



Artisans Center of Virginia

The Official State Artisans Center

Handcrafting Virginia's Cultural Economy

Organizational Update

The Artisans Center of Virginia develops and implements systems and strategies to improve economic outcomes for Virginia artisans and their communities while assisting them in promoting their local artisan culture.

Artisan entrepreneurship exists in abundance across the state and as a hard-working, talent-based industry made up of creative and agricultural businesses it is of growing significance on Virginia's economic landscape.

"The Artisans Center of Virginia is deliberately coordinating efforts to leverage this talent into a recognized and established industry that is connected, branded, promoted and celebrated. Now, more than ever, diversifying economic development initiatives statewide to elevate artisan enterprises is critical to sustaining the authentic work, cultural and economic contributions that these entrepreneurs make daily as they uniquely contribute to the vitality and character of Virginia communities." Sherri Smith, Executive Director, ACV

ACV is implementing a defined plan of strategic initiatives across the Commonwealth that include:

- Developing collaborative, relationship-building strategies and implementing connective systems to support economic growth for Virginia's artisans and their communities such ACV's flagship programs, the Artisan Trail Network and the Virginia Oyster Trail;
- Upholding the highest jury standards for Virginia Craft Artisans to include Master Artisan recognition;
- Strengthening local economies through regional and network marketing of their artisan and cultural assets;
- Enhancing statewide tourism initiatives that draw visitors to artisan events, activities and businesses as invoked in the global "Take Home A Piece of Virginia" campaign;
- Encouraging the growth and development of existing and "Next Generation Artisans" through entrepreneurial educational workshops & seminars;
- Providing an entrepreneur framework that integrates local business resources and provides teaching opportunities for Virginia artisans;
- Increasing job creation by encouraging artisans to leverage business partnerships, transfer their skills into synergistic industries and engage in apprentice/intern programs;
- Quantifying the state artisan industry's economic impact;
- Maintaining of Virginia's statewide artisan registry.



ACV Currently Fulfills its Mission by...

...Establishing the first Statewide Artisan Industry Economic Impact Study

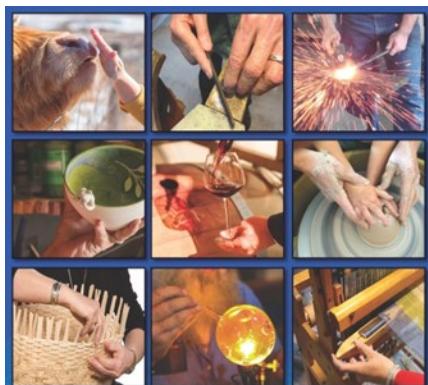
Virginia Artisans: Etched in History, Forging the Future

The total economic impact of the artisan industry in Virginia in 2014 was \$572.2 million, providing \$15.6 million in state tax revenue for the Commonwealth. In 2014, nearly 12,000 full-time jobs were supported by artisan visitor spending. Artisan visitor spending totaled more than \$250 million, with the average visitor spending \$260 per person, per trip. One out of seven Virginia visitors plan trips around Artisan Trails. Artisan Trail locations accounted for 59% of sales in 2014, and created a direct economic impact of \$415,600 sales per day.

According to the first statewide benchmark study, nearly 700,000 travelers visit Virginia's artisan attractions and business. Visitors love the artisan products and experiences in Virginia because they are authentic, unique, and local. Many Virginia artisans work independently, operating their own studios and selling their products through local vendors. These artisans contribute to their local economy and elevate the Virginia tourism experience with their level of craftsmanship and knowledge. Virginia artisan and associated businesses purchase 47% of their supplies in Virginia.

"Virginia is a true destination for artisan culture and trails," said Rita McClenney, president and CEO of Virginia Tourism Corporation. "Travelers are coming from all over the country to experience our vineyards, farms, lodging, cultural points of interests, and local artisans. Our Artisan Trails provide many opportunities for visitors to connect with artisan businesses. This helps make Virginia a premier travel destination with a diverse array of tourism product."

Virginia's Statewide Economic Impact Study, released on August 4, 2016, is a combined effort from the Artisans Center of Virginia (ACV) and 'Round Mountain: Southwest Virginia's Artisan Network in partnership with the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC), performed by Chmura Economics & Analytics.



...Strengthening Industry-Driven Community Development and Tourism through Connective Trail Development

Virginia communities depend on their character, charm, and regional context in attracting visitors. Artisans are an essential component to any community's creative culture, relying on the patronage of their local residents as well as visitors from outside the state. ACV works in public-private and cross-industry partnerships to expose and elevate the authentic work and cultural contributions of Virginia artisans through the development of regional, community-connective artisan trails.

Statewide Artisan Trail Network - www.artisantrailnetwork.org

ACV's Artisan Trail Network offers a unique opportunity to form strategic alliances with artists (3D and 2D), venues, galleries and retailers and agri-artisans/agri-tourism businesses across the state, while connecting points of interest, restaurants, and accommodation locations in the related communities in order to enhance regional tourism activity. The ACV Artisan Trail Network is an innovative program leveraging ACV's broad-based grassroots membership into a coordinated marketing and connective outreach campaign to strengthen local communities while strengthening Virginia's Artisan Industry.



Bringing an economy of scale to the marketing efforts of individual artisans, their studios and venues, ACV connects communities, large and small, with consumers, businesses, counties, cities, and visiting tourists.

Historical Snapshot of Artisan Trail Development in Virginia

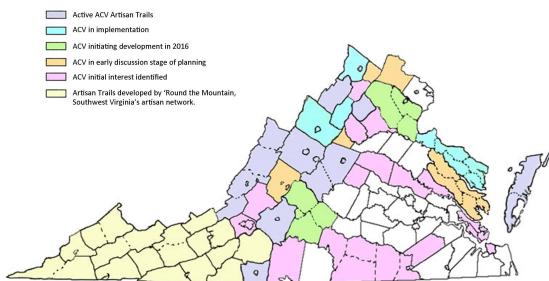
- 1997 ACV designated the "Official State Artisans Center" and begins to develop a statewide artisan registry.
- 1999 Virginia's first four artisan trails established by the "Hand Craft Alliance," Waynesboro, Virginia, a committee of ACV's founding members and regional partners.
- 2006 Mark Warner's "Works Initiative" supports 'Round the Mountain, the Southwest Virginia regional artisan trail development.
- 2006-2008 ACV performs the Alleghany Craft Network Outreach Study to identify artisan businesses in Alleghany region of the state.
- 2009 - present ACV Artisan Trail Network statewide program is initiated with implementation on-going.
- 2013 ACV's headquarter office relocates to the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton, Virginia.
- 2014 ACV initiates development of the Virginia Oyster Trail, synergistic with the Artisan Trail Network
- 2015 ACV launches statewide Virginia Oyster Trail
- 2016 Virginia currently has 31 community-connected and developing artisan trails representing 52 counties and 12 cities across Commonwealth.



Current & Developing Artisan Trail Network Service Area

- **ACV Active Artisan Trails:** “*Monticello Artisan Trail*” (Nelson County, Albemarle County with the City of Charlottesville) Inaugurated September 2011, 64 Participating Businesses; “*Virginia’s Western Highlands Artisan Trail*” (Craig, Alleghany, Bath & Highland Counties) Inaugurated November 2012, 71 Participating Businesses; “*HeART & Soil of the Shenandoah Valley Artisan Trail*” (Staunton, Augusta, Waynesboro) Inaugurated February 2013, 47 Participating Businesses; “*O Shenandoah County Artisan Trail*,” (Shenandoah County) Inaugurated October 2013, 77 Participating Businesses; “*Bedford Artisan Trail*” (Bedford County), Inaugurated September 2014, 86 Participating Businesses; “*Rappahannock County Artisan Trail*” (Rappahannock County) Inaugurated September 2015, 101 Participating Businesses; “*Virginia’s Eastern Shore Artisan Trail*” (Accomack and Northampton Counties) Inaugurated October 2015, 118 Participating Businesses; “*Smith River Artisan Trail*” (Henry County with City of Martinsville) Inaugurated Dec. 11, 2015, 61 Participating Businesses; “*Northern Neck Artisan Trail*” (counties of Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, Westmoreland and King George) Inaugurated April 2016, 127 Participating Businesses; “*Top of Virginia Artisan Trail*” (Clarke and Frederick Counties with City of Winchester) inaugurated September 8, 2016 with 77 Participating Businesses; “*Harrisonburg-Roanoke Artisan Trail*” (Roanoke County with the City of Harrisonburg), inaugurated September, 22 2016 with 89 Participating Businesses.

Artisan Center of Virginia- Artisan Trail Network
Trail Development Progress Update as of 1/1/2016



- **ACV Artisan Trails in Implementation:** “*Page Valley Artisan Trail*” (Page County) anticipated inauguration late spring 2016 with estimated 50 Participating Businesses; *Stafford, Fauquier and Prince William Counties* (working title) initiated July 2016, 100 estimated participating businesses; *Loudoun County Artisan Trail* (working title) initiated November 2016 100 estimated participating businesses.
- **ACV In Early Stages of Planning - to Initiate Implementation in early 2017:** Lynchburg City with counties of Amherst and Appomattox; Virginia’s Middle Peninsula (Mathews, Gloucester, Middlesex, Essex, King and Queen Counties).
- **ACV In Early Stages of Planning: ACV Artisan Trail Interest Identified:** Jamestown, Yorktown and Williamsburg Region; Ashland/Hanover County Region; Southern Virginia (Transtech Alliance - Brunswick, Charlotte, Greensville, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway Counties and the City of Emporia); Southside Virginia (Danville with Pittsylvania, Halifax & Campbell Counties); Warren County; Norfolk VA.
- **15 Active Artisan Trails developed independently by the “Round The Mountain” Regional Network:** Clinch River Artisan Trail (Tazewell and Russell Counties); Countryside Artisan Trail (Washington County and the City of Bristol); Floyd County Trail (Floyd County); Giles Art & Adventure Trail (Giles County); Harmony Trail (Carroll County and Galax); Hidden Treasures (Patrick County); Lonesome Pine Artisan Trail (Wise County and the City of Norton); Montgomery County Artisan Trail (Montgomery County); Mountain Crossroads (Wythe and Bland Counties); New River Artisan Trail (Pulaski County and Radford); Rivers to Ridges Artisan Trail (Dickenson and Buchanan Counties); Smyth County Artisan Trail (Smyth County); White Lightning Artisan Trail (Franklin County); Wilderness Road Artisan Trail (Scott and Lee Counties); Woven Mountains and River Bends (Grayson County).



The Virginia Oyster Trail: Where Delicious Adventures Await You!

www.virginiАОystertrail.com

In 2014, Virginia Tourism Corporation, in partnership with the Governor's Office, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD), Shellfish Growers of Virginia, Virginia Seafood Council, Virginia Marine Products Board, local tourism offices, local planning district commissions, and private partners, began working together to brand the Virginia oyster travel experience to show the world that "Virginia is for Oyster Lovers."



Because of ACV's work providing exceptional service in Virginia communities by working in public-private and cross-industry partnerships to expose and elevate the authentic work and cultural contributions of Virginia artisans through the development of regional, community-connective trails, ACV was enlisted to develop the Virginia Oyster Trail and to help communities highlight the distinctive businesses, places, and organizations in their community that tell their unique story of the Virginia Oyster.

The Virginia Oyster Trail is a visitor-directed experiential "journey of discovery" program featuring Virginia's Oyster regions. It includes unique waterman/aqua-artisan sites, inviting community narratives and hospitality, creative, culinary, cultural and activity points of interest to be found along the way.

Fundamental to its visitor experience attributes, the trail program focuses on increasing awareness of the benefits Virginia Oysters have on local economies with emphasis on community development, environmental stewardship, entrepreneurial growth, health attributes and the cultural integration of Virginia's distinctive coastal and aquaculture way of life.



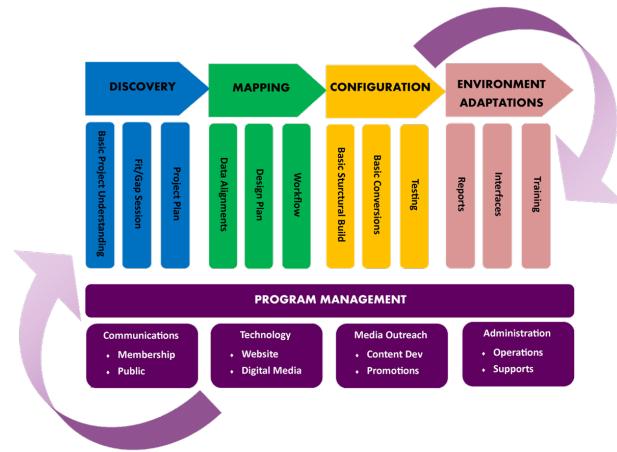
The Virginia Oyster Trail program recognizes a synergy with businesses that may already be enrolled as a trail site on Virginia's Artisan Trail Network. Qualifying businesses may choose to participate on both trails and in doing so realize a significant discount on their participation fees. Each trail program is distinctively unique with separate websites and participation criteria, yet they share a unified functional structure. In addition to the reduced fees, the unification utilizes a "one login code" system. This means that when a member logs in to add information to their online profile or to the event calendar, it will be visible on each distinctive website.

...Maintaining Integrated Programs and Diverse Financial Planning

ACV's program development methodology is an integrated building block approach divided into phases. Each phase builds upon the other, delivering new functionality to meet organizational needs without the uncertainty associated with a more traditional "waterfall" approach.

- Phase 1: Discovery
- Phase 2: Mapping and Adaptations
- Phase 3: Configuration Extensions
- Phase 4: Environmental Adaptations
- Phase 5: Program Management

Using a collaborative "informed by participation" model, program assessment and conversion occurs repeatedly during all implementation phases so that when a program goes into full management there are no surprises—only a smooth-running system and a workforce (board, staff, members, volunteers) that understands how to use it.



ACV maintains a diverse budget. In addition to ACV members, trail site participants, affiliate organizations, their respective local government, tourism and economic development departments, financial support includes federal and state agency grants, corporate and individual contributions.



...Developing an Entrepreneur Framework for Small Businesses and Creating Jobs

Many Virginia Artisans (creative and agricultural) are practicing and producing entrepreneurs. Although gifted with hands-on talent, many of these entrepreneurs lack the business expertise to realize the full economic potential of their products and services. By supporting and expanding their the business, retail, and marketing knowledge and skills, ACV supports job creation through local entrepreneurship and the development and expansion of existing small businesses.



The Artisans Center of Virginia's (ACV) Transforming Healthy, Responsively Involved, Viable Entrepreneurs (THRIVE) program identifies opportunities that members and communities in ACV's programming can capitalize on.

It helps local and state organizations target development opportunities. It pinpoints areas where new investments can be targeted.

Ecosystem mapping, to include value chain analysis, is critical to understanding the entrepreneur community as well as its opportunities and challenges. ACV uses the map to identify the key entrepreneur businesses, suppliers, and distributors that require targeted support in order to increase economic activity in the community.

THRIVE's targeted support is then anchored in specific quantifiable outcomes, driven by an analysis of the ecosystem mapping results. Opportunities for growth will be converted to success using ACV's many development services. All participating businesses who wish to utilize these services are expected to actively engage as a core value of the program is based on a one-to-one premise of "Helping Businesses Help Themselves."

ACV provides many of these services directly and partners with local organizations wherever appropriate to achieve the desired effects. Some specific activities include:

- **Business Training (with Certification Option for Virginia Artisans):** This includes proven training modules covering financial management, marketing, human resources, cash flow management, federal contracting practices, export regulations/practices, etc. ACV delivers training in three types of forums: individual, cross community groups, and group workshops based off of the need and proprietary nature of the businesses.
- **Business Counseling:** ACV offers a bench of experienced business advisors with an average of 26 years' experience and both practical and academic credentials. These skilled and practiced individuals currently counsel executives from the small business to the Fortune 500 firms. Our team's best practices includes counseling ideas and practices developed through ACV's Studio School workshops, seminars and business programming as well as the Small Business Administrations' "ScaleUp America Program" implementations. Ideal counseling session include peer-to-peer connections and resource facilitations with assets like the SBDC, financial institutions, community colleges, etc. At the onset of counseling, a growth plan will be documented for the business' executive/manager to help ensure the entrepreneur's critical business gaps are filled first.
- **Resource Connection:** ACV offers the expertise in connecting entrepreneurs to the resources required for growth. These resources include financial and partnership connections. ACV will serve as a resource bureau, utilizing existing resources in communities and/or facilitating outside, third-party talent as may be appropriate to the needs of the participating entrepreneurial business.

Workforce Development for Skilled Trades



As manufacturing and industrial-based jobs become increasingly scarce in many Virginia communities, finding jobs and entrepreneurial niches for displaced workers that honors their skills, trade, and commitment to quality is no small workforce development task. While many of the state's workforce development initiatives to date have focused on retraining workers based on the demands of the local job market, this strategy fails to serve many who live in communities where lower-paying retail and service sector jobs are the predominant alternative to declining opportunities in the manufacturing/industrial sectors.

ACV's Studio School workforce development initiative focuses on honing the vocational and trade skills of Virginia Artisans while providing them with the business/entrepreneurial training needed to operate, market and sell their products and services. Additionally, incorporated in the practical applications that develop a craftsperson, a broader functionality or transferability of skills will be presented to cross-train individuals in skill-based trades where they utilize similar equipment and procedures.

Outcomes include: growth of the next generation of Virginia artisans and artisan entrepreneurs adept in successful business practices; establishment of an Instructor's Bureau; implementation of entrepreneurial and artisan-related programming that can be adapted for dual-enrollment courses at the community college level; and facilitation of a taskforce to develop an official vocational syllabus.

ACV Studio School Locations:

- Old Dominion University – Women's Business Center, Hampton Roads
- Tidewater Community College, Virginia Beach
- Blue Ridge Community College, Weyers Cave
- Patrick Henry Community College, Martinsville

ACV is available to facilitate and customize full day seminars around various arts-as-business topics to include but not be limited to:

- *Business Planning for Busy Entrepreneurs*
- *Differentiate! What Makes You So Special?*
- *Copyright 101: Through A Musical Lens*
- *Shout it Out! How to Toot Your Horn without Blowing It*
- *Art for Art Sake*
- *Blog to Boost Your Biz*
- *Breaking the Myths of "Breaking In"*
- *Works for Sale! Working with Retailers*
- *Know it! Locate it! Purchase it! Re-sell it!*
- *To Pin or Not to Pin, There is No Question!*



- *From Brilliant Idea to Nuts and Bolts*
- *Being Serious to be Silly (trademarks)*
- *Photographing Your Work*
- *Etsy Etc.*
- *Entrepreneurs, Artists and Taxes; Can We All Get Along?*
- *Connecting the Dots*
- *E-Commerce in the Fast Lane*
- *Social Media: Why Facebook, Twitter & Instagram are so important, and how to use them*

....Establishing a Connected Artisan Community

ACV encourages the exchange of ideas and celebrates the artisan way of life by connecting artisans with each other, and their patronizing communities through a dynamic website, e-newsletters, social media and program activities.

ACV seeks to stimulate a shared experience and excitement for the creative vitality of Virginia Artisan endeavors. A strong membership supports ACV's ability to represent Virginia's quality artisans among the finest in the world and to further connect those who believe that handmade quality items strengthen the cultural, educational and economic vitality of local communities.

- *The ACV website for the period of July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016 received 8,635,625 hits (annual) representing an average of 3,093,118 page views and 300,981 unique visitors per year.*
- *13% of visitors are Virginia residents, 50% are from other U.S. states, and 37% are international.*
- *Digital Marketing Features: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest & Etsy. In 2016 ACV will add Instagram.*
- *ACV produces & features YouTube videos on its homepage to promote community programs.*
- *ACV Special Feature e-newsletters: 11,096 unique readers (viral reach unknown).*
- *Each Member Profile page on the ACV website hosts the following viral marketing features to cross-connect artisans with ACV, each other and the larger internet patronizing audience: GoogleMaps, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, and Etsy. Instagram will be added in 2016. Additional features can be added as popularity in the market indicates.*
- *Open Door Tour, Virginia Artisan Month & Virginia Oyster Trail travel blogs featuring member activities.*



Retail Affiliate Organizations



The Artisans Center of Virginia has pioneered a retail affiliate program that combines the power of ACV's network of Virginia Artisan entrepreneurs with the marketing power of the private retail sector. In order to broaden the market entry points for Virginia artisans, ACV strategically partners with private commercial enterprises that either currently or plan to sell quality, handmade Virginia works. Through a partnership agreement, the Artisans Center can serve as the contact point for securing artisan works or ACV Handcrafting Virginia's Cultural Economy 11.11.16

to arrange exhibitions within the store. ACV can additionally work with localities that are developing Main Street initiatives to help enhance artisan opportunities such as Cooperative Galleries, Studio Tours and other destination features that promote an artisan retail presence. ACV's mission of bringing economic opportunity to Virginia artisans, while offering a sustainable financing model that combines ACV's networking and jurying strengths with the retail and marketing reach of the private sector, is realized through these affiliate opportunities. ACV directs visitors to "Shop ACV" through designated online promotions and dedicated digital marketing, driving traffic to over 120 affiliate organizations and venues all across the Commonwealth who are featuring the works of Virginia Artisans.



...Maintaining Standards of Excellence



VIRGINIA JURIED ARTISANS: Excellence in Quality Craft

ACV is dedicated to assisting artisans in advancing their endeavors, whether for pleasure or for business. One facet of this obligation is highlighted by a stringent Jury, or judging process, that provides critique and distinction. The Jury award recognizes the highest level of quality indicative of Virginia's fine heritage, creativity and workmanship.

The ACV Jury evaluates an artisan's competency in skill, material understanding, and the artisan's commitment to originality and/or historical merit through their medium. The designation of Juried Artisan recognizes the quality work of the artisan regardless of whether they produce for pleasure or as an entrepreneur. Utilizing a stringent process, craft artisans achieving ACV juried status have met the highest standards for quality and workmanship in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

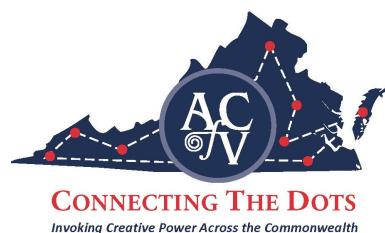


Virginia Juried Artisans are also eligible to be nominated for the Juried Master Artisan designation, which recognizes the highest level of craft achievement and mentorship. Member Juried Artisans may utilize the ACV jury distinction/seal in their own studio, website and print materials or wherever their work is shown. The ACV seal, found on pieces displayed in galleries, studios, sales venues and during exhibitions, denotes work created by leading Virginia artisans representing the excellence in media

...Featuring World-Class Programs and Exhibitions

Statewide Artisan Conference: Empowering Artisans Across the Commonwealth

The Artisans Center of Virginia conference targets focused artisans (creative and agri-artisans) who are looking to boost their business savvy by utilizing a diverse range of materials, business technologies and marketing materials and who look for opportunities to network. The ACV statewide conference reaches out to artisans that reside and practice in the state of Virginia, offering workshops on a wide-range of topics - from sales and marketing and the latest trends in



communication to productive new display techniques--to help them take their artisan endeavors to the next level. Early planning has begun for the next conference event in 2018.

ACV is a selective organization reaching well-educated, focused artisans who take their businesses seriously by utilizing a diverse range of materials, business technologies and marketing materials and who look for opportunities to network. This conference reaches out to artisans that reside and practice in the state of Virginia, offering them workshops on a wide range of topics--from sales and marketing and the latest trends in communication to productive new display techniques--to help them take their artisan endeavors to the next level.

VIRGINIA ARTISAN MONTH: A celebration of Virginia Artisan Culture



In 2015, Governor Terry McAuliffe proclaimed October as "Virginia Artisan Month," a time to showcase and celebrate the culture of the Virginia artisan which inspires appreciative audiences for its unique work and distinctive way of life, featuring exceptional Virginia artisan events & hands-on activities.

"Artisans play a key role in our Commonwealth's economy," says Governor McAuliffe.
"Virginia's artisan industry creates jobs, enriches civic life, drives tourism and helps so many people all across our state stay in touch with what it has always meant to be a Virginian"

Nationwide: "American Craft Week"

ACV works in partnership with the Virginia Tourism Corporation and 'Round the Mountain, as a sponsor of American Craft Week (held the first week in October each year). Now in its sixth year, American Craft Week is the country's largest nationwide celebration of American craft and design. Participation in American Craft Week is FREE to Artisans Center of Virginia and 'Round the Mountain member creative artisans/artists and agri-artisans as well as supporting sites such as restaurants, unique lodging and cultural points of interest who align their events/activities with their local artisans.



Exhibitions: Captivating Audiences of All Ages



Held in various galleries, museums and business locations across the state, ACV exhibitions are dedicated to enhancing the public's awareness of contemporary artisan works while providing a venue for established and emerging artists alike to share their functional and sculptural creative endeavors. Innovative, cultural and technically astounding, "Featured Member" and "Virginia Creates" exhibitions represent the best of ACV Juried Artisans while National exhibitions bring the finest artisan work from all across the country to the Commonwealth.

Educational Outreach Programming

ACV offers opportunities for Juried Artisans to provide quality instruction in various media to the education system and to the public at large. Whether in an ACV Juried Artisan's home studio or on educational grounds, outreach programming offers a unique and experiential opportunity that is often not available in the public school system due to the lack of funding for regular art instruction. Artisans discuss the process they use in developing their work, and demonstrate their art and provide opportunity for students to create handmade projects.



Fiscal Agent Program: Working Together

ACV's "Joint Plan of Work" program offers community art-based groups the ability to establish programming that enhances their creative economy. With ACV serving as an umbrella organization, this program allows each group more time and resources to work on their artisan and creative community missions. By working cooperatively with a Joint Plan of Work, no one group is isolated, and shared resources allow group efforts to be more effective. As non-profit programs of ACV, these groups receive bookkeeping and auditing services, outreach marketing for arts programming and arts events, use of ACV's juried standards for program participation criteria, ACV brand leveraging, website visibility, staff assistance as well as payroll services if applicable.

Current Community Joint Plan of Work Programs:

- Mobile Art Share Initiative (MASI), Charlottesville, Virginia. *The Mobile Art Share Initiative (MASI) is a collective of artists dedicated to bringing the arts to underserved communities. The MASI mission is to provide those who are in need with the opportunity to learn about art, make art and share art.*
- Middle Peninsula Artisan Trail Task Force, to raise seed funding to develop an Artisan Trail in their region.



...Enhancing Statewide Marketing Initiatives



ACV's seal is a recognized symbol for Virginia Artisan handcrafted works, known for its high standards of quality workmanship further representing experience, integrity and professionalism and the loyalty of its patrons. ACV brand brings added value to Juried Artisan members over their competitors and distinguishes the high quality of Virginia artisan works. It is the established and unifying brand by which the entire state of Virginia's Artisan Industry can be identified as single entity representing the approximately 4,000 separate cottage businesses that make up its \$527.2 million dollar economic impact to the Commonwealth (Statewide Economic Impact Study to be released in early 2016)

Coupled with the strength of marketing partners such as the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC), ACV develops strategies that enhance the visibility and marketability of local communities. VTC's state marketing tagline "Virginia is for Lovers" is echoed in the tradition and passion of lovers of local, handmade works.

ACV's work to expand the visibility of Virginia Artisan communities as visitor destinations is an integral component of the "Take Home a Piece of Virginia," campaign that further provides opportunity to recognize the producers of handcrafted Virginia products and to provide opportunity to increase their recognizable edge in the marketplace.

Brand Distinction and Positioning – ACV is Handcrafting Virginia's Cultural Economy



The artisan industry in Virginia is one of the state's greatest untapped economic assets. Skilled artisans, with expertise in design, manufacturing techniques, and tradesmanship, form the backbone of the creative economy in many communities across the Commonwealth. While their handmade work is itself marketable as a unique Virginia product, artisan locations in small rural to bustling urban communities provide a tremendous and largely underutilized opportunity for regional tourism marketing and economic growth.

ACV is working to establish Virginia as the nation's destination for distinctive handcrafted goods. ACV is uniquely qualified to provide access to a variety of promotional opportunities, bringing increased exposure and advertising expertise to foster artisan entrepreneurs.

In the past there has been a lack of coordination to leverage artisan talent into creating a recognized and established industry that is branded, promoted, and celebrated as a valuable Virginia commodity. ACV works to elevate visibility, celebrate quality handcrafted goods, and to extol the attributes and stories of Virginia Artisans to the benefit of communities throughout the Commonwealth. ACV is committed to diligent collaboration of marketing efforts to spread the message that the arts enhance community.



ACV's statement "**Handcrafting Virginia's Cultural Economy**" has taken on new meaning as the collective organization works on a grassroots level developing artisan initiatives that will have positive and sustainable impacts on their local communities.



“Take Home a Piece of Virginia” is a proactive call-to-action engaging visitors to experience the culture of Artisanal Virginia in a profound and hands-on way.

Virginia’s artisan culture links the past, present and future and reconciles “meaning” with “making”. Whether exploring the artisan studios, galleries, eclectic shops, agri-artisan farms and on

water experiences, unique restaurants, lodging amenities, and points of interest along the ACV trails, attending world-class exhibitions featuring the work of Virginia Artisans or embarking on a journey of discovery to learn an artisan skill, “Take Home a Piece of Virginia” proudly aligns with “Virginia is for Lovers” (“Take Home A Piece of Virginia” is sponsored in part by the Virginia Tourism Corporation). This highly-visible marketing campaign is designed to impart a desire in visitors to return time and again to encounter the rich history and stories that make Artisanal Virginia an unforgettable destination experience.

The goal of “**Take Home A Piece of Virginia**” is strengthened by the “Think Virginia First” premise that resonates with each of the Artisans Center of Virginia’s program initiatives to motivate members to “choose local” for their products and services, and visitors to patron artisan businesses and fully experience the cultural artisan amenities of Virginia communities all across the Commonwealth.

“**Take Home a Piece of Virginia**” is a global marketing message and call-to-action overarching each of ACV’s program initiatives through the following dynamics:

An Experience: Visit artisan studios, agri-artisan farms, fairs, exhibitions, cultural events and related local businesses. *ACV Relative Programs:* Artisan Trail Network, Exhibitions, Retail Locations (“Shop ACV”), Virginia Oyster Trail.

A Memory: Acquire Virginia Artisan products and/or secure artisan services.

ACV Relative Programs: Artisan Trail Network, Exhibitions, Retail Locations (“Shop ACV”), Virginia Oyster Trail.

A Skill: Learn artisan crafts, observe agri-artisan practices and/or expand arts-business skills.

ACV Relative Programs: Artisan Trail Network, Studio School, Jury, Virginia Oyster Trail.



ACV's Future Vision for Virginia's Artisan Industry includes.....

...Opening Markets, Expanding Exports

Virginia Artisans create economic value through both the handmade items they produce and the product development and design expertise that they possess as individual artisans. The economic impact of Virginia Artisans may be expanded through either of two separate market strategies: (1) increasing the sale of Virginia handcrafted products through branding, enhanced marketing, and private sector retail partnerships, and (2) leveraging the expertise of Virginia artisans into new partnership industries such as product development, research and design, and consulting services. Much as the Virginia Exports division of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership enhances the economic base of Virginia manufacturers by working with companies to identify new markets, develop market entry strategies, and locate distributors and representatives for products, goods, equipment, technology or services, the Artisans Center of Virginia will provide resources for artisan businesses seeking to expand their sales beyond local venues and sales galleries.

Market Goals

Increase the sales and economic impact of the Virginia Artisan Industry by, expanding markets including:

- *Manufacturing Design Firms and Construction Projects:* Develop strategic partnerships with design firms that are working in national and international markets as well as facilitate utilization of craft trades in large and small construction projects.
- *Education:* Provide education to Virginia artisans on entering national and international markets, including market research.
- *Branded and Centralized Sales:* Provide a standardized craft jury process to establish Virginia quality and brand. The "ACV" seal and statewide sales gallery website will enhance sales activity and allow both rural and urban-based artisans to deepen their market penetration.
- *Private Sector Partnerships:* Expand the Retail Alliance program to feature Virginia Artisan work in non-Virginia based retail galleries to increase Virginia exports.



Virginia Artisan Culture



The culture of the Virginia Artisan inspires appreciative audiences for its unique products while expressing a distinctive way of life. Virginia Artisan culture invokes a natural order, firmly woven into the everyday fabric of an artisan's life, embracing the familiar relationship between the acts of creating and living. Once immersed in this culture, whether producing "handmade" or enjoying the use and aesthetic of artisan produced items, an intimate lifelong relationship of value and appreciation emerges strong and true. Artisan culture links the past, present and future, reconciling "meaning" with "making", as it embodies traditional practices and explores creative innovations and new trends that touch all facets of society.

What is a Creative Artisan?



A Creative Artisan of "craft" creates objects of three dimensional craft, often to be used functionally, and always with a high degree of artistry and fine craftsmanship. For the craft artisan, form follows function, and the work of the artisan speaks to the simple honesty of that paradigm. Whether a craft artisan or one who creates two dimensional works of art, ACV recognizes that both types of Creative Artisans are "artists" who create without the use of kits, commercial

models, where the primary components of the final works are hand-touched, not manufactured or copied. The Creative Artisan instills their works with personal feeling and experience, creativity and innovation while making quality objects and compositions with pride, honesty, and integrity. Whether using hand tools or machines, the Creative Artisan takes no shortcuts that might compromise the quality of the work. The Creative Artisan does not attempt to compete with the large-scale manufacturer, and the amount of time taken to make a work of fine art is secondary to the result. That the goal of the Creative Artisan is to achieve heirloom quality is an unspoken assumption.

What is an Agri-Artisan? (a.k.a Agro-Artisan, Aqua-Artisan)

Agricultural-based, an Agri-Artisan relies on the natural resources of the land while reconciling a preservation of America's past as they operate businesses such as family farms, vineyards, wineries, breweries, orchards, organic farming, waterman culture, roadside stands, etc. Many embrace traditional farm practices, capturing a way of life unique to the rural and agricultural communities where they reside and retaining the culture and character passed on to them by previous generations. Such enterprises produce food and beverages, fiber, unique crops or livestock, add value to traditional agricultural products, or offer recreational, education, nature or other farm-based activities, such as markets and roadside stands.



The Brief History of the Artisans Center of Virginia

In 1987, then Governor Gerald Baliles included the statement “enhancement of the craft industry” in a set of directives to state agencies. To meet this directive various public and private entities worked to bring Virginia’s craftspeople together to draft a list of needs and desires for the craft industry. At the top of that list was the need for a unified presence for Virginia Artisan handcrafted works.

In 1997, the Artisans Center of Virginia was incorporated and on June 11, 2000, it was designated to the public as the “official state artisans center.” Service to the entire state and its artisan community has been at the forefront of planning and programming. ACV realizes that in order to best serve Virginia’s artisans it needs to attract the public and provide sustainable economic opportunities to developing artisan businesses while working to train tomorrow’s artisans and keep the culture of handmade fine Virginia-made products alive and thriving.



From 2000 – 2009, ACV operated a successful 5,000 square foot sales and exhibitions gallery. During that time outreach objectives included the creation of a statewide Craft Registry, identifying artisans and the venues that serve them and the establishment of the first statewide jurying program, utilizing stringent standards to distinguish levels of quality and professionalism among Virginia artisans. This program further identifies Master Virginia Artisans who work to perpetuate the business of artisan craft through education and advocacy.

In past years, ACV has created a large demonstration and sales gallery at the Virginia State Fair attracting in excess of 250,000 people over an eleven day period, including approximately 30,000 school students who are able to see artisans at work and discuss craft one-on-one with professionals. Additionally, ACV hosted an annual Studio Tour for 15 years in the area surrounding Charlottesville reaching out to over 15,000 visitors each year.



In March of 2009, ACV expanded its statewide scope with a clear objective of creating statewide collaborations between state and local governments, planning districts, the small business community, arts organizations, economic development, tourism and artisans to bring the ACV strategic initiatives to fruition all across the Commonwealth.



ACV's headquarters is physically located at the Frontier Culture Museum, 1290 Richmond Ave Staunton, VA, 24401.

The Artisans Center of Virginia, Inc. is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.

For more information on the Artisans Center of Virginia contact:
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