

Highlights

- Saved historic school building
- School will be named for famous musician from Marion
- Combines music and arts
- Artists already signed up to teach classes



This "survival story" was completed as part of the Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative with support from the ARC and NEA

What began as a challenge – saving a historic school building from demolition – has emerged as a vision for the southwest Virginia town of Marion to stimulate economic development by creating the Wayne C. Henderson School of Appalachian Arts as a place that will celebrate and share the area’s traditional Appalachian music and arts.



The school will be named in honor of world-renowned musician Wayne C. Henderson.

“The building was the first high school in Smyth County,” says Ken Heath, Marion’s Director of Economic and Community Development. “The county was looking at expansion of the courthouse and planned to tear down the building for a parking deck. The community said no. They went to the board of supervisors and stomped their feet and they won.”

Success in preventing demolition raised the next question, Heath says: “What are we going to do with it? We bounced around ideas and came up with the school of music and arts. We want to make it part of our overall economic revitalization through cultural heritage

tourism.”

Giving additional credibility to the project was the agreement of Wayne C. Henderson to lend his name to the school and to teach there. A resident of Marion, Henderson is a world-renowned musician and luthier. He is the recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts’ National Heritage Fellowship Award and was honored at the White House in 1995 for his craftsmanship and his playing.

Once the decision was made to save the building, plans moved quickly. Exterior renovations were funded through a federal Community Development Block Grant. Additional grants were secured from the U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development and the Appalachian Regional Commission. Federal and state historic tax credits were also given.

Even with all of the grant funding, the project came up \$500,000 short when bids were taken on the façade’s renovation. The town stepped in again to provide workers to do initial parts of the renovation. When the project is rebid in early 2014, planners hope the costs will be within the existing budget.

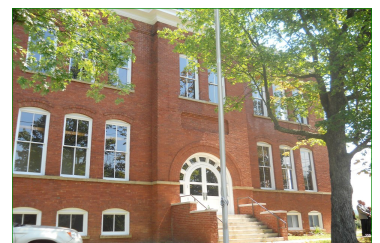
While plans are underway to renovate the building, planning is equally intense to develop the programs, events and activities that will be offered at the center. Although originally envisioned as a music center, in the summer of 2013,

Marion’s Town Council approved a plan to expand the concept to become a multi-use cultural heritage center. The business plan projects approximately 2,500 visitors in the first three years and more than \$650,000 in tuition revenue.

When the Wayne C. Henderson School of Appalachian Arts opens in the fall of 2015, it will offer a wide variety of programs and classes. Artists have already made commitments to serve as instructors for classes on music, instrument construction, painting, sculpture, stained glass, wood turning, fabric arts and theater performance.

“We will even have a commercial canning kitchen where an instructor will teach about canning to help start new businesses,” Heath says.

“The main focus will be Appalachian music and arts,” Heath says. “Marion is on the route of the Crooked Road (a music heritage trail through southwest Virginia) and we also have lots of artists in the area. By combining music and arts, it becomes a center for everybody to come to.”



This 1908 building will soon become the Appalachian Arts School.

Photos courtesy of Marion Downtown Revitalization Association

Highlights

- Awards luncheon held at Statehouse to encourage legislators to attend
- Attendance has more than doubled from 50 to 100+ between 2011 and 2013
- 3-minute success stories provide highlights from the region



This "survival story" was completed as part of the Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative with support from the ARC and NEA

Ohio's Hill Country Heritage Area (OHCHA) has had a heritage awards program since 2002 to recognize successful efforts to keep the region's heritage alive. For the first nine years award winners were recognized at an awards ceremony in the region. In 2011, OHCHA teamed up with Heritage Ohio to move the event to the state capitol in Columbus, Ohio. For the last three years, the two organizations have teamed up to offer an "Appalachian Heritage Luncheon" at the Ohio Statehouse.

"We knew that having the awards ceremony in Columbus would make it easier for legislators to attend, and if legislators are more aware of what is happening they will be more likely to support other endeavors in their region," notes Amy Grove, secretary of OHCHA. To increase the appeal of the luncheon, legislators are invited to lunch as guests of OHCHA and Heritage Ohio and the event is kept to two hours in length (including a tour of the Statehouse by the architect in charge of the most recent restoration).

Grove adds "the Statehouse event has grown over the last three years to the point where last year we had to move from a small meeting room in the Statehouse to the atrium, and we actually had legislators from outside the region crash the event to hear the speakers. A key measure of our success is the fact that we get the legislators themselves, not only their aides, and they stay for the



The 2013 Appalachian Heritage Luncheon at the Ohio Statehouse attracted more than 100 guests (including a number of legislators), more than double the attendance of the first luncheon in 2011. Photo courtesy John Winnenberg

entire lunch." The first awards lunch in 2011 had approximately 50 attendees and by the most recent lunch in 2013, attendance had more than doubled.

The luncheon features speakers from the region who present "Three Minute Success Stories" on topics such as heritage tourism, Main Street, the arts, festivals, tourism, local foods and more. The three minute deadline is strictly enforced with an egg timer and warnings about how much time each speaker has left.

From 2011 to 2013, OHCHA and Heritage Ohio hosted the lunch in September, this year the event was moved to May to avoid a conflict with Heritage Ohio's annual conference. While March is traditionally the time that constituents and organizations lobby their legislators, OHCHA and Heritage Ohio wanted to host this event at a different time

of year as an educational opportunity for elected officials. "It's a very convenient way for legislators to get to know the region better, and we hope that down the road that interest will transfer to support both financial and legislative," observes Grove.

Plans for future enhancements for the awards lunch include adding a slide show of images to appear behind each of the speakers during the three minute success stories, and thoughts of inviting legislators to introduce the success story presenters might guarantee that key legislators are in attendance.

Highlights

- First offered in 2011
- Festival has expanded from 1 to 2 weeks
- Number of Learnshops increased from 60 to 211
- Tickets sold increased from 264 to 1149.
- Participants are staying longer and taking more classes, increasing the economic impact



This "survival story" was completed as part of the Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative with support from the ARC and NEA

City and tourism leaders in Berea Kentucky (population 14,000) knew the arts were a big part of Berea's appeal, but they wanted to find new ways to use the arts as an economic revitalization tool. With that in mind, Berea's leaders looked at a number of successful folk art schools across Appalachia--yet none seemed like the right model for Berea.



When the Kentucky Arts Council designated Berea as one of three pilot "Cultural Districts" in Kentucky, Berea had a chance to take part in a comprehensive cultural asset survey which opened their eyes to new opportunities.

Berea Tourism director Belle Jackson notes "I've been here for fifteen years and I thought I knew everything Berea had to offer, but the cultural asset survey really made us revisit who we were and what we had to offer." Among Jackson's undiscovered assets were more artists, award-winning authors and an outdoor trail system and a reservoir. "We had previously overlooked some of our natural assets because we were so focused on the arts," Jackson explains.

The cultural asset survey resulted in the creation of the "Festival of Learnshops," an

annual July event featuring artist-led workshops. Participating workshop leaders attend a "Master the Art of Workshop" program with training in customer service and teaching skills. To create a sense of warm hospitality, trainers are asked to contact all participants in their class before the workshop to welcome them. In addition, artists are asked to cook something such as brownies or cookies at home to offer to their class. "Excellent customer service is an important part of the learnshop programs, yet artists may not have any training in hospitality or teaching skills" notes Jackson.

To minimize risk for participating artists, the City of Berea and Berea Tourism absorb costs that artists might have a difficult time covering including providing insurance and liability coverage. They also ensure that artists do not lose money if a workshop is undersubscribed. Artists are



Through Berea's Festival of Learnshops artists offer workshops in dulcimer making, glassblowing, jewelry making, painting, photography, blacksmithing, mushroom growing, banjo playing, storytelling and more during two weeks in July.



asked to set a fair price and determine how many participants they needed to break even. If a class does not attract the minimum number of participants, Berea Tourism and the City tap into a "debt pool" to cover unsold registrations to be sure that every class at least breaks even. As yet another benefit for participating artists, if additional class spaces are available those spots are offered for free to other artists in Berea to give back to the local artist community.



The Festival of Learnshops was launched in July 2011 with 9 days of workshops. Hoping for 50 participants, the festival attracted 264 in the first year. In 2012 the festival was expanded to 17 days. With a goal of doubling attendance to 500, the festival's second year drew 921 participants. The festival's third year in 2013 drew 1,149 class registrations representing 590 students. "We found that as people learn about the festival they make plans to come and stay for a longer period of time so they can take several different classes during the festival," explains Jackson. "The extended stays benefit local hotels, restaurants and other businesses as well."

To ensure that all businesses in the community benefit from the influx of Learnshop students, classes are asked to pause from noon to 1:30 to encourage students to visit Berea's restaurants for lunch, and no classes are held on Wednesday afternoons to allow festival goers time to explore Berea's shops.



Teachers make up a large contingent of the learnshop participants. To encourage teacher participation, the classes are accredited through Eastern Kentucky University for professional development credit. The classes are structured to help teachers incorporate art in the classroom to meet the state's curriculum standards for arts education.



Participants in the 2013 Festival of Learnshops hailed from 23 states and 3 foreign countries. Jackson estimates that the nominal investment in coordination has paid off with millions of dollars in economic impact for the area. Jackson describes the program as a win-win for Berea, providing additional revenue for artists and adding to the economic vitality of downtown Berea. She observes "every community has an artist that can teach a class if they have some support behind them."



Photos courtesy Berea Tourism

Find more "Survival Stories" in the Cultural Heritage Tourism Survival Toolkit at www.preservationnation.org/survival-toolkit

Highlights

- Grew out of Learnshops
- Promote off season

As an outgrowth of the successful Festival of Learnshops in Berea, Kentucky (population 14,000), Berea Tourism is developing a series of “H.O.W.” Workshops (Hands-On Workshops). While the Festival of Learnshops was designed to be held at the height of Berea’s busy season in July, Berea Tourism director Belle Jackson plans to use the HOW workshops to increase tourism in the slower winter months.

Jackson explains “we’d like to make education in artisan skills and crafts accessible to everyone, and the H.O.W. program gives our visitors a chance to learn about trade crafts from our most talented artists and craftspeople.”

Workshop offerings include jewelry making, sculpting, stained glass, glass blowing as well as other art forms and trade crafts. As an additional holiday workshop offering, the “Twelve Days of Christmas” event features



target for H.O.W workshops, Jackson hopes to create a year-round calendar of workshop offerings that will appeal to teachers as well as groups such as Elderhostel or corporations looking for team building retreat activities.

know the artists and craftspeople and learn more from them about how to actually create something .

Berea Tourism maintains a calendar of H.O.W. workshop offerings on Berea’s website at bera.com, and workshops can also be scheduled on request for groups. “We’ve found that the cultural heritage travelers who come to Berea have a strong interest in experiential learning” observes Jackson. “Our visitors don’t just want to see or shop for art or crafts, they also want to get to



Photos courtesy Berea Tourism



“Make it-Take it-Give it” workshops for the holiday season. While the slower winter months are the initial



This “survival story” was completed as part of the Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative with support from the ARC and NEA

Highlights

- Feasibility study of artists and opportunity
- Restored bank building in downtown Galax
- Classes and programs attract locals and students from across the country
- Volunteer program growing by word-of-mouth
- Next project—woodworking studio



This "survival story" was completed as part of the Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative with support from the ARC and NEA

Everyone who lives in the small Southwestern Virginia town of Galax knew there were plenty of talented musicians and artists in the area. But were there enough to build a new diversified creative economy to counteract the loss of more than 1,200 manufacturing jobs in the early years of the 21st century?

In 2003, the idea for a school for the arts emerged when local leaders from the City of Galax and the Arts Council of the Twin Counties attended business development sessions at the Crossroads Institute, a small business incubator in Galax.

"The demographics of artists show they are highly educated, creative and entrepreneurial," says Chris Pollins-Shackleford, executive director of the Chestnut Creek School of the Arts. "Why not give a focus of helping them get themselves into business?"

Today, the answer to that question is the resounding success of the Chestnut Creek School of the Arts. The school is a constant buzz of activity with a continual schedule of artist demonstrations, marketplaces for artists and classes taught by expert local artists including pottery, stained glass, weaving, metalsmithing and watercolor as well as playing the guitar, banjo, mandolin and fiddle. JAM – the Junior Appalachian Musicians program brings in youth to learn about their community's musical heritage.

"The school is the crown jewel of a four-block downtown," says Pollins-Shackleford. "We have become a community center and a place to bring visitors to study and enjoy what is here."

Achieving this success grew out of in-depth research and planning. City officials and community activists made the case for a school for the arts by starting with the necessary research. "With initial funding from the Virginia Tobacco Commission, we did a feasibility study in 2004 to document the talent that was here," says Pollins-Shackleford. "The study confirmed that talent is abundant. We have musicians, luthiers, crafters and contemporary artists. The study justified the original capital funding."

In 2005, the idea was tested with a class sampler which drew participants from Florida, North Carolina, Maryland and Virginia.

Once the research was completed, the search began for grants to build capacity for a capital project, to purchase a building and to

hire staff. Funds were also raised, including grants from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and National Endowment for the Arts, to purchase sewing machines, metal working torches, spinning wheels, kilns and other tools and equipment needed for use in classes. Although the school established 501c3 nonprofit status, it is also part of the city's budget. "The city government has been a responsible steward of grant funds through the years, so funders were apt to trust an application from them," says Pollins-Shackleford.

"The idea was to build a campus downtown, and the ARC was instrumental in initial funding," says Pollins-Shackleford. Funding from the ARC was matched by an anonymous donor in the community and was used to purchase an old bank building which the owner sold for less than market value. "It was renovated using historic tax credits which paid the difference in the cost for construction," Pollins-Shackleford notes.



Workshops such as Masters Music Weekend attract students from across the country to study with local experts in the traditional music of southwest Virginia.



A new woodworking studio will increase the school's offerings with classes in furniture-making, instrument building and general woodworking.

While the bank building renovations were underway, the school incorporated and began creating staff positions. Pollins-Shackleford was hired as executive director in 2008. "We now have two full-time employees – the executive director and the director of marketing and development, plus there are four part-time employees," Pollins-Shackleford says. The new school operated in a leased space until the building renovations were completed. During that time Oldtown Pottery was established as Chestnut Creek's second downtown location.

In 2009, the school moved into its main building. Since then, "we have been growing exponentially," says Pollins-Shackleford. "We set up a structured analysis of growth in classes and students. We track the number of students from out of town, the number of new students and the number of returning students."

As part of the school's responsibility as a city entity, the site is open and provides programming to enhance events and festivals – including more than 1,000 people who came into the building during the 2013 Fiddlers' Convention, the town's largest annual festival.

A strong volunteer base makes the school's operations possible. "We partner with two organizations including a program under Goodwill for seniors and a federally funded social services program. We also participate in a volunteer recruiting fair," Pollins-Shackleford says.

Even with these recruitment activities, Pollins-Shackleford describes the volunteer program as developing "organically. Most are recruited based on their experiences coming into the school. Our reputation as a good place to volunteer is also growing through word-of-mouth."

The school works with the Galax Tourism Department to attract an increasing number of out-of-town visitors with a variety of creative programming opportunities. A grant from the ARC funded a partnership program with the nearby Matthews Living History Farm Museum and the adjacent Matthews State Forest along with local businesses. The program, titled "Appalachian Heritage Classes," was targeted to vacationing families.

"We also create packages with well-known old-time musicians," says Pollins-Shackleford. "For example, we host a 'Music from the Crooked Road' weekend several times each year, which average 15 to 20 students from all over the country. They stay at



An after-school and summer program encourages creativity in youth.

B&Bs, in cabins or at campgrounds where they get discounts for being students. We also give them coupons for meals and shopping.

"We have also seen an increase in bus tours. We offer groups a one-hour dance class with a musician playing. It lets them get off the bus and move around," she says. "It hooks them when they visit and we hope it will get them to come back and stay longer."

The school's success has been recognized with many awards including the Virginia Municipal League's President's Award, the Blue Ridge Crest, LLC Community Leadership Award and the Dominion Artstars "Rising Stars" Award.

Building on this success, the planning process continues to ensure the site's sustainability and growth.

"In 2013 we started an analysis of our growth from the beginning to now," says Pollins-Shackleford. "We are preparing for strategic planning with our board since we have a lot of new board members. Everyone will share the same vision and know what role they play."

The biggest "next step" for the school will be development of a woodworking studio which was part of the school's original plans. This will be the third building in Chestnut Creek's downtown campus. Funding has been secured for the \$1.1 million project including grants from the ARC, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, Virginia Tobacco Commission and U.S. Rural Development. "They all funded us when we started six years ago," Pollins-Shackleford says. "Based on our success, they all recommended that we apply for additional funds for the woodworking studio."

When opened, the studio will add a new element to the school's offerings including classes in furniture-making, instrument building and general woodworking as well as space for woodworkers to make their handcrafted items.

Pollins-Shackleford sees a bright future for the Chestnut Creek School of the Arts: "Our mission is to preserve the rich cultural heritage of this area and to develop the creative economy. We have the human resources, talent and natural resources. When you're surrounded by abundance, it's just a matter of being creative."

Photos courtesy of Chestnut Creek School of the Arts.

Highlights

- Historic Walking Trail
- ArtsWorks Connellsville
- Arch
- Murals
- Sculpture
- New businesses
- Hotel
- Downtown revitalization



Artists painted murals on silos at the local glass factory.



This "survival story" was completed as part of the Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative with support from the ARC and NEA

When Michael Edwards and his partner, Dan, decided to move from Washington D.C. and began searching for a historic home to operate as a bed and breakfast, they found more than they hoped for in Connellsville, a town of 7,500 located in Fayette County in southwestern Pennsylvania. Not only did they find the home they wanted, they found a community that was rich in history just waiting to be shared and a host of creative and talented new friends who were ready to work together to tell Connellsville's story.

The formation of the Fayette County Cultural Trust in 2006 signaled the start of series of ambitious projects and activities focusing on history and the arts. (Founded as the Connellsville Cultural Trust, the organization name was changed in 2010 to reflect its intended county-wide outreach.) Founded with a mission to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors, the organization was undeterred by economic difficulties that arrived on the national scene within the next few years.

"We had lots of assets in the community that we weren't taking advantage of," says Edwards. The long list of assets ranged from stories of the county's world-famous reputation as The Coke Capital of the World from the 1870s to the 1970s when it fueled the steel industry furnaces in nearby Pittsburgh; its role in the Whiskey Rebellion in the 1790s – a protest against taxes on whiskey; to the World War II

-era operation of a canteen at the local railroad station operated by women who fed more than 600,000 troops headed to war, among many other stories. Artistic talent also overflowed in the community with potters, painters, photographers, sculptors and stained glass artisans. In addition to historic and current stories and people, Connellsville's downtown and residential districts retained historic buildings from the city's heyday as an industrial center in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

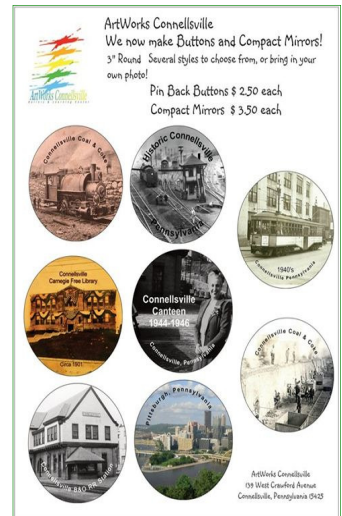
All of these assets contributed to the remarkable results of the Fayette County Cultural Trust, local government and numerous partner agencies and organizations.

A few of the community's projects include:

Connellsville Historic Walking Trail

Work on the historic walking trail got its start with a Gateway Initiative grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Appalachian Regional Commission in 2008. "We started with 11 signs that took people on a two-mile walk through the community and brought them down Main Street," Edwards says. "As we have raised more money, we added five more. We also have signs at the entrances to the city – north and south – to greet people as they come in." The poster-sized signs explain the history of Connellsville through pictures and text. An accompanying brochure with

more information on Connellsville's history and historic buildings can be downloaded from the Trust's website.



ArtWorks Connellsville
Recognizing that Connellsville and the surrounding area had many talented artists and knowing that tourists like to purchase locally made products, the Fayette County Cultural Trust decided to open ArtWorks Connellsville. ArtWorks is a gallery to showcase local art as well as a learning center offering a variety of classes taught by local artists. "It is all run by a volunteer manager. We started with 40 artists – now we are up to 85 local and regional artists," Edwards says. "Since opening three years ago, we have seen a continual increase in visitation including a recent visitor who was from Australia."

Public Art

Creativity has a long history in Connellsville. In 1908, industrialist and art patron Henry Clay Frick had an archway leading into Connellsville constructed from coke and illuminated. “We used that as inspiration for a public art project at the southern gateway,” says Edwards. With funding from the Connellsville Redevelopment Authority, an artist was selected through a competition and public voting to create a 14-foot-tall arch of cast concrete, coal, riveted steel and stained glass. Youghiogeny Glass Factory, located in Connellsville, manufactured the stained glass.

A second public art project was to create murals on three 30-foot-high silos at the Youghiogeny Glass Factory. “We had two artists who painted the four seasons, and they also added a mosaic of stained glass,” Edwards says. “One of the artists was the daughter of the factory’s owner, and the other was a school art teacher.” Other local artists have also painted murals on Connellsville buildings.

The most recent addition to Connellsville’s public art is a sculpture titled “From Coke to Spokes” which reflects the town’s industrial heritage and its connection to the Great Allegheny Passage rail trail. All of the public art pieces are part of the Pennsylvania Trails program.

The Results

These projects and others including a downtown revitalization program, festivals and events throughout the year, construction of the Connellsville Canteen – a building which will house a 25 x 50 foot HO model railroad display and a coffee shop, and many others are yielding visible results in contributing to economic development and increasing tourism for Connellsville.

“In the past four years, 21 new businesses have opened downtown with a good variety of businesses,” Edwards says. “We are also getting a new hotel, the Cobblestone. The company will build a 56-room hotel that is appropriate to the historic downtown.”

Connellsville has also attracted new residents to open bed and breakfasts, including a couple from Florida who found a house the Fayette County Cultural Trust owned and had listed for sale. “They are moving from Florida to run a bed and breakfast and a tea house,” Edwards says.



An arch created in 1908 (above) provided inspiration for a new piece of public art made of cast concrete, coal, riveted steel and stained glass (right).



A sculpture titled “From Coke to Spoke” reflects the town’s industrial heritage and its connection to the Great Allegheny Passage rail trail.



Photos courtesy Fayette County Cultural Trust

Highlights

- Geocaching Trail launched in June 2010
- Appeals to all age levels
- 1,200 official visits logged in first 5 months



This "survival story" was completed as part of the Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative with support from the ARC and NEA

In 2009 the Appalachian Regional Commission announced a grant competition as part of the Gems of Appalachia Initiative to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Grants were available for projects that would enhance Appalachia's gateways to the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia and North Carolina. Recognizing that a key to success would be appealing to many different generations, a team from Rockbridge County in Virginia secured a grant to create a geocaching trail.



"Our goal with the Gems of Rockbridge Geocaching Trail was to bring people down off the parkway and into the foothill communities" notes Jean Clark, director of tourism for Buena Vista, Lexington and Rockbridge County. "Not everyone knew exactly what geocaching was, so one of the first things we did with the grant was to offer workshops about geocaching." This educational process about geocaching is ongoing, and a short video about geocaching is included on the website which promotes the geocaching trail. The geocaching.com website

describes geocaching as "a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the geocache (container) hidden at that location."

The geocaching trail launched in June of 2010 on National Trails Day, providing an opportunity for residents and visitors to explore the forests and landmarks throughout the region, using GPS technology to get them close to a hidden "cache." By October 31, more than 1,200 visits had been officially logged for the trail, though the actual visitation was likely much higher. To participate in the trail visitors can pick up a geocaching passport at one of two visitor centers.

A commemorative coin was added as additional incentive to encourage participants to find all ten geocaches. Participants who successfully complete the trail receive one of the coins which features the logos of the 75th anniversary of the Blue Ridge Parkway on one side and the Gems of Rockbridge Geocaching Trail on the other side.

This family friendly activity has led to word-of-mouth recommendations as friends and family encourage others to experience the trail. While Rockbridge County's geocachers have mostly hailed from the region and Virginia, there have been a number of participants from out of the county and other countries. "Getting local residents to recommend the

trail to friends and family is one of the best kinds of promotion we can have," observes Clark.

Clark notes "one of the additional benefits of creating the geocaching trail has been connecting us to places in the region that weren't on our radar. For example, in our research to identify geocaching sites we heard about a tiny local restaurant that was said to have the best fried bologna sandwiches in the area. We went to check it out and ended up including them. They have now been recognized by the readership of *Blue Ridge Country* magazine as having the #1 food experience on the Blue Ridge Parkway for their barbecue, and it was the geocaching trail that really helped to put them on the map."



"The downturn in the economy has caused today's tourists to take fewer vacations of shorter duration and closer to home, referred to as staycations," observes Clark. "The Geo Trail appeals to all age levels and genders and can be accessed during any season, at any time, and on any day."

Highlights

- 13 new businesses
- 31 graduates
- 62 jobs created
- 4 buildings sold
- Started with VA Main Street grant
- Local partners support the program
- Program has received several awards



This "survival story" was completed as part of the Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative with support from the ARC and NEA

Since forming in 1995, the Marion Downtown Revitalization Association has witnessed many successes in this small southwestern Virginia downtown including the restoration and reopening of the historic General Francis Marion Hotel and the 1920s Lincoln Theatre, a movie house which was transformed into a live performance venue, and the support of residents who recognize that downtown is the heart of Marion's community.

Even with these successes, there were challenges. "In 2012, we had a 17% vacancy downtown. What we needed were shops for residents and visitors," says Ken Heath, Marion's Director of Economic and Community Development and former executive director of the Marion Downtown Revitalization Association.

By good fortune, around that time the Virginia Main Street Program was looking for ideas for awarding economic development grants. "They asked what we wanted them to fund," Heath recalls. "We already had money for banners and landscaping. What we asked for was funding for training to help people start new businesses."

The Virginia Main Street Program awarded a \$15,000 grant in the fall of 2012 to test the concept. Heath developed "Pop Up Marion Small Business Boot Camp" and registered 42 people for the first round of training.

Heath determined that the program needed to combine

opportunities and requirements. "We didn't want to just give checks out to people. We wanted to give the tools to succeed and also have a way to monitor what they did," Heath says.

Class participants learn the fundamentals of operating a small business with classes on planning for operations and cash flow, providing customer service, obtaining credit and marketing. By the end of the eight-session course, participants have developed a business plan.

To support the transition from planning to reality, graduates have the opportunity to compete for up to \$5,000 in startup grant funds to offset rent or mortgage and utility expenses for six months. "To qualify for grant funds, they have to complete the whole program," Heath says. "We are working to change the culture of downtown. They are also required to commit to being open extended hours and to meet with a business mentor. We don't just teach a class – we stay connected so we can monitor what happens."

What has happened since four rounds of classes have been completed is nothing short of remarkable:

- 103 participants
- 31 graduated
- 13 new businesses opened
- 62 new jobs were created
- 4 buildings were sold
- 8 storefronts are filled
- 7 indirect new businesses started
- 15 indirect new jobs started



Participants gain new skills in the Fall 2013 Small Business Bootcamp.

- \$200,000 in private investment has been made downtown

The program's success has also drawn the attention of local supporters. "After the first course, we got a call from Wells Fargo," Heath says. "They asked if they could put money into the program and gave \$25,000. They have just given another \$10,000." Support also came from a local radio station which gives \$1,000 in advertising credit to graduates and from People, Incorporated, a Virginia community action agency which provides business mentoring.

The success of Marion's Small Business Boot Camp and Main Street Program has garnered several awards including a Virginia Main Street Milestone Achievement Award, Virginia Downtown Development Association Award of Excellence and SBA Small Business Community of the Year.

Heath is especially happy to see new businesses opening that will appeal to visitors. As an example of the entrepreneurs that Marion is attracting, Heath points to Appalachian Mountain Spirits, a new distillery which will be located in a renovated downtown building.

Their Virginia Sweetwater Whiskey has already won several awards.

“They have the first licensed distillery in Virginia since the 1800s,” Heath says. “They will attract visitors with local crafts, a picking porch and tours of the distillery.”

With Marion’s location as the gateway to several outdoor recreation destinations, including Hungry Mother State Park, Jefferson National Forest, Mount Rogers National Recreation Area and the Appalachian Trail, a vibrant downtown can attract visitors to come and enjoy all there is to see and do.

The addition of new businesses opened by Bootcamp graduates contributes to Marion’s downtown experience which can include a wide range of activities such as attending a “Song of the Mountain” bluegrass performance at the Lincoln Theatre, dining at locally owned restaurants, shopping at stores that sell locally and regionally made arts and crafts, antiques and clothing and staying overnight at a historic hotel.

“We are already talking about having an alumni reunion and community celebration,” Heath says. “We are also sharing our success – our program materials and format as well as our passion and energy with any community that wants to implement their own program. It is the combination of encouragement, hand holding and belief in the potential of new businesses that makes this program a success.”



“Pop Up Marion Bootcamp” has helped entrepreneurs like the Fall 2012 class to start new businesses and create new jobs in downtown Marion, Virginia.

*Photos courtesy of Marion
Downtown Revitalization
Association*

Highlights

- 36 communities visited in 2011 and 2012
- 110,000 visitors
- Permanent exhibit in State Museum
- For more information, www.PACivilWar150.com

A state-of-the-art traveling exhibit visited 36 communities statewide in 2011 and 2012 to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the Civil War. Exhibits were housed in an expandable 53' tractor-trailer filled with interactive exhibits as part of the Pennsylvania Civil War 150 Road Show.

Pennsylvania Civil War 150 will focus on the exhibit as a tool to engage new audiences, raise the visibility of smaller historic sites and contribute to their long-term sustainability. The outside of the tractor-trailer also serves as a moving billboard for the Road Show with historical photos and the organization's website. Pennsylvania Civil

information about four thematic areas: why Pennsylvania soldiers enlisted in the Civil War; life on the Pennsylvania home front during the Civil War; Pennsylvania African Americans in the Civil War; and how surviving Civil War veterans from Pennsylvania memorialized the Civil War after it was over. Seitter



A traveling exhibit housed in a tractor-trailer visited 36 communities across Pennsylvania during the summers of 2011 and 2012.



This "survival story" was completed as part of the Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative with support from the ARC and NEA

The project began in 2007 when four statewide organizations (Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Pennsylvania Heritage Society, Senator John Heinz History Center and Historical Society of Pennsylvania) came together to create Pennsylvania Civil War 150 with the mobile exhibit as a major component of that initiative.

Thanks to funding from a 2010 IMLS grant

War 150's project manager John Seitter estimates that by halfway into the first year of the Road Show, this mobile advertisement had already been seen by an estimated 750,000 people as the exhibit traveled from location to location.

The sides of the tractor-trailer expanded to create a 53' x 24' exhibit space (roughly 1,000 square feet). Every inch of space was packed with activities and

explains: "We wanted to focus on Pennsylvania's Civil War stories, and specifically on those stories that aren't already told at other Pennsylvania Civil War sites to complement, not compete, with what we already offer in Pennsylvania."

Exhibits include video, audio and touch/feel components in each of the "arcade" areas in the tractor-trailer as well as additional live programming outside the traveling exhibit in each Road Show location.

Local hosts provided a parking area for the tractor-trailer as well as four volunteers each day. Interactive elements included touch screens where visitors can have a digital self-portrait taken for the cover of their own online Civil War scrapbook. Within a few days, participants received an email giving them access to create their personalized scrapbook, and scrapbooks were posted on the Pennsylvania Civil War 150 website as a legacy of the program. There was also a “Tell Your Own Story” area where visitors can record a 90 second audio visual interview. To help customize the Road Show for each location, there was a locked exhibit case that local historical societies used to showcase their own local artifacts and stories.

Seitter observes: “The exhibit has been a tremendous draw that attracts visitors from age 9 to age 90. In just two days, we had 2,500 people tour the exhibit in Scranton. Some people had to wait for over an hour to get in, and they still gave us very positive responses. I’d estimate that most people stay in the exhibit for about 25 minutes, and we’ve even had visitors come back two and three times to see it again.”

The goal is to use the Road Show as a catalyst to get people to visit other Pennsylvania Civil War sites, read about the Civil War, have discussions and think about the impacts of this important event in American history. Seitter works with local host organizations to help them leverage the Road Show as an opportunity to build support and awareness of their Civil War sites.

For example, funds are available through Pennsylvania Civil War 150 for local sites to use for events and programming. Seitter has also worked with local hosts on joint membership promotion, such as one offered as part of the Scranton Road Show. The three-day Road Show in Scranton resulted in 28 new six-month joint



The traveling Road Show included a 1,000 square foot exhibit space packed with interactive exhibits about Pennsylvania's role in the Civil War. Components of the exhibit were installed in the State Museum in Harrisburg in September 2013. Credit: Don Giles 2011 - State Museum of PA

membership packages that included both the Pennsylvania Heritage Society and the Everhart Museum. In Gettysburg, Seitter worked with The Historic Fairfield Inn and Restaurant and Gettysburg National Military Park to donate a vacation package raffled off during the Road Show. While there was no fee to enter, raffle contestants provided their name, address and email resulting in 800 new email contacts in 2½ days.

Seitter observes: “The timing of the Road Show is helping Pennsylvania’s Civil War sites cope with the economic downturn. Although many of the traditional funding sources for these sites are either gone or greatly diminished, the Road Show is providing an opportunity to try out a new model to raise the profile of these sites and engage a whole new generation—and it’s working.”

Photos courtesy Pennsylvania Civil War 150

Find more “Survival Stories” in the Cultural Heritage Tourism Survival Toolkit at www.preservationnation.org/survival-toolkit

Highlights

- 4-acre site is the creation of folk artist Howard Finster
- Funding from ARC, ArtPlace America and Foundation for America
- Community support on work days
- Visitation is increasing



This "survival story" was completed as part of the Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative with support from the ARC and NEA

During Howard Finster's lifetime, a continual stream of people came to the place he called Paradise Garden to see the works that emerged from the artist's visions. "That's what kept people coming here. Finster was always working on it," says Jordan Poole, executive director of Paradise Garden.

Today, the full-scale restoration that is underway is having the same effect – drawing an increasing number of residents and visitors to experience this unique destination and to become involved in the site's preservation. "We have had lots of support for our work days with people coming to help with things like cleaning, clearing the site and digging canals," Poole says. "And we have seen a big increase in visitation since we started tracking in June of 2011 with people coming from here in the county and from all over the country and internationally."

The success of this effort led by the Paradise Garden Foundation has the potential to significantly impact Chattooga County, one of the most economically distressed counties in the state of Georgia.

When Howard Finster bought the four-acre property near Summerville, Georgia in 1961, he probably would not have guessed that the works he created here would make him one of the most well-known folk artists of the 20th century. After retiring from more than 25 years as a Baptist preacher, Finster

devoted his time to creating art, using items he collected from all over the county—everything from bicycles to jewelry to shoes—in his creations. As Poole puts it, "He was recycling before recycling was cool."

In 1976, Finster experienced a vision – while painting a bicycle, he saw a human face in a drop of paint on his finger and heard a voice telling him to paint sacred art.

Finster believed that God had told him to make 5,000 paintings to spread the gospel. Although he completed that number by 1985, Finster kept working, reaching 46,000 paintings by the time of his death in 2001. His paintings interpret a wide range of people, places and issues – from Elvis Presley, George Washington and John the Baptist to aliens from outer space and visions of heaven and hell.

In addition to paintings, Finster transformed Paradise Garden into a maze of buildings including the five-story World Folk Art Church, sculptures including a bicycle tower and walkways imbedded with colorful mosaic pieces. Throughout the site, Finster posted signs with Biblical texts and his own interpretive writings about Biblical events and prophecies.



Paradise Garden is being restored to recapture the legacy of folk artist Howard Finster (pictured below).



Although Finster gained national recognition by the 1970s – appearing on television, creating album covers for the rock bands R.E.M. and Talking Heads, and having his work shown at the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian and the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, after his death in 2001, Paradise Garden fell into disrepair. In 2010, the site was placed on the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation’s Places in Peril listing.

Increasing appreciation for Finster’s legacy and awareness of the site’s fragile condition spurred the Chattooga County government to action. The county obtained a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission and raised additional funds locally to purchase the property from its owners (a nonprofit organization started by Finster’s daughter) and to develop a site restoration and management plan. By January of 2012, the Paradise Garden Foundation was formed and was awarded a 50-year lease by the county to manage the property.

Since the foundation’s formation, work has been underway on all fronts from restoration of the property to new tours and educational programs to new and expanded events and even an artist-in-residence program.

The foundation’s goals have been supported with several significant grants from the Appalachian Regional Commission, ArtPlace America (a coalition of private foundation, banks and the National Endowment for the Arts) which awarded \$445,000 for restoration and promotion (one of 47 projects selected from 2,000 applications submitted in 2012), and the Foundation for America.

In addition to the award of grants, there have been several significant milestones:

Photos courtesy of Paradise Garden Foundation

- Paradise Garden was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- An executive director plus three additional staff have been hired.
- Visitation continues to increase. From June through December 2012, there were 1,249 visitors. From January through October, the site welcomed 3,639 visitors.
- A new visitor center was constructed and opened in the fall of 2013.
- In 2014, the site will host “Inspired Georgia: 28 Works from Georgia’s State Art Collection” which includes works by Howard Finster and was developed by the Georgia Council of the Arts in partnership with the Georgia Tourism Division and Georgia Humanities Council.
- A house across the street was purchased and renovated to serve as offices for the foundation on one side and artist-in-residence housing on the other side.

Equally as important as becoming a major destination for visitors is for Paradise Garden to be an integral part of the community. “We are having a lot of community events,” Poole notes. “We want to spark the creativity that is here in Summerville. And we want every county school student to come here. We want students to know about Howard and to understand that even though they may live in an economically depressed county, they can look at Howard’s example and see that if you have passion about your work you can make your own mark.”

Poole sees the future of Paradise Garden as carrying on the legacy of Howard Finster – a legacy of welcoming everyone who comes here, giving them a chance to be not just a spectator but a part of whatever is happening at the moment and to leave feeling changed by the experience.

“We are using the site as Howard intended,” Poole says. “Our goal is to offer the arts for all ages. Howard Finster started his visionary work at the age of 59, so people can start art at any age. That has become our whole mission.”



Highlights

- 521 supporters on Kickstarter
- \$48,222 raised in 30 days
- Raised funds to convert from 35mm to digital film and acquire a 3D screen.
- To learn more, visit www.kickstarter.com and search for "Tioga Theater"



This "survival story" was completed as part of the Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative with support from the ARC and NEA

Movie theaters relied on 35mm film projectors to show movies for more than a century, yet in recent years the conversion to digital has forced theaters to invest in new technology or go dark. These conversion costs are especially daunting for small town theaters who lack the corporate backing that large multiplex theaters have.

In the Village of Owego, New York (population 3,800), the historic 1908 Tioga Theater had hosted performances by notables such as John and Ethel Barrymore, and President Taft once gave a speech from the stage. Despite this long and rich history, finding the \$42,000 needed to upgrade the projection and sound systems to digital in 2013 presented an intimidating challenge. Still, there was a strong local desire to help this much beloved local theater (and the only movie theater in Tioga County) survive.

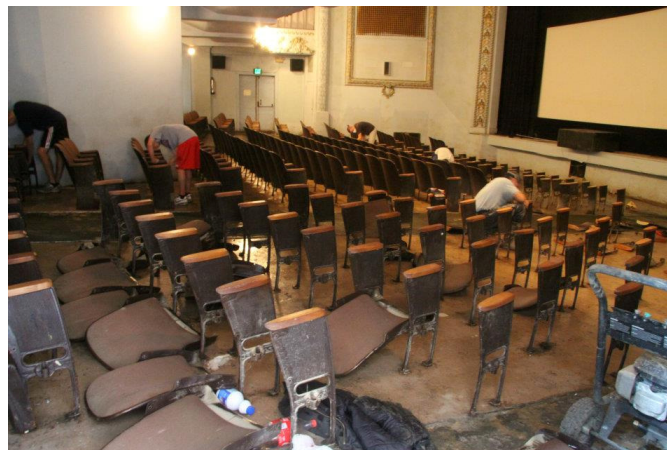
To make matters worse, in September of 2011 the Village of Owego was hit by the worst flood in the town's history. The theater took on



The cost of converting to digital from 35mm threatened the future of the historic Tioga Theater.

18 inches of water in the lobby and 5 feet in the auditorium, damaging the carpeting and auditorium seats beyond repair. Faced with a deadline of raising funds by the end of 2013 when 35mm films would no longer be available, the Friends of the Tioga Theater turned to Kickstarter.

Since launching in 2009, Kickstarter has helped 54,000 projects secure \$933 million from 5.4 million "backers" through online pledges. The



A flood in 2012 damaged seats and carpeting in the theater's auditorium beyond repair.

project creators set a funding goal and a deadline, and each project must reach the fundraising goal in order to receive any money. Forty-four percent of Kickstarter's projects to date have reached their funding goals.

As part of the online Kickstarter campaign the Friends of Tioga Theater created a 3½ minute video about the needs of the Tioga Theater as well as an illustrated narrative about the theater's plight. To incentivize potential donors, rewards were offered for pledges at different levels. Incentives included movie tickets, drinks, popcorn, commemorative T-shirts, posters, framed historic



Movie tickets, drinks and popcorn were among the incentives provided to supporters as part of the Kickstarter campaign.

photos, frames of 35mm movie film and listing of sponsor names on the contributor section of the Friends website.

Top level incentives included an unlimited one-year family movie pass for four, sponsor names on the theater marquee, a behind the scenes tour of the theater, and an opportunity for a private movie showing at the theater or to have the sponsor's name engraved on the Tioga Theater Wall of Fame.

More than half of the backers (272) gave less than \$100 with some pledges as small as \$10. Friends of the Tioga Theater volunteer Phoebe Morris notes “as most of our donations were in the \$25-50 range, it was important to have reward levels that were good enough to entice larger donations at those levels.” While many backers were local, the Kickstarter campaign also drew contributions from indie theater enthusiasts from across the country.



Original architectural details have been retained and restored.

In order to be successful it was critical to make sure people were aware of the effort. According to Stella Reschke, director of Tioga County Tourism, “We all pitched in to promote the Kickstarter campaign. In such a small community, everyone knows everyone, so many of us reached out to our contacts and networks through social media including Facebook, and we also used our local newspaper and TV. As the campaign happened in the fall, we also took advantage of a local Halloween event to draw attention to the theater’s needs.” During this event the movie *Night of the Living Dead* was projected on another historic building in downtown Owego as part of an outdoor Zombie Fest.

The Friends of the Tioga Theater posted updates throughout the campaign, and backers were also able to leave comments on the Kickstarter page as well as making financial contributions. In addition to expressing enthusiasm for the project, some backers offered tips to help the Friends of the Tioga Theater maximize contributions from potential backers. Friends of Tioga Theater

volunteers Phoebe Morris and Joe Skovira emphasize the importance of social media to promote the campaign as well as planning ahead. Phoebe notes “the biggest hurdle was getting publicity. It is critical to have a story that people and the local media will want to talk about and share. With Kickstarter, you only have 30 days to make it happen so prior planning is a must.” Joe adds “social media is what really won the day for us. We blogged on the Kickstarter site as well as on Facebook and Twitter and responded to comments from donors to create a virtual conversation.”

Phoebe adds “It was a nail-biter right up to the end. We were discussing fall-back plans four days before the end of the campaign. The last few days were amazing as the donations came in. When we passed our goal on Friday morning, a day and a half before the end of the campaign, Joe suggested we take advantage of a rising tide and push for an additional \$5,000 ‘stretch goal’ which we made as well.” The stretch goal raised funds for a new screen to show 3D movies. The campaign finished up with 521 backers pledging a total of \$48,222. The Tioga Theater received \$43,000 after Kickstarter and Amazon took their 8% fee.

Just like in the movies, the story of the Tioga Theater has found a happy ending.

Photos courtesy Friends of the Tioga Theater



The Tioga Theater as it appeared in 1938, shortly after converting from a performing arts venue to a movie theater.



The Tioga Theater retains many of its original historic features, and thanks to a successful Kickstarter campaign, has been able to upgrade to digital film to continue operating as Tioga County’s only movie theater.



Theater donors take in a movie over the holidays using tickets they received in return for donating to the Kickstarter campaign.

Highlights

- Research by folklorists continues to uncover new assets in the Overhill
- Information used to develop directory as well as programs
- Outreach also builds goodwill in the community

“Assess Your Potential” is the first of the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s four steps to build a successful and sustainable cultural heritage tourism program. When the Tennessee Overhill was selected as one of the National Trust’s sixteen pilot areas in 1990, one of the first things the Trust did with the



Tourists photographing Lake Ocoee from the Chilhowee Overlooks in the Cherokee National Forest. Photo courtesy Jim Caldwell

Overhill was to identify their cultural, heritage and natural assets. Linda Caldwell, the founding and now retired director of the Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association (TOHA) knew that it would be important to inventory the Overhill’s tangible and

fun.”

With this in mind, TOHA worked with the Tennessee Arts Commission (TAC) to secure a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant in

including the makers of knives, guns, stagecoaches, brooms and more. “Our folklorist, Dr. Brent Cantrell, found stuff I couldn’t even imagine and had no idea was here.” comments Caldwell. TOHA also worked with TAC to create a process to regrant a portion of the NEA funds to local institutions to try out new programs that focused on art forms rooted in the region. Having the inventory in hand proved very useful when new programs needed to be developed quickly.



Rip Mann is a wood turner who has been hired by TOHA to perform at community festivals. Photo courtesy TOHA

When the Olympic Whitewater Races were held on the Ocoee River in Tennessee in 1996, TOHA was able to tap into the relationships that had been created with local artists to offer a “Cultural Olympiad.” This event provided an opportunity to attract international media attention to the Overhill’s high quality artists including basketmakers, quilters, musicians, herbalists and more.

intangible assets, including landscapes and buildings but also the folkways and traditions of the region. Yet as Caldwell notes, “the identification of assets and the process of discovery just never ends, and that’s a good thing. That’s what makes it

1995 to hire a folklorist to complete a three-year research project to identify artists and artistic traditions in the Overhill.

This research resulted in the identification of approximately 500 artists



This “survival story” was completed as part of the Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative with support from the ARC and NEA



Just Us, a bluegrass band, performs at the Benton Heritage Festival as part of the Tennessee Overhill Performance Series. Photo courtesy TOHA.

Caldwell’s background in the arts helped her see connections between the arts and historic sites in the Overhill. She observes “especially in rural areas we need to think creatively about who is presenting the arts, and we’ve found that our historic sites are some of our most valuable arts presenters. History museums do better if they don’t just have static exhibits. Program development is key to expanding audiences and attracting return visitors.” In the Overhill, this programming at museums and historic includes art exhibits, period reenactments, lecture series, Cherokee language classes, art and craft classes, and music festivals.

As communities began to develop festivals, the Overhill was often asked to suggest artists, bands, and demonstrators to hire. Both Caldwell and Cantrell became aware that many festival sponsors were not aware of regional artists. Occasionally festival sponsors requested artists who might perform for free. Caldwell says, “we explained that TOHA does not approve of asking artists to perform for free because it devalues their art and perpetuates the notion that artists

are not worth much.” As a result

of this, TOHA developed a program titled “Tennessee Overhill Traditional Performance Series.” With financial support from Tennessee Arts Commission, TOHA provides support to pay artists to perform at community events across the Overhill. The program is now in its 16th year.

Caldwell also wisely recognized that the inventory was a building block and that the Overhill needed to use the inventory to develop new programs and products. One of the first products to be developed based on this new inventory was a directory of arts and artists.

The initial directory was a print version with contact information for artists which was expanded in later editions to include a glossary to explain different art forms. TOHA later switched to an online version of the directory that was more economical and

easier to update. TOHA is preparing to conduct another survey of artists and to create a new online directory.

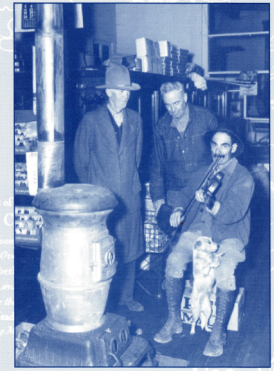
When TOHA secured a Gateway grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) in 2007, they hired another folklorist to take a look at art forms with a connection to the Cherokee National Forest. They identified more than 30 artists with an occupational or recreational connection to the forest such as woodworkers, taxidermists, fly tiers, knife makers, and more. Funding from the Tennessee Arts Commission and the NEA resulted in the exhibit “Made by Hand: Forest ‘Inspirations” which included the work of these local artists and artisans as well as a traveling exhibit from the Smithsonian.

Saturday demonstrations offered as part of the exhibit included wood carving, gun making, fly tying, taxidermists and turkey calling. TOHA created an accompanying brochure that included places to go to buy the products featured in the exhibit as well as places for artists to go in nature to be inspired.



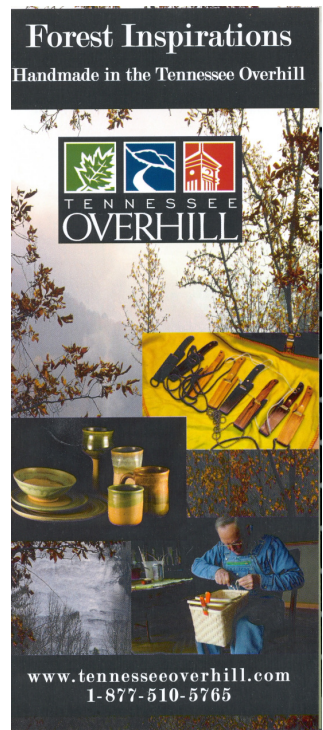
A turkey calling demonstration by Russ Arthur was one of the most popular Saturday demonstrations during the “Forest Inspirations” exhibit. Photo courtesy TOHA

Arts and Artists in the Tennessee Overhill



McMinn County • Monroe County • Polk County

TOHA’s initial directory was a print version (cover shown above). The directory later switched to an online version. Image courtesy TOHA



TOHA’s “Forest Inspirations” brochure featured places to go to buy products related to the forest as well as places for artists to go to in nature to be inspired. Image courtesy Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association

A second grant from the ARC allowed TOHA to hire yet another folklorist to research culinary traditions. This research identified around three dozen food festivals, food venues, and foodways in the region from Lottie's Diner: Home of the Cat Head Biscuit to Benton's Smoky Mountain Hams, Tellico Grains or the Ramp Tramp festival where participants can hike the Appalachian Mountains in search of ramps (a wild onion native to North America), enjoy a meal of ramps, beans eggs and greens and sassafras tea while listening to live music.

To learn more about TOHA visit tennesseeoverhill.com



Toad Frog tying flies at the Forest Inspiration Exhibit . Photo courtesy TOHA, Photographer Liza Blair.



Ramps and fixings being prepared at the Ramp Tramp Festival. Photo courtesy Polk County Extension Office.



A pie maker displays her pies in the Tennessee Overhill. Photo courtesy TOHA, Photographer Liza Blair.

Reaching out to a diverse constituency through folklife research has paid off in other ways for the Overhill as well. TOHA has been able to tap into the Overhill's artistic talent to pitch story ideas to the media that have generated feature coverage of the region. Caldwell also reflects "when you build relationships with taxidermists, coon hunters and others it makes it easier to build legitimacy and trust in the broader community. They are honored to be recognized, and those relationships translate to support for our work."



Ham and bacon from Benton's Smoky Mountain Hams are featured in the finest restaurants from New Orleans to Atlanta to New York. Visitors and residents can shop at his store and smokehouse in Madisonville, Tennessee. Photo courtesy TOHA, Photographer Liza Blair.

Find more "Survival Stories" in the Cultural Heritage Tourism Survival Toolkit at www.preservationnation.org/survival-toolkit

Highlights

- **Voluntourism**
www.voluntourism.org
- **Road Scholar**
www.road scholar.org
- **Americorps**
www.nationalservice.gov
- **H.O.P.E. Crew**
www.preservationnation.org
- **Earthwatch**
www.earthwatch.org
- **Adventures in Preservation**
www.adventuresinpreservation.org



This "survival story" was completed as part of the Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative with support from the ARC and NEA

The last thing people want to do on their vacation is work, right? Think again.

"Voluntourism" is increasingly gaining popularity as people plan vacations where their work can make a difference. The Travel Industry dictionary defines voluntourism as "travel undertaken solely or in part to engage in humanitarian or other volunteer activities."

While some voluntourism opportunities are developed by individual destinations, there are a number of programs that offer voluntourism opportunities across America. The spirit of volunteering is alive and well, including both short and long term volunteer opportunities.

A number of programs for youth such as Americorps offer a community service component. Over the last 20 years, Americorps volunteers have mobilized more than 820,000 individuals who have provided more than 1 billion hours.

Even those who work in the tourism industry volunteer their time to help protect and restore destinations across the country. Since 2003, more than 2,000 volunteers have donated over 20,000 hours at more than a dozen tourism-related sites across the country such as Louis Armstrong Park in New Orleans, Angel Island in San Francisco and Gettysburg in Pennsylvania.

Private tour companies offer additional opportunities for

travelers to choose from a variety of volunteer vacation opportunities. Earthwatch has led more than 1,400 conservation research projects in 120 countries since 1971. Road Scholars (formerly known as Elderhostel) has been offering lifelong learning travel opportunities since 1975, including some vacations that include a volunteer or community service component.

Adventures in Preservation has included sites in Appalachian Regional Commission's service region such as the Francis Mill in Waynesville, North Carolina, where volunteers worked with a conservation expert for one or two weeks each summer between 2004 and 2006.

A number of states use volunteer site stewards to protect and help staff remote sites. For example, the Wyoming Site Stewards program attracts snowbirds during the summer months who park their fifth wheel campers at state historic sites that do not have staff, offering security and in some cases, offering tours or helping to interpret the site for visitors.

One of the newest volunteer programs is the National Trust for Historic Preservation's H.O.P.E program. One of the first pilot H.O.P.E (Hands On Preservation Experience) Crew projects will be the restoration of a historic site in Shenandoah National Park. In times of limited resources, tapping in to voluntourism

opportunities can create a win-win opportunity to increase tourism revenues while providing volunteer assistance to improve and enhance natural, cultural and heritage assets in your community.

To learn more about how to tap into existing voluntourism programs, or to find out more about how to develop your own voluntourism offerings, check out www.voluntourism.org.



Many states offer volunteer site steward programs. In Wyoming, site stewards stay at sites in their RV or fifth wheel trailer to provide added security to the site. Stewards often take on other responsibilities such as this volunteer demonstrating the craft of broom-making at the Wyoming Territorial Prison State Historic Site.

Photos courtesy Wyoming Division of State Parks, Historic Sites & Trails