore the idea of creating a designated "art space" in the Stillwater-Lake Elmo region.

The St. Croix Valley Community Foundation announced Wednesday that the task force will conduct a study to determine what the cultural needs are for the area.

"For some time, the idea of a new performing or cultural art space has surfaced repeatedly -- often by different organizations considering separate projects," Jill Shannon, director of community partnerships at the St. Croix Valley Community Foundation, said in a news release.

Artspace Inc., a Minneapolis-based real estate developer for the arts, has been chosen to conduct the study, which is scheduled to be completed in the fall.

City and community leaders will be interviewed to gauge the political will and support for an art space, Shannon said.

Later, local artists will be surveyed to determine their interest in affordable rental studio space for living and/or working.

Shannon said the task force is not proposing a particular solution, such as a performance arts center in Stillwater. Rather, the coalition will use the study findings to make a recommendation on how best to address the art space issue.

Other task force members are ArtReach Alliance, Lake Elmo Regional Art Center, the Phipps Center for the Arts, Stillwater Community Education, Theatre Associates of Stillwater and Trinity Lutheran Church.

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