

**Rural Prosperity through the Arts and Creative Sector:
A Rural Action Guide for Governors and States**

Literature Review

Introduction

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is supporting a National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA) initiative funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to collect and disseminate knowledge about how the arts and creative industries can contribute to the sustainable economic development of rural communities across the United States. NASAA's contribution to this effort is to provide research and consulting services. To surface and summarize what is pertinent to policymakers interested in arts based rural economic development, NASAA is undertaking a review of academic and practitioner literature, a 50-state field scan of rural creative economic development projects and practices, and a search for publicly available quantitative data sets that offer national perspectives of rural creative economies. Building off these resources, NASAA will provide its expertise and advice to the NGA on the development of an expert roundtable discussion, other convenings and a final publication, which will summarize relevant research, highlight exemplary state examples, and offer recommendations to governors and their staff about how they can support and benefit from their state's creative sector.

The following annotated bibliography distills NASAA's literature review and is the project's first research deliverable. It takes stock of the extant English-language literature—including research reports, white papers, policy briefs, conference presentations, academic studies and more—about how the arts and culture contribute to rural economies and communities. It is a curated collection, focused on the resources NASAA believes are the most substantial, informative and useful for the NGA, and does not reflect all of the literature reviewed. In addition, it does not include rural focused statewide creative economic impact studies, which NASAA is collecting as part of its second research deliverable, the 50-state field scan.

NASAA welcomes additions to and feedback on the annotated bibliography. Please feel to contribute your knowledge by contacting NASAA Research Manager Paul Pietsch at paul.pietsch@nasaa-arts.org or 202-552-0844.

Annotated Bibliography

Agricultural and Resource Economics Review

[A Consumption Base Theory of Development: An Application to the Rural Cultural Economy](#)

Ann Markusen

Vol. 36, Iss. 1 (April 2007), pp. 9-23

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

This article describes how cultural investments prompt regional growth and emphasizes the role of artists as economic catalysts in rural communities. To this end, it applies a "consumption base approach," which, as an alternative to the more prominent "export base theory," posits that "locally oriented consumption activities" drive regional economies. It also considers three types of arts and cultural investments—artist centers, artist live/work spaces, and performing arts facilities—with examples from rural and small-town settings. The report concludes with recommendations for a "rural cultural strategy."

[The Emergence of Rural Artistic Havens](#)

Timothy R. Wojan, Dayton M. Lambert and David A. McGranahan
Vol. 36, Iss. 1 (April 2007), pp. 53-70

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

This paper finds that rural areas, like urban areas, can develop a distinct specialization in the arts. Identifying rural characteristics associated with attracting performing, fine and applied artists, it describes what it calls "rural havens" and maps their locations throughout the United States. It also uses data from the 2000 Census to illustrate by community size (from populations of fewer than 2,500 to more than 1 million) the number and relative percentage of people employed in the arts (p. 3). It notes, "the growth of tourism in some rural areas may support arts markets despite relatively low population density. Alternatively, footloose artists supplying regional or national markets may choose to live in amenity-rich rural areas, similar to other footloose creative professionals" (p. 1).

[Ambient Returns: Creative Capital's Contribution to Local Manufacturing Competitiveness](#)

Timothy R. Wojan and David A. McGranahan
Vol. 36, Iss. 1 (April 2007), pp. 133-148

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

Based on empirical evidence that "highly creative workers are drawn to amenity-rich rural areas" and on data from 2,500 rural manufacturers, this article considers whether "competitive rural manufacturing is increasingly driven by quality-of-life factors required to attract highly skilled and creative workers." Such quality-of-life factors contrast with the traditional cost-advantage rationale of rural manufacturing, "an advantage that is eroding with increased globalization." The paper's analysis suggests that there is an alternative to the traditional rural manufacturing model of low wages, one that "involves a trade-off of slower growth in employment for a developmentally superior labor force composition."

American Planning Association

[Community Character: How Arts and Cultural Strategies Create, Reinforce, and Enhance Sense of Place](#)

Jeff Soule, Kimberley Hodgson and Kelly Ann Beavers
2011

This policy brief discusses how arts and culture can foster a community's evolving sense of place, reflecting the current values and aspirations of residents and businesses. Through planning strategies, community members can articulate the unfolding narrative of their hometown and, as a result, strengthen its gravitational pull. Key planning principles include understanding community context; celebrating community character; and designing local

policies, regulations and arts programming that enhance community identity. The brief does not specifically address non-metro communities, but its message applies to rural contexts.

[Economic Vitality: How the Arts and Culture Sector Catalyzes Economic Vitality](#)

M. Christine Dwyer and Kelly Ann Beavers

2011

This policy brief considers four key points for realizing creative economy projects, noting that such efforts connect the fields of planning, economic development, and arts and culture. It posits (1) that local economies grow when creativity is concentrated, (2) that celebrating cultural assets attracts businesses and workers to a community, (3) that arts activities spark tourism and encourage residents to engage in community activities and (4) that planners can capitalize on local arts and cultural resources. The brief does not specifically address non-metro communities, but its message applies to rural contexts.

Americans for the Arts (AFTA)

[6 Characteristics to Successful Arts and Rural Economic Development Efforts](#)

Shannon Ford

2014

This ArtsBlog post describes the following six traits of successful arts based rural economic development projects: (1) clarity of goals, (2) sustainability, (3) evaluation, (4) visibility, (5) partnerships and (6) authenticity.

[Building Creative Economies: The Arts, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development](#)

2003

This monograph summarizes the proceedings of an eponymous 2002 conference that was cosponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Appalachian Regional Commission. Conference participants shared their stories of creative economic development in Appalachian communities and discussed related issues such as cultural heritage tourism, downtown revitalization, arts entrepreneurs and marketing strategies. They also talked about sources of local, state and national funding. The paper offers recommendations for local creative economy projects and offers case studies as examples.

[Community-Based Arts Organizations: A New Center of Gravity](#)

Ron Chew

2009

This essay talks about the ability of community based arts organizations (rural or urban) "to satisfy multiple goals—artistic, social, civic, and economic—because they operate on multiple levels in [a] community." It describes these groups as "vital community institutions" and as drivers of "economic development and a broader community vision."

[Cultural Tourism: Attracting Visitors and Their Spending](#)

Cheryl Hargrove

2014

This is one of five papers AFTA commissioned as part of its 2014 National Cultural Districts Exchange, each of which addresses arts leaders, planning professionals, community

development practitioners and other policymakers interested in developing a new cultural district or improving an existing one. This paper, which includes examples of several rural communities, focuses on the mutually beneficial relationship between cultural tourists and cultural districts. It describes strategies for planning, developing, marketing and managing cultural districts. It also discusses measuring the impacts of tourism on cultural districts.

[It's the Ecology, Stupid](#)

Donna Neuwirth and Jay Salinas, Wormfarm Institute

2014

In this ArtsBlog post, the cofounders of the Wormfarm Institute in Reddsburg, Wisconsin, assert that there is a natural relationship "between a vibrant culture and economic activity." But they also maintain that Wormfarm "can't significantly affect economic *development*, but...can dramatically increase economic *activity*." They continue: "Economic activity is a natural byproduct of our arts-centered efforts. Economic development is the responsibility of those whose livelihood depends upon capturing and sustaining this activity."

[Rural Communities as Cultural Hubs in Northern New Hampshire](#)

Jamie Feinberg

2014

This ArtsBlog post argues that rural communities interested in harnessing creative economic development should capitalize on their homegrown arts and heritage assets. Arts based economic development is not limited to new museums, large festivals and contemporary art. Unique cultural events and traditional art forms can be equally effective economic drivers if marketed effectively.

[The Power of Partnerships in Placemaking](#)

Eric R. Rogers

2014

This ArtsBlog post explains how partnerships and collaborations are often the basis for successful creative placemaking efforts in both rural and urban communities. It offers three keys for successful joint placemaking ventures: (1) balance the sense of local ownership with centralized planning, (2) accept that collaboration demands more time than unilateral action and (3) be willing to think creatively. The post does not address economic impact of creative placemaking, but it is implied.

Appalachian Regional Commission

[Appalachia: Turning Assets into Opportunities](#)

2004

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

This paper focuses on rural "asset-based economic development," which it defines as "a strategy that builds on existing resources—natural, cultural and structural—to create valued products and services that can be sustained for local benefit." This type of development, according to the paper, "results in a high impact for users and a low impact on assets." Furthermore, when applied in a "holistic approach to growth," it "balances preservation and promotion for enduring prosperity." To realize such an effort, the paper recommends "focusing on what already exists, rather than inventing or building

something new" and "taking what is and turning it into what can be." The paper notes that Appalachia is poised to reap the benefits of this strategy as "no other region has the landscapes, the mountain music, craft traditions and industrial heritage" that can be found in and around its small towns. It discusses several examples of successful efforts, including Virginia's Heritage Music Trail, Tennessee's National Storytelling Festival and Berea, Kentucky, which is home to the Kentucky Artisan Center and is known as the state's Folk Arts & Crafts Capital.

[Creating an Entrepreneurial Appalachian Region: Findings and Lessons from an Evaluation of the Appalachian Regional Commission's Entrepreneurship Initiative 1997-2005](#)

2008

This report reviews the work and results of the Appalachian Regional Commission's Entrepreneurship Initiative, which invested nearly \$43 million in entrepreneurship development projects that, over 10 years, "created jobs and businesses, supported partnerships and collaborations, and helped leaders at the community and state levels recognize the value of entrepreneurship as an economic development strategy." While the report does not focus on arts based development, its lessons for practitioners likely apply to rural cultural entrepreneurship.

[Creating Regional Advantage in Appalachia: Towards a Strategic Response to Global Economic Restructuring](#)

Stephen Herzenberg, Suzanne Teegarden and Howard Wial

2005

This report summarizes the findings of field research conducted in seven Appalachian states—New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina and Georgia—on the effects and responses to worker displacement and economic restructuring. One conclusion is that successful economic development plans for Appalachia are "likely to require a great deal more self-conscious strategy development and sustained and collaborative regional and community action than did the economic development that raised living standards in North Appalachia from the 1950s to the 1970s and in Southern Appalachia from the 1970s to the 1990s." It also talks about applying the "theory of regional advantage," which contends that "a region can best promote its growth by assisting and building on industry clusters in which the region is already specialized." The paper offers the example of Asheville, North Carolina, which has an existing arts/crafts/design industry cluster.

[Economic Diversity in Appalachia: Statistics, Strategies, and Guides for Action](#)

Edward Feser, Troy Mix, Mark White and Ken Poole

2014

This report addresses economic diversification in Appalachia as a valuable strategy because it "helps economic development practitioners and community stakeholders better detect and understand economic opportunities and threats." The report has three goals: (1) to describe the economic diversity trends of Appalachian counties and subregions related to U.S. trends; (2) to summarize diversity trends, economic development practices and diversification strategies in 10 specific counties; and (3) to share lessons that highlight what economic diversity means for development initiatives. An accompanying website, <http://economicdiversityinappalachia.creonline.org/>, features data, maps and interactive tools for understanding economic diversity trends in Appalachia and the United States. This report points to the creation of the Kentucky School of Craft and the Kentucky Appalachian Artisan

Center as pivotal parts of a rural creative economic development effort in Knott County, Kentucky.

[Kentucky's Creative Marketing Boosts Artisan Businesses](#)

Carl Hoffman

2005

This *Appalachia Magazine* article highlights two arts based rural economic development efforts in eastern Kentucky developed with support from the Appalachian Regional Commission. The Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea, which opened in 2003 as a state agency, is 26,000 square feet of gallery, retail and cafe space dedicated to showcasing "the best in Kentucky arts and crafts." Kentucky Artisan Heritage Trails is a project of Kentucky University's Center for Economic Development, Entrepreneurship and Technology that encourages cultural tourism.

[Rural Action: Revitalizing Appalachian Communities](#)

Fred D. Baldwin

2007

This *Appalachia Magazine* article highlights Rural Action, a group working in Appalachian Ohio to create a sustainable economy, promote sustainable communities and foster a sustainable environment. It focuses on the organization's efforts to support agriculture by encouraging a culture of consumption local food. The article's consideration of economic development tied to food culture is applicable to the arts.

[Sources of Regional Growth in Non-Metro Appalachia](#)

Lisa Petraglia, Glen Weisbrod, Teresa Lynch, Stuart Rosenfeld, Phil Psilos, Dan Broun, Karen R. Polenske, Joseph Ferreira, Jr. and Ayman Ismail

2007

This paper is part of a larger research effort aimed at understanding the factors affecting economic growth in rural and distressed regions. It provides a background for the project, reviews related research, presents case studies and statistical studies, and looks at tools of economic development. The paper provides examples of economic development coming from cultural heritage tourism in southeast Tennessee and southwest North Carolina. It also talks about quality of life—which includes arts and culture—as an important factor in businesses deciding where to locate.

[West Virginia's Showcase for Entrepreneurs](#)

James E. Casto

2002

This *Appalachia Magazine* article features the Center for Economic Options, a nonprofit based in Charleston, West Virginia, that helps small-scale business owners develop markets for their products. It describes how the organization has fostered artist-entrepreneurs and creative economic development in rural communities.

Applied Geography

[A Creativity-Led Rural Renaissance? Amenity-Led Migration, the Creative Turn and the Uneven Development of Rural Australia](#)

Neil Argent, Matthew Tonts, Roy Jones and John Holmes

Vol. 44 (October 2013)

This article evaluates how successfully rural regions and communities in Australia have been able to attract creative workers since 2001. It reviews data that indicates that the presence of the creative class in rural areas has "relatively little stimulatory effect on local economies as measured by employment growth." The article recommends that rural economic development efforts incorporate multiple strategies and not focus solely on arts based efforts.

Applied Research in Economic Development

[From Blues to Benton to Bluegrass: The Economic Impact of the Arts in the South](#)

Sujit M. CanagaRetna

Vol. 5, Iss. 3 (December 2008)

This journal article looks at the economic impacts of arts activities in 16 southern states—Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia—in comparison to legislative appropriations to their state arts agencies. As it concludes, "the ability of the arts and cultural sectors to contribute significantly to the economic vitality of local and state economies, despite the reductions in legislative appropriations, strongly suggests that the continuation of funding during an economic downturn could potentially ensure even greater levels of economic flows from these sectors." The article doesn't focus on rural creative economic development, though many of the states considered do have large rural populations and it does highlight rural Berea, Kentucky—home to the Kentucky Artisan Center—as "the arts and crafts capital of the state."

ArtPlace Blog

[Collective Spirit and Rural Economic Development](#)

Ebony McKinney

2017

This is the first part of an interview with Lori Pourier, president of The First People's Fund, who talks about artists and artist entrepreneurs living on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, and Cheryal Hills of Region Five Development Commission, who talks about the Sprout Growers & Makers Marketplace, an indoor, year-round market in Central Minnesota that connects local food and artwork to residents and tourists.

[Can Arts and Culture Shift Economics?](#)

Ebony McKinney

2017

This is the second part of an interview with Lori Pourier, president of The First People's Fund, based in South Dakota, and Cheryal Hills of the Region Five Development Commission in

Minnesota. The conversation focuses on alternate definitions of rural wealth, the ethics of mobilizing cultural assets and the value of culture bearers as coaches.

Arts Council England

[Arts in Rural England: Why the Arts Are at the Heart of Rural Life](#)

François Matarasso

2005

This paper was developed to highlight the "extraordinary and innovative work that artists are doing in rural areas" in England and to surface "their contribution to the country's economic, social and environmental regeneration." It was developed after Arts Council England learned that rural arts activities were largely overlooked by local and national government agencies, arts critics and journalists. It talks about and gives examples of rural creative economies and related "rural regeneration."

Arts & Democracy Project, Center for Rural Strategies and InCommons

[Rural Cultural Roundtable Report](#)

2011

This report summarizes a 2011 meeting of cultural leaders, policymakers, funders and researchers who discussed "the power of place based arts and culture as an integral part of equitable, democratic, and culturally vital communities." The idea of natural cultural districts framed the conversations, as did four questions: (1) How can opportunities and benefits be distributed fairly and equitably across communities? (2) What is the nature of the benefits? (3) In what ways can community members have a voice in these decisions? (4) How can arts and culture be supported as an ecology, rather than as a hierarchy? Arts based economic development was one of the themes throughout the event's discussions.

The Atlantic

[Imagining a Post-Coal Appalachia](#)

Alana Semuels

2015

This article does not directly discuss rural creative economic development, but it highlights the conditions conducive to it as well as the need for it. It highlights the work of Appalshop in Whitesburg, Kentucky, and mentions Berea, Kentucky, which is known as a locus of rural creative placemaking because the Kentucky Artisan Center is located there.

Australia Council for the Arts and Regional Arts Australia

[Stats and Stories: The Impact of the Arts in Regional Australia](#)

Ruth Rentschler, Kerrie Bridson and Jody Evans

2015

This paper considers five themes vis-à-vis the arts and rural Australia: (1) economic regeneration, (2) community connectedness, (3) social inclusion, (4) regional development and (5) civic pride and community identity. Each section includes a case study and quantitative data. As it asserts, "There are eight dimensions of economic regeneration addressed through the arts: Place marketing; Widening opportunities; Encouraging investment; Growing the economy; Improving people's lives; Tackling disadvantage; Community strategy and policy; Tackling industrial decline."

Bipartisan Policy Center

[The Appalachia Initiative: A Bipartisan Approach for the 21st Century](#)

2017

This is the summary report of the Appalachian Initiative task force, which explored critical issues related to (1) education and work force, (2) entrepreneurship and job creation, (3) energy and infrastructure and (4) rural health. It was led by four U.S. senators and consisted of state policymakers, business executives and academics. The task force's report describes a rural region that is ripe for arts based economic development.

Canadian Journal of Regional Science

[A Look Beyond Metropolis: Exploring Creative Class in the Canadian Periphery](#)

Andrey N. Petrov

Vol. 30, Iss. 3 (Autumn 2007)

This paper reevaluates Richard Florida's theory of the creative class relative to economic development in rural communities. It is based on evidence from 34 communities in Canada's northern periphery. It warns against "the blind application" of Richard Florida's creative class prescriptions in rural areas because they may not be applicable or appropriate.

Center for Creative Community Development (Williams College)

[Culture and Revitalization: The Economic Effects of MASS MoCA on Its Community](#)

Stephen C. Sheppard, Kay Oehler, Blair Benjamin and Ari Kessler

2006

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RESOURCE**

This paper looks at the economic effects of MASS MoCA, a contemporary art museum in rural western Massachusetts. The research behind the paper stands out from previous creative economy studies—including those by Americans for the Arts, the Urban Institute and the Social Impact of the Arts Project at the University of Pennsylvania—in that it utilized the analytical tools of multiple social sciences and focused primarily on neighborhood and community impacts instead of regional results.

[Mill Town, Factory Town, Cultural Economic Engine: North Adams in Context](#)

Kay Oehler, Stephen Sheppard and Blair Benjamin

2006

This paper is a companion piece to [Culture and Revitalization: The Economic Effects of MASS MoCA on Its Community](#), a 2006 report that also is included in this literature review. The present paper investigates the cultural and historical context of a rural western Massachusetts community that enabled it to redevelop a former mill into a world-class contemporary art museum and, in so doing, to revitalize its local economy through cultural activity.

[The Economic Impact of MASS MoCA in 2017](#)

Stephen Sheppard

2017

This report evaluates the economic and employment impacts of MASS MoCA, a contemporary art museum in rural western Massachusetts, as of 2017. It is an update to a 2006 report, [Culture and Revitalization: The Economic Effects of MASS MoCA on Its Community](#), which also is included in this literature review. The 2017 report concludes that the museum has become "a cornerstone of the Berkshire County economy." Nonetheless, "the region continues to experience economic difficulties" despite the widespread economic benefits of the museum.

Center for Rural Studies (Sam Houston State University)

[An Investigation of Arts-Based Rural Creative Development \(working paper\)](#)

Gene L. Theodori, Cheryl L. Hudec and Charlotte Drumm

2015

This report summarizes a research project, supported by a National Endowment for the Arts Research: Art Works grant, considering the potential of the arts as a rural-development strategy. Using quantitative data collected from rural communities across Texas, researchers tested eight hypotheses about arts participation and community satisfaction and attachment. Although they did not focus on economic development through the arts, the researchers did find connections between the arts, community satisfaction/attachment and economic growth. They found, for example, that the arts "may be a novel and exciting possibility for community revitalization" in rural communities "experiencing social and economic decline" (p. 1). Furthermore, they conclude that "an increased understanding of (a) the factors related to arts participation and (b) the effects of arts participation on community-oriented action is especially beneficial for community developers, public leaders, and other practitioners (e.g., cooperative extension service personnel) seeking an arts-based strategy to rural community and economic development processes/projects" (p. 26).

Community Arts Network

[Small Town America Redesigns Itself into Prosperity](#)

Jennifer Roche

2005

This article discusses creative placemaking efforts and results in a small town in Alabama. The town benefited from technical assistance provided by CIRD, which at that time was still known as Your Town: the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design. One result of the town's project was a dramatic increase in sales and use tax revenue.

Community and Rural Development Institute (Cornell University)

[The Creative Economy Practitioner's Toolkit: Taking Advantage of Campus and Community Resources](#)

Susan Christopherson, Suzanne Loker and Susan Monagan

2007

This policy brief discusses how colleges and universities can foster creative economies in rural areas. It also outlines four strategies for developing rural creative economies. These ideas are also discussed in [Connecting Campus and Community to Foster a Creative Economy: Strategies and Lessons from Upstate New York](#) (2007), an occasional paper from the New York Campus Compact, a Cornell-led membership association of New York college and university presidents committed to promoting "active citizenship as an aim of higher education."

Createquity

[Artists Shaking Up and Strengthening Communities in Rural America](#)

Rachel Engh

2013

This blog post discusses examples of cultural activities benefiting small, rural towns in Minnesota. Creative economic development is not named but it is implied. The post notes that artists increase a rural community's "brain gain" not only through sharing their own creative and intellectual products but also by attracting educated people who want to live in an arts-supportive community. Furthermore, "efforts by a rural area to attract artists can be an especially high-yield strategy." For example, using the arts to attract new residents aged 30-49 "can be an effective way to create an increased tax base, a more diversified economy, a more vibrant school system (since these people tend to have families), and new ideas and optimism."

Creative City Network of Canada

[Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities through Arts and Creativity: An International Literature Review and Inventory of Resources](#)

Heather Campbell, Kim Dunphy, Nancy Duxbury, Patrick Overton and Lidia Varbanova

2009

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

This report is a broad survey of the state of rural creative economic development around the world. It features a literature review as well as three essays and associated case studies highlighting related work in the United States, Australia and Europe. It also includes an annotated bibliography. There are tables illustrating the dimensions and characteristics of arts activities in rural communities, a logic model describing how the arts thrive in rural towns and an illustration of the six stages of "creative destruction," which is the unintended consequence of cultural amenities losing their intrinsic value through over-commodification. The U.S. focused essay surfaces five elements that distinguish cultural development work in small and/or rural communities: (1) project timelines are long, (2) cultural assessments of communities help ensure authentic, sustainable processes, (3) a reliance on volunteers and/or part-time staff, (4) a need to balance cultural tourism with community needs and identity, and (5) the absence of a local funding authority.

In a subsequent journal article—[Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities through Arts and Culture](#) (Small Cities Imprint, Vol. 3, Iss. 1 [2011])—the directors of the project behind the 2009 report, and the authors of the literature review within it, reprise and clarify ideas that emerged from the earlier research. They group these ideas into six themes: (1) the nature of arts and creative activities in rural communities, (2) capacity and related challenges, (3) community factors and critical ingredients, (4) population related issues and opportunities, (5) economic issues and opportunities, and (6) governance factors.

[Revitalizing Rural Communities through Arts and Culture](#)

Creative City News

2009

This special edition of *Creative City News* summarizes the findings of [Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities through Arts and Creativity: An International Literature Review and Inventory of Resources](#) (2009), an in-depth report that also is included in this literature review. The present newsletter cautions against transferring "urban-centric" creative economy policies and practices to rural locations, and it articulates "key ingredients for vital communities" and 12 strategies for success. It also features several short case studies of rural creative economic development in Canada. The piece asserts that cultural development and economic development in a community "are equally important and, in fact, are interdependent."

Creative Industries Journal

[Creative Industries in a Rural Region: *Creative West: The Creative Sector in the Western Region of Ireland*](#)

Pauline White

Vol. 3, No. 1 (2010)

This article considers evidence from the Western Region of Ireland—where about 68% of the population lives in a small community—to address the "potential and challenges for the creative sector in rural regions." Attracting and retaining creative talent is critical to arts based rural development, according to the article. To that end, natural amenities and other quality-of-life factors are assets, while the relative lack of physical and virtual connectivity is a threat. The article notes that 24% of "cultural employment" throughout the European Union is located in rural areas.

[From Culture to Cultural Economic Power: Rural Regional Development in Small German Communities](#)

Karin Drda-Kühn and Dietmar Wiegand

Vol. 3, No. 1 (2010)

This article summarizes a study that aimed to identify the conditions that enable small towns in Germany to benefit from the cultural economy. Based on empirical evidence, the study concluded "that the initiation, creation and professional monitoring of networks" are essential to fostering rural cultural economies.

Creative Vitality Suite (Western States Arts Federation)

[A Guide to Creatives in Rural California: An Analysis of Economic Activity in the Creative Sector in California's Rural ZIP Codes](#)

Nicole Stephan and Paul Nguyen

2016

This study "defines the current state of the creative economy" in rural California. It surfaces data showing that rural and urban creative economies have different dynamics. The report positions itself as a resource to inform policy development. It includes a section on measuring employment and earnings in the creative sector, by considering both the creative workers in all industries and all the workers in the creative industries. It also provides creative economy profiles of northern and southern California.

[Our Creative Roots, Creative Districts and Economic Growth in Colorado's Mountain Communities](#)

2017

This is one part of a five-part blog post series on the creative economy "from the perspective of rural communities." This post highlights the Creative Districts program of Colorado Creative Industries, which has supported the creative economic development of small, rural communities in the Rockies.

[Our Creative Roots, Impact and the Homegrown Entrepreneur](#)

Sarah Calhoun

2016

This is one part of a five-part blog post series on the creative economy "from the perspective of rural communities." The post is a case study of the local economic impact of the Red Ants Pants Music Festival, which attracts nearly 9,000 people to a rural Montana town of 950 people.

CultureWork

[Culture in Agriculture: The Cooperative Extension Service as an Alternative Rural Arts Model](#)

Savannah Barrett

2013

This article looks at how cooperative extension services—which are educational networks of local, regional and state offices affiliated to public land-grant universities—facilitate programs that contribute to the development of America's community arts field. It considers historical models as well as contemporary projects. According to the article, extension service arts programs currently operate in Idaho, Kentucky, Massachusetts and Wisconsin and "utilize the arts as a vehicle for community development through entrepreneurship and cultural tourism, youth development, and community arts."

Current Issues in Tourism Letters

[The Role of Agritourism in Heritage Preservation](#)

Chantell LaPan and Carla Barbieri

Vol. 17, Iss. 8 (2014)

This article examines the connection between "agritourism"—which it defines as "any type of recreational or educational activity offered in any type of working agricultural setting"—and heritage preservation. It concludes that agritourism helps preserve tangible heritage such as historic buildings and antique equipment and that farmers engaging in agritourism are driven mainly by the intrinsic value of their land and culture.

The Daily Yonder

[Artists Revitalize Rural Manufacturing](#)

Janet Kagan and Jean Greer

2013

This blog post is a case study of a small, rural town of Siler City, North Carolina, that leveraged collaborations between artists and local workers "to create new products, retrain a workforce, and stimulate a community's social and economic connection to place." The project highlighted was led by Art-Force, a nonprofit organization that stimulates local economies by fostering cross-sector projects between artists, artisans and designers with entrepreneurs, small businesses, educational institutions, local agencies and other stakeholders.

[Breaking Down Rural-Urban Barriers](#)

Shawn Poynter

2016

This blog post is an interview with Josh May of Appalshop and Savannah Barrett of Art of the Rural, who are the cofounders of the Kentucky Rural-Urban Exchange, a creative placemaking project that draws on collaborations "between arts, agriculture, community health, and small business to build collective capacity and support homegrown leadership" around the state. In the interview, Josh May notes, "Although creative placemaking is rooted in rural community arts and community cultural development practice, it has largely developed into an urban-centric economic development strategy, and is largely based on site-specific projects. We developed the Kentucky Rural-Urban Exchange as a new approach to creative placemaking." Savannah Barrett mentions that "rural" has both demographic and cultural meaning.

Dakota Fire

[Land of 10,000 Art-Stopping Moments: What We Can Learn from Minnesota](#)

Heidi Marttila-Losure

2014

This article looks at Minnesota's successful rural creative placemaking projects relative to the question of whether North Dakota can replicate them. It summarizes several Minnesotan efforts and identifies what makes them work, including effective partnerships and networks. The piece also discusses how arts funding from Minnesota's Legacy Amendment Fund provided support.

The Economic Development Journal of Canada

[Some Thoughts on the Economic Revitalization of Small Town Downtowns](#)

N. David Milder and Andrew Dane

2013

This article addresses the differences between small-town and big-city economic revitalization. Its three main conclusions are that (1) small-town economic development is "surprisingly complex," (2) rural job creation is a "chronic and seemingly intractable problem" and (3) small communities often lack the resources and trained professionals to realize broad economic changes. While the article doesn't discuss arts based projects, it does provide good context for understanding the challenges of rural economic development.

European Planning Studies

[Art and Design as Competitive Advantage: A Creative Enterprise Cluster in the Western United States](#)

Stuart Rosenfeld

Vol. 12, No. 6 (September 2004)

This paper looks at Montana's "creative enterprise cluster," which consists of individual artists and arts entrepreneurs as well as cultural nonprofits and specialized service companies. "Montana's biodiversity, low population density, independent lifestyle, and cultural heritage have drawn large numbers of creative enterprises and entrepreneurs, which have led to [a] support network of associations, cooperatives, galleries, suppliers, and educators" (p. 1). The paper points to the state's creative economy in its cities, rural areas and Native American reservations and concludes with policy recommendations.

Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City

[Networks and Clusters: The Yin and Yang of Rural Development](#)

Stuart A. Rosenfeld

2008

This paper looks at the successful replication of the Italian model of "interfirm collaboration"—in which small companies "focus their investments and skills on a particular state of production or area of expertise...to meet complex market demands"—in rural America. More readily than urban areas, rural communities adopted interfirm collaboration strategies because of the decline in rural manufacturing, an undereducated labor force, a lack of global competitiveness, a history of agricultural cooperatives and the need to build sustainable economies in persistently poor areas. While the paper does not address the arts, its ideas are applicable to rural creative economic development.

Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco's *Community Development Investment Review*

[Building Resiliency: Anchoring: Prattsville Center and Artist Residency](#)

Nancy Barton

Vol. 10, Iss. 2 (2014), pp. 114-116

This case study looks at the creative placemaking work undertaken in a small, economically struggling town to rebuild from 2011's Hurricane Irene. The arts center leading the effort leveraged grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the New York State Council on the Arts and the New York State Regional Economic Development Council to create paid internships for more than 20 low-income youth, generate 10 construction jobs and contribute more than \$185,000 to the local economy.

[Creative Placemaking: How to Do It Well](#)

Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa Nicodemus

Vol. 10, Iss. 2 (2014), pp. 35-42

This essay considers "how to do creative placemaking well, including challenges in partnering, project design, securing finance, and evaluating progress." It features a case study of Paducah, Kentucky, home to a rural development program through which the city government sold abandoned properties to artists for next to nothing and provided a subsidy of \$2,500 per artist to help cover renovation costs (e.g., professional fees and architectural services). In 2010, 10 years after this effort began, "the city had achieved a 10-to-1 return on public investment, thanks to Paducah Bank's willingness to invest in artists."

[Our Town: Supporting the Arts in Communities Across America](#)

Jane Chu and Jason Schupbach

Vol. 10, Iss. 2 (2014), pp. 65-71

This essay reviews the impetus for and history of the Our Town grant program, through which the National Endowment for the Arts supports various types of creative placemaking projects. Many of these projects have supported arts based rural economic development efforts.

[Seeding Civic Engagement: Anchoring: Sonoran Desert Retreat Center and Residencies](#)

Tracy Taft

Vol. 10, Iss. 2 (2014), pp. 102-105

This is a case study of the International Sonoran Desert Alliance leveraging culture to revitalize rural Ajo, Arizona, an economically depressed former mining community that "has been swept up in the national press's depiction of the [Mexico] border region as a 'war-zone.'" The organization has implemented a series of arts based economic and community development efforts, including the Sonoran Desert Retreat Center, which was designed to attract cultural tourists. Economic impact data assessing these efforts were not available when this article was written, but anecdotal evidence of the town's vibrancy suggests that they are helping the town turn around.

First Peoples Fund, Artspace, Northwest Area Foundation, Colorado State University and Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC)

[Establishing a Creative Economy: Art as an Economic Engine in Native Communities](#)

2013

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

Based on research conducted in Montana, Oregon, Washington State and South Dakota, this paper asserts that the arts are "a strong and available economic force in Indian Country." "Creative production of art and artistic expression are, today, among the most promising ways to expand the market economy in rural and urban Native communities." The paper identifies strategies for how the arts can be an economic driver benefiting Native Americans living on and beyond reservations, what reservation based Native artists need to this end and potential partners (including nonprofits, foundations and federal agencies) that could help foster the Native arts economy.

Geographical Review

[Creative Economic Development, Sustainability, and Exclusion in Rural Areas](#)

Rachel C. Fleming

Vol. 99, No. 1 (January 2009)

This article, based on interviews and participant observation conducted in rural Chatham County, North Carolina, suggests that, "in terms of sustainability, creative economic development projects can be more effective as economic strategies than as environmental and social justice strategies." It also identifies the challenges of such efforts, including lack of local funds and resources, artists' social isolation and fragmentation, misaligned goals of planners and artists, and rural gentrification.

Grantmakers in the Arts

[A Rural Perspective](#)

Dee Davis and Tim Marema

From *GIA Reader*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Fall 2008)

Premised on the observation that "rural America of our [national] imagination is at odds with reality," this article addresses three myths—there is a single rural culture, rural places and people are different, and rural residents are mostly farmers—and elucidates the realities of rural communities. Some of these realities are that the country's rural population is "shrinking dramatically" relative to the total population, exterior forces have changed the rural economy and led to the loss of traditional rural occupations, and, as a result, there is chronic poverty affecting generations of residents.

[Creative Placemaking 2.0](#)

Anne Gadwa Nicodemus

GIA Reader, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Summer 2012)

This article reviews the state of creative placemaking several years after the publication of [Creative Placemaking](#) (2010), the seminal paper on the topic from the National Endowment from the Arts. It points out new interest in and resources for creative placemaking, noting that

the discipline is rapidly evolving. It also describes the key issues for stakeholders to consider, including questions about performance indicators and metrics, substantiating return on investment, managing expectations, avoiding shortsighted investments and ensuring that cultural goals are not subsumed by economic and community development targets. The article does not have a rural focus, though it notes that creative placemaking is applicable in small communities and elsewhere mentions the economic benefits of the practice.

[From Whitesburg, Kentucky, to Washington Court House, Ohio: An Academic Explores Economic Empowerment through Cultural Revitalization](#)

Sonia BasSheva Mañjon

From *GIA Reader*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Winter 2017)

In this essay, a professor from The Ohio State University—who also heads the school's Center for Integrated Arts and Enterprise—recounts her experiences in developing a project to develop small Appalachian communities through arts and culture. She describes her work engaging local communities and the benefits of convening with other rural economic development practitioners. The essay discusses the principles and strategies for rural creative placemaking and describes partnerships and resource opportunities stemming from the application of those principles.

[Small Is Beautiful: Creative Placemaking in Rural Communities](#)

Anne Gadwa Nicodemus

From *GIA Reader*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Summer 2014)

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

This article presents four case studies by way of trying to answer the question, *How does creative placemaking unfold in rural contexts?* It addresses the economic impact of creative placemaking, but focuses more on the motivation and community effects of placemaking. It explains that "efforts to preserve and enhance rural communities' living cultural legacies can pay dividends in terms of economic resilience, fellowship, cultural exchange, and physical revitalization." It also makes a comparison between rural communities and low-income urban communities: "Places don't just become forgotten; sets of actors working within political and economic systems deprive communities and ecologies of leadership and stewardship. Interestingly, both rural communities and low-income neighborhoods struggle with the stigma of deficiency-based narratives."

Governing

[Can Counties Fix Rural America's Endless Recession?](#)

Alan Greenblatt

2016

While this article does not discuss creative economic development, it does provide good context for understanding it by describing the economic pressures currently facing rural America. The article notes that there isn't a one-size-fits-all model for rural economic development. Rather, "what separates the winners from the many losers is inspired leadership on the ground." It also highlights the problem of "rural gentrification," which may face rural communities that leverage the arts for economic development.

Housing Assistance Council

[Rural Placemaking: Making the Most of Creativity in Your Community](#)

Articles by Jen Hughes, Chris Masingill, Bob Reeder, Joseph Kunkel and Sandi Curd
2017

This special issue of *Rural Voices*, the Housing Assistance Council's quarterly magazine, focuses on rural creative placemaking. It includes interviews with the chairman of the Delta Regional Authority about its Delta Creative Placemaking Initiative and the program director of Rural LISC about how to ensure rural placemaking efforts are "inclusive, culturally relevant, and economically equitable." The issue also features an article about "Indigenous placemaking or placekeeping" and one about creative placemaking in a federally designated Promise Zone in rural Kentucky.

Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs (University of Minnesota)

[Native Artists: Livelihood, Resources, Space, Gifts](#)

Marcie Rendon and Ann Markusen
2009

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

This study explores the challenges facing Native American artists living and working in Minnesota's reservations, small communities and urban centers. It considers how Native artists' training, employment, entrepreneurialism, location, access to space and resources, and commitment to community, culture and environment affect their ability to produce creatively and earn a living from their artwork. It considers artists' financial gains and contributions to their local economy. But the paper does not address how they impact the economy on a larger scale. Similarly, the paper's recommendations focus on the financial success of individual artists, but not on the broader creative economy.

Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs

[Cross-Currents: Artists + Manufacturers Strengthening Place](#)

Jean P. Greer and Janet Kagan
2014

In this essay, the founding directors of Art-Force—a nonprofit that works with arts professionals, business leaders, education institutions and local government agencies to stimulate economic development in distressed communities—recount working with artists and small manufacturers in three rural North Carolina towns to create new products and new jobs. The project was successful, as the communities embraced creative economic development as a strategy. One went on to position itself as a hub for innovative manufacturing.

Imagining America

[Cultivating Community Vitality: Reflections from Northern California](#)

Holly George
2014

This essay is a personal reflection on working with the University of California Cooperative Extension service for more than 30 years and, through the job, coming to see "how art and culture can nourish the economic (and in our case agricultural) life of a place, and vice versa." It describes university extension professionals as "trusted network weavers" who are able to help individuals and entire communities harness innovative practices and ideas for economic development.

[The Art of Extension: Connecting with the Arts to Build Stronger Communities](#)

Anne Rhodes

2014

Noting that public agencies focus more on individuals and families than on collective community action, this blog post advocates leveraging community arts to realize collaborative work on community and economic development projects. It also talks about how university and other public extension services can foster community arts projects.

Institute for Emerging Issues (NC State University)

[Creative Conversations: Community Discussion Guide](#)

This paper aims to help communities "understand the importance of creativity to their economies, see ways to build on local assets in place to foster creativity, and provide clear steps to further enhance and harness creativity for economic development." It overviews the creative economy before outlining ways to engage community members in arts-based development efforts. The guide is applicable to all communities in North Carolina, where about a quarter of residents live in rural areas.

[New Thinking, New Jobs](#)

2010

As this brief paper begins, "Creative thinking, the kind that fuels innovation, is now the world's most valued commodity. If North Carolina is to remain competitive in this new economic era, our 21st century job strategy must focus on creativity, imagination, and invention." The creative economy, according to the paper, is replacing the state's knowledge economy. The paper includes a map showing for each county the percentage of creative jobs relative to all jobs. About a quarter of the state's population lives in a rural county.

International Association for Impact Assessment

[The Role of the Cultural Arts in Post-Disaster Recovery](#)

Michael Spranger, Randall Cantrell and Katherine Allen

2016

This paper considers how an arts focused, asset based community development approach is helping a small community in rural Florida recover from Tropical Storm Debby. Working with the University of Florida's extension service, the community applied for a National Endowment for the Arts grant and received technical assistance from the Citizens Institute on Rural Design. Artists were active in community planning workshops. While the community's recovery and revitalization effort was a work in progress at the time of the paper's publication, it already had

yielded positive results such as the Rails to Trails Project, the West Side Retail Area Project and the Live Oak Heritage Trail.

International City/County Management Association (ICMA)

[Asset-Based Economic Development and Building Sustainable Rural Communities, Part 3: Existing Infrastructure, Historic and Cultural Resources](#)

Anna Read

2012

This paper considers how rural communities can leverage their infrastructure, history and cultural resources to spark economic development. It shares case studies of two small towns, Silver City, New Mexico, and Lindsborg, Kansas. It highlights a cultural district, discusses cultural tourism and foregrounds the benefits of Main Street programs.

[Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities](#)

Nadejda Mishkovsky, Matthew Dalbey, Stephanie Bertaina, Anna Read and Tad McGalliard

2010

This report considers "smart growth strategies" for rural communities that foster development while protecting natural resources and preserving community character. The report advances three goals: (1) "support the rural landscape by creating an economic climate that enhances the viability of working lands and conserves natural lands"; (2) "help existing places to thrive by taking care of assets and investments such as downtowns, Main Streets, existing infrastructure, and places that the community values"; and (3) "create great new places by building vibrant, enduring neighborhoods and communities that people, especially young people, don't want to leave." These are goals of creative placemaking, though the report doesn't use that term. It does not focus on creative economic development though it mentions several times how the arts support community revitalization efforts.

International Economic Development Council

[Economic Development and Smart Growth: 8 Case Studies on the Connections between Smart Growth Development and Jobs, Wealth, and Quality of Life in Communities](#)

Alex Iams, Pearl Kaplan, Andrea Bauerfeind, Jenifer Huestis and Kathleen Quillinan

2006

This report considers the connections between "smart growth strategies" and economic development. To that end, it presents eight case studies looking at communities that have undertaken smart growth projects that have realized development goals such as higher tax revenue, additional jobs, higher salaries and downtown revitalization. One case study looks at rural Paducah, KY, and the creation of its Artist Relocation Program, which leverages financial and regulatory incentives to attract "artists and associated economic benefits" to the town. These incentives include free land for new construction; tax-exempt construction materials; financing for constructing, purchasing and/or renovating existing buildings; grants (up to \$2,500) for architectural services; mixed-use zoning; and national marketing of the community's arts district.

Iowa State University

[An Analysis of the Creative Economy in Rural Midwestern Communities](#)

Brad Robert Schmidt

2008

This master's thesis considers whether Richard Florida's creative class theory applies to rural settings, in an effort "to suggest an alternative economic development paradigm for rural communities to use when strategizing ways to enhance their economy." It asks and answers three research questions: (1) What are the characteristics that define a rural creative economy? (2) Which of those characteristics predict or explain economic growth in rural Midwest counties? and (3) Where are rural creative communities located in the study area?

Jackson Hole Public Art

[Places of Possibility: Public Art & Placemaking Toolkit for Rural Communities](#)

This is an in-depth but clear guide for undertaking public-art creative placemaking areas in rural areas. It addresses the activities, stakeholders and goals related to project planning, case-making, funding, implementing, promotion and more.

Journal of Economic Geography

[The Rural Growth Trifecta: Outdoor Amenities, Creative Class and Entrepreneurial Context](#)

David A. McGranahan, Timothy R. Wojan and Dayton M. Lambert

Vol. 11 Iss. 3 (May 2011), pp. 529-557

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

This article applies urban-rooted ideas of the "creative class" to rural economies relative to economic, demographic and other data from the 1990s. It posits a model of rural growth "based on outdoor amenities, creative class and entrepreneurial context" and suggests these factors "had a synergistic effect on US rural (nonmetropolitan) county growth in the 1990s." It describes an alternative model of "smokestack chasing," in which communities with fewer local amenities are reliant on outside employers, proximity to urban areas and low-cost labor. The article concludes with questions about whether "the creative class should always be considered a source of job growth" and whether the success of the creative class model is dependent on "broader economic and technological contexts."

[Emoting with Their Feet: Bohemian Attraction to Creative Milieu](#)

Timothy R. Wojan, Dayton M. Lambert and David A. McGranahan

Vol. 7, Iss. 6 (November 2007), pp. 711-736

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

This article tests and ultimately supports the hypothesis that the "unobservable factors that attract a relative abundance of Bohemians positively influence local economic dynamism." It analyzes arts employment and other quantitative data from the 1990s relative to metro, rural and suburban communities. The article notes that there is "a significant number of rural counties with high arts employment" and that natural amenities (such as mountains, forests, open spaces and welcoming weather) attract artists to live in rural communities.

Journal of Extension

[Agri-Cultural Tourism: Linking the Arts and Humanities with Agricultural Direct Marketers and Specialty Producers](#)

Rhoda Burrows, Anne Fennell, Meredith Redlin and Lynn Verschoor

Vol. 45, No. 6 (December 2007)

This article highlights the "Agri-Cultural Tourism" approach undertaken in South Dakota by a coalition of state agencies, the state's cooperative extension service, and cultural, agricultural and educational institutions. This effort links artists and specialty food producers in ways that draw cultural tourists to sparsely populated areas.

Journal of Regional Analysis and Policy

[An Arts-Based State Rural Development Policy](#)

Ann Markusen

Vol. 37, Iss. 1 (2007), pp. 7-9

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

This short article summarizes how the arts foster economic and community development in rural America before describing examples of "relatively inexpensive policies" states can implement to achieve these results. The article asserts that "retiree in-migration" and arts related activities in rural areas, which help draw new residents and spur local spending, are counterbalancing the effects of lost agricultural and manufacturing jobs. It says that the presence of artists helps keep consumer spending local, activating a "consumption based model of rural development" that is an alternative to the export model typical in rural communities. Furthermore, because arts activities tend to be labor intensive, there is a larger "local multiplier effect" associated with arts spending than similar investment in capital-intensive projects. Finally, non-metro environments conducive to arts activity also tend to promote faster rates of growth.

[Cultural and Recreational Industries in Rural America: Opportunities for State Legislators](#)

William B. Beyers

Vol. 37, Iss. 1 (2007), pp. 25-27

This article recommends five ways state legislators can support opportunities for recreation and culture in rural communities, which can be the "basis for economic revitalization." The recommendations are to (1) support high quality environments, (2) support infrastructure investment, (3) promote the recreation and culture industries, (4) provide labor-force training and (5) assess development possibilities.

Journal of Rural Studies

[Creating the Good Life? A Wellbeing Perspective on Cultural Value in Rural Development](#)

Karen Scott, Frances Rowe and Venda Pollock

2016

This paper makes the case that arts based rural economic development should be guided by the "capabilities approach," which conceptualizes cultural value "through a wellbeing and social justice lens." This approach prioritizes cultural access over cultural impact, and it validates

"intangible and marginalized aspects of cultural value." Focused on evidence from a rural community in the United Kingdom, this paper "argues against the narrow instrumentalism of culture as a delivery mechanism for other policy agendas"—such as economic development—and for "a clearer normative basis for understanding...the intrinsic value of culture in rural development."

[The Creative Countryside: Policy and Practice in the UK Rural Cultural Economy](#)

David Bell and Mark Jayne

Vol. 26 (2010)

This paper reviews research and policies focused on rural creative industries in the United Kingdom. It includes a case study of rural Shropshire County. One conclusion in the paper is that "the newly emerging rural creative industries agenda has failed to move beyond mistakes made in urban areas and to fully engage with how to make connections between the knowledge economy, social inclusion agendas and cultural policy, and to balance the (sometimes conflicting) remits of cultural development and economic development."

[The Creative Fire: An Interactional Framework for Rural Arts-Based Development](#)

Bruce Balfour, Michael W-P Fortunato and Theodore R. Alter

2016

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

Based on a review of relevant research and literature, this article proposes "a conceptual framework for understanding the creative, entrepreneurial, and interactional conditions that facilitate community-embedded arts-based development in rural places." The framework's three contexts (creative, entrepreneurial and network/interactional) together "form a dynamic community ecosystem of vertical, horizontal, and diagonal...relationships that can be supportive of arts-based development." The article asserts that this type of development is sustainable when it focuses on "both near-term and long-term improvements in collaborative capacity, civic engagement, youth arts education, aesthetic connections to nature, and inclusive perspectives that bridge class, ethnic, and power divisions in the community." It also identifies a typology of four cultural economy models and asserts that two—the Cultural Planning model, which focuses on arts facilities and other assets that facilitate capacity building, and the Cultural Occupations model, which focuses on individuals instead of creative industries—are most suitable for rural creative economic development.

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Institute for Comprehensive Community Development

[Creative Placemaking for Every Community](#)

Susan Fitter Harris

2015

This short article addresses rural creative placemaking, focusing on three of its components: cultural programming, cultural spaces and cultural districts. Creative placemaking generally yields economic benefits, though this article does not address them specifically.

Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center (University of Maine)

[St. John Valley Creative Economy Project](#)

Sheila Jans, Kathryn Hunt and Caroline Noblet
2010

This report summarizes a two-year assessment of the creative economy in northern Maine's rural St. John Valley. It is based on research that included focus groups, interviews and surveys. The report concludes that "culture and place" can serve as a "foundation for building new business opportunities and a prosperous future for the communities of the St. John Valley." It offers these recommendations: (1) build regional leadership, identity and collaborative capacity, (2) strengthen programs and assistance to entrepreneurs and nonprofits, (3) invest in the region's creative assets and (4) cultivate pride in culture and place.

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

[Leveraging Change: Increasing Access to Arts Education in Rural Areas](#)

Lisa Donovan and Maren Brown
2017

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

Based on research supported by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)—which included a literature review, phone interviews and a stakeholder convening—this report considers how to increase access to arts education in rural areas. It addresses a number of related topics, including rural creative placemaking and its economic impact, which it associates with fostering opportunities for arts learning. It also notes that rural artists are resources for business stimulation, youth engagement and community development. Finally, it argues that arts educators should be included in efforts to realize rural creative placemaking because they are experts in creativity and collaboration.

The paper is summarized and contextualized by the NEA in a post on its Art Works blog, [Arts Education in Rural Communities: What's Working](#).

M/C Journal (A Journal of Media and Culture)

[Developing the Rural Creative Economy "from Below": Exploring Practices of Market-Building amongst Creative Entrepreneurs in Rural and Remote Scotland](#)

Ealasaid Munro
Vol. 19, No. 3 (2016)

This article considers efforts to develop the creative economy in rural Scotland. Referring to the country's arts infrastructure and funding systems, it notes that rural artists often feel "distant from decision makers and isolated in terms of practice," which leads many of them to develop the creative economy "from below," without public support. Furthermore, the article observes that adapting urban creative economy models to rural regions "is alienating and frustrating for rural creatives and targeted, rural-specific intervention is required."

The McKnight Foundation

[Bright Stars: Charting the Impact of the Arts in Rural Minnesota](#)

Carlo M. Cuesta, Dana M. Gillespie and Padraic Lillis

2005

This report summarizes The McKnight Foundation's exploration of the impact of the arts on eight small towns in Minnesota. The paper shows how the arts can help towns adapt to social and economic changes, though it also considers the many other benefits of the arts. One chapter, "The New Rural Arts Economy," considers rural creative placemaking. The report's recommendations for developing "new economic opportunities" are based on qualitative assessments.

Metropolitan Regional Arts Council

[Thriving Arts: Thriving Small Communities](#)

Sharon Rodning Bash

2006

This paper summarizes research undertaken to identify whether there are "critical ingredients or common themes necessary to build long-term vitality for the arts in rural and 'suburban fringe' communities." The research centered on 10 communities (five rural and five suburban) with a population of 1,000-6,000 and included interviews with residents, news scans and a literature review. The paper notes the economic benefits of the arts but doesn't focus on creative economic development.

Michigan State University Museum

[Your Community Culture: An Informal Guide to Discovery](#)

Julie A. Avery

1998

This is a workbook designed to help rural communities to identify their cultural assets. While it doesn't directly address creative economic development, the workbook does describe strategies—such as asset mapping, cultural inventories and community dialogue—fundamental to creative placemaking and economic development.

Minnesota Post

[Southeast Minnesota Explores How to Make Hay in the Emerging Creative Economy](#)

Jay Walljasper

2015

This newspaper article highlights the success of rural creative placemaking and economic development in several small towns in southeastern Minnesota.

Mt. Auburn Associates

[Berkshire Creative Economy: A Report to the Berkshire Economic Development Corporation](#) 2007

This paper is the result of a research and strategic planning effort focused on the creative economy of the Berkshires, the rural western part of Massachusetts. The initiative included collection and analysis of quantitative data as well as focus groups and interviews with artists, arts organizations, arts related businesses, state legislators, business executives, and leaders in the education and work-force system. The report concludes that it is in the region's best interest to foster its rural creative economy. To that end, it lays out strategic goals, addresses specific challenges and related opportunities, and proffers recommendations for facilitating successful economic development through the arts in the Berkshires.

Municipal World

[Building a Creative Rural Economy](#)

Greg Baeker
2008

This brief article examines the economic development of Prince Edward County, Canada, which is a rural municipality of 25,000 people. It reviews the history of the creative economy in the region, discusses its evolving strategies and highlights a 2005 cultural planning process. The article includes a number of data points illustrating the economic impact of the arts in the county.

National Endowment for the Arts

[Are You Ready for the Country? Creative Placemaking in Rural America](#)

Paulette Beete, Rebecca Gross, Michael Gallant and Christy Crytzer Pierce
From *NEA Arts Magazine*, Iss. 2011, No. 2 (2011)

This special issue of *NEA Arts Magazine* focuses on how rural communities have leveraged arts and culture to improve their communities "socially, aesthetically, and economically." It includes articles considering how a family foundation in Vermont is engaging artists in community planning efforts; how an Arizonan nonprofit is sparking economic growth in a small town in the Sonoran desert by creating artist housing; how creative placemaking strategies compare in two towns in rural Washington; how a health clinic on a Native American reservation in Minnesota is leveraging art to promote healing and local heritage; and how the Handmade in America program has contributed to the economy of North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains.

[Building Economy and Community with Cultural Assets](#)

Ben Fink and Mimi Pickering

From *How to do Creative Placemaking*, pp. 74-77
2016

This essay in *How to do Creative Placemaking*—a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) publication, which features 27 other essays as well as 13 case studies of projects funded through the NEA Our Town grant program—discusses how Appalshop has benefited the small, rural

community where it is located, Whitesburg, Kentucky. Appalshop is a media, arts and education center that began as a federal project in 1969. Today it is the home of a filmmaking company, a theatre company, a record label, a community radio station and a youth media training initiative, among other projects and programs. Appalshop directly creates jobs for local filmmakers, musicians, recording artists, archivists and educators. Indirectly, through extensive partnerships, it supports artisans, farmers, chefs, tech companies, health care providers, school systems and governments. These partnerships are a key element in Appalshop's Culture Hub project, "a dynamic center of cross-sector cultural activity" focused on creating equitable economic and civic development in rural eastern Kentucky. Yet Appalshop's biggest economic contribution, according to the essay, "may be in *creating the conditions* for creating jobs."

[Can Arts Drive Rural Economic Development?](#)

Chris Beck and Tracy Taft

From *How to do Creative Placemaking*, pp. 60-66

2016

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

This is essay in *How to do Creative Placemaking*—a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) publication, which features 27 other essays as well as 13 case studies of projects funded through the NEA Our Town grant program—highlights strategies rural communities use to leverage the arts and cultural as economic drivers. It describes various types of rural creative placemaking projects, such as artist housing; artist residencies; pop-up businesses; creative workforce development; festivals; and connecting local art to local food. It also enumerates the elements for successful culture based rural economic strategies: good leadership, sound buildings, Main Street focus, strong partnerships, inclusiveness and regional collaboration. A set of brief examples from the field reinforces these recommendations.

[Communities Reinvent Themselves with the Help of the Arts](#)

Jennifer Hughes

2015

This Art Works blog post recounts the Art + Leadership: Powering Rural Economies conference, which was hosted by Art-Force, the Imperial Art Centre and the City of Rocky Mount, North Carolina. The event focused on how arts and culture can "drive community and economic revitalization in rural America." The mayor of Rocky Mount spoke at the conference's opening session about "the arts' important impact on the local economy and quality of life for residents."

[Creating an Arts Master Plan for a Historic Millwork District](#)

From *How to do Creative Placemaking*, pp. 56-58

2016

This case study of Dubuque, Iowa—a town of 60,000 in a rural state—focuses on its arts district, which grew out of a 2007 downtown master plan and a 2009 Historic Millwork District master plan. It estimates that the annual economic impact of the arts district is \$47.2 million. The Dubuque project is supported by a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Our Town grant, just like the 12 other projects featured as case studies in the NEA's book *How to do Creative Placemaking*, which also includes 28 essays addressing the many facets of arts based development.

[Creative Placemaking](#)

Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa

2010

This is a seminal paper on creative placemaking that has informed much of current practice and understanding of the strategy in both urban and rural areas. The paper doesn't focus on arts based rural economic development, but it does make clear that "placemaking can occur at scales as large as a multi-state region and as small as a rural town or city neighborhood." Similarly, it cite examples of rural communities benefiting economically through creative placemaking strategies.

[Exploring Our Town: Ajo, AZ—Ajo Masterplan](#)

This case study considers the impact of an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in Ajo, Arizona, a small community in the middle of the Sonoran Desert. The grant supported creative economic development activities, including work to build affordable live/work spaces for artists and an artist retreat center.

[Exploring Our Town: Ashfield, MA—Ashfield Town Spectacle](#)

This case study examines efforts underwritten by an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to foster the creative economy in rural Ashfield, Massachusetts, a town of about 1,800. The project centered on community engagement activities and collaborations between local businesses, farms and artists, resulting in "a spectacle performance that included public pageantry, live music, and educational programming."

[Exploring Our Town: Berea, KY—Wayfinding Design](#)

Berea, Kentucky—a town of 13,000 that is the home of the Kentucky Artisan Center and is known as the state's Folk Arts & Crafts Capital—is the focus of this case study. With the support of an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the City of Berea led an effort to encourage creative economic development by designing and implementing a wayfinding system to direct residents and cultural tourists to the community's many cultural assets.

[Exploring Our Town: Creative Economy Projects](#)

This page on the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) website highlights the lessons learned from creative economy projects funded by an NEA Our Town grant. It highlights examples from both urban and rural projects related to community engagement, fundraising, partnerships and performance measurement.

[Exploring Our Town: Independence, KS—Astra Arts Festival](#)

This case study focuses on a project funded by an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to develop a summer music festival in Independence, Kansas, a rural town of 9,200 residents.

[Exploring Our Town: Marfa, TX—Drive-In](#)

This case study considers a project supported by an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to develop an outdoor arts venue that would host festivals, events and other programming attractive to cultural tourists.

[Exploring Our Town: Montgomery, NY—Arts and Agriculture Transforming Orange County](#)

This case study summarizes a creative economy project in Montgomery, New York, supported by an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The project fostered cultural tourism by marketing the work of the many artists and farmers who reside in this small town of about 4,000 people.

[Exploring Our Town: Reedsburg, WI—Farm/Art DTour](#)

This case study summarizes a project underwritten by an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to develop a "self-guided driving tour through scenic working farm land...punctuated with Art Works (temporary art installations), Field Notes (educational signs), Roadside Culture Stands (artist-built mobile farm stands), Farm Forms (creative participation by landowners), Pasture Performances and Roadside Poetry." The 50-mile tour fostered cultural tourism over its 27 stops.

[Exploring Our Town: Rural Projects](#)

This page on the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) website discusses the lessons learned from rural projects funded by an NEA Our Town grant. The lessons are related to working with consultants, unique challenges in rural areas and issues of equity.

[Exploring Our Town: Sitka, AK—Sitka Fest](#)

This case study highlights an effort supported by an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to repurpose an abandoned college campus in Sitka, Alaska, to host the Sitka Festival of the Arts, Humanities and Natural Sciences. The study describes the 10-week event as a platform for the small town's "cultural and economic rebirth."

[Exploring Our Town: Stone Mountain, GA—Art Station](#)

This case study highlights a project funded by an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to revitalize downtown Stone Mountain, Georgia—a community of 12,000 residents—by transforming empty storefronts into art galleries and work spaces.

[A Gathering and A Weaving: A View from the Rural Arts & Culture Summit](#)

2013

This Art Works blog post summarizes the 2013 Rural Arts and Culture Summit, hosted by Springboard for the Arts and the Center for Small Towns at the University of Minnesota, Morris. It references economic development through the arts, but does not focus on it. The post notes how much summit participants discussed cross-sector and interdisciplinary partnerships.

[Not Just Another Point on the Map: The Artful Reinvention of Driggs, Idaho](#)

Paulette Beete

From *NEA Arts Magazine*, Iss. 2012, No. 3 (2012)

This article is about the experience of Driggs, a rural town of 1,600 residents that benefited from creative placemaking. The town participated in the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Citizens' Institute on Rural Design program and received an NEA Our Town grant. It also implemented a local tax district to fund its creative placemaking initiative.

[Reimagining a Historic School and Town Center](#)

From *How to do Creative Placemaking*, pp. 68-70

2016

This case study of Ajo, Arizona—an economically depressed former mining community in the Sonoran Desert—describes the community's efforts to revive its economy by becoming a "tourist destination with a focus on arts and culture." The essay focuses the work of the nonprofit International Sonoran Desert Alliance and the importance of "broad, multicultural, and multigenerational community participation." The Ajo project is supported by a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Our Town grant, just like the 12 other projects featured as case studies in the NEA's book *How to do Creative Placemaking*, which also includes 28 essays addressing the many facets of arts based development.

[Restoring Folk Art Is Creating Jobs and Revitalizing a Downtown](#)

From *How to do Creative Placemaking*, pp. 152-154

2016

This case study of Wilson, North Carolina—a town of 50,000 in a rural part of the state—highlights the work-force training program and the construction of a mixed-use development associated with preserving and promoting Vollis Simpson's "whirligigs," which are "internationally celebrated examples of vernacular art." The Wilson project is supported by a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Our Town grant, just like the 12 other projects featured as case studies in the NEA's book *How to do Creative Placemaking*, which also includes 28 essays addressing the many facets of arts based development.

[Rural Arts, Design and Innovation in America: Research Findings from the Rural Establishment Innovation Survey](#)

Bonnie Nichols

2017

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

This report is the result of a formal research collaboration between the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service. Drawing on data from the 2014 Rural Establishment Innovation Survey and the U.S. Census, it compares rural and urban arts organizations relative to their location, innovative practices and customer service. It also looks at the proximity of rural arts organizations to design oriented and/or innovative businesses. Finally, it considers the economic outcomes associated with rural design-integrated businesses.

The NEA published four research briefs to accompany this report, each of which also analyzes data from the 2014 Rural Establishment Innovation Survey. [Rural Arts, Design, and Innovation—Research Brief 1: Rural versus Urban Arts-and-Cultural Organizations](#) (2017) describes the characteristics of rural arts and cultural organizations relative to their urban counterparts. It considers innovation, employee wages and barriers to competition, among other things. [Rural Arts, Design, and Innovation: 2014—Research Brief 2: Exploring Rural Communities by the Presence of Performing Arts Organizations](#) (2017) considers the "correlation between rural businesses' use of 'integrated design' and the presence of performing arts organizations in rural areas." [Rural Arts, Design, and Innovation—Research Brief 3: Innovation and Design Use by Small Manufacturers](#) (2017) demonstrates that design can be leveraged to increase manufacturing innovation. [Rural Arts, Design, and Innovation—Research Brief 4: Local Arts and](#)

[Entertainment as a Draw for Businesses and Their Workers](#) (2017) focuses on how the arts can be leveraged to attract and maintain work forces.

[Rural and Proud](#)

Victoria Hutter

From *NEA Arts Magazine*, Iss. 2017, No. 2 (2017)

This article highlights the efforts and impacts of a nonprofit community design center—which supports local business, entrepreneurs, artists, designers and ideas—working to revitalize Green River, Utah (pop. 952). The article is focused on creative placemaking and doesn't directly address economic development, though that effect is implied.

[The Validating Arts & Livability Indicators \(VALI\) Study: Results and Recommendations](#)

Elaine Morley and Mary K. Winkler

2014

This report summarizes an effort to validate a set of proposed creative placemaking indicators applicable to both urban and rural communities. The candidate indicators, put forth by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), measure community attachment, quality of life, economic conditions, and arts and culture activity. The Urban Institute led the effort to determine which of the indicators rang true with five urban and five rural communities that received an NEA Our Town grant. Based on site visits, focus groups and a day-long convening, the initiative concluded that urban and rural communities doubt the relevance of data collected at larger geographies—such as by county or ZIP code—as indicators for placemaking occurring on a smaller and more local scale.

[Weaving the Sweetgrass Braid: Rolling Rez Arts at Pine Ridge](#)

Victoria Hutter

From *NEA Arts Magazine* Iss. 2017, No. 2 (2017)

This article highlights Rolling Rez Arts, a "mobile artist studio, classroom, bank, and marketplace" that traverses across the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota—which at 3,469 square miles is more than three times the size of Rhode Island—in support of Native American artists. The bus brings a host of creative-career resources to arts entrepreneurs who otherwise might not have access to them, such as business workshops, digital equipment, design and film-editing software, and a safe. It also organizes routine "buying days" through which it brings artwork to markets to which artists might not have access on their own. The program is supported by the First Peoples Fund, The Bush Foundation, ArtPlace America and the National Endowment for the Arts, among other groups.

Next Generation

[Rural Roots of Creative Placemaking](#)

This time line chronicles the evolution of rural creative placemaking. It is a working document of the Next Generation initiative, which was designed and is facilitated by [Art of the Rural](#) and the [Rural Policy Research Institute](#) with support from the University of Iowa and the National Endowment for the Arts. As an evolving time line, it is meant to expand as projects develop and come to light. It is a good contextual resource for both practitioners and researchers.

**Northern Center for Community and Economic Development (University of Wisconsin-Extension/
Superior)**

[Craftspersons and Artists in Northwest Wisconsin: Putting a Face on a Creative Industry](#)

Jerry Hembd and Andrew Dane

2006

This report summarizes a research project focusing on the impact of artists and craftspersons as a creative industry in Wisconsin's rural Northwest Heritage Passage. The goals of the project were to determine the size, composition and characteristics of this creative industry in the area, to estimate its economic contributions to the region, and to assess the educational needs of individual artists and craftspersons. The report concludes that artists and craftspersons "are at the heart of a vital creative economy in northwest Wisconsin."

Orton Family Foundation

[Community Heart & Soul Field Guide \(2nd Edition\)](#)

2015

This is a field guide explaining how communities can work with residents in a public process to understand their "heart and soul," which is beneficial information that can be used to inform subsequent community development strategies and decisions. The "Heart & Soul" process is inclusive, resident-driven and based on questions that elicit emotional connections to places. It results in a document that can be formally adopted by a community's government and used as the basis for an official document, such as a town's master plan or a zoning ordinance. It is applicable to arts based rural economic development projects. Based in Vermont, the Orton Family Foundation focuses on supporting healthy and economically vibrant small cities and towns nationwide.

The Pew Charitable Trusts

[Can the Arts Help Save Rural America?](#)

Teresa Wiltz

2016

This blog post summarizes the Next Generation initiative led by Art of the Rural and its summit in Iowa City, Iowa, in 2016. It also highlights a few creative rural economic development success stories, such as Red Ants Pants and its music festival in Montana and the International Bluegrass Music Museum in Owensboro, Kentucky.

PolicyLink

[Creating Change through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy and Practice Primer](#)

Kalima Rose, Milly Hawk Daniel and Jeremy Liu

2017

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

This paper presents a "framework for moving equitable development policy across multiple sectors—aided by and strengthening the use of arts and culture practice." It discusses various underserved communities, including rural populations. The cultural economy, it notes, "is significant not only in cities, but also in rural and tribal communities." The paper cites examples of rural creative economic development, such as Appalshop—a media, arts and education center located in the mountains of eastern Kentucky—which it describes as "a great illustration of how arts and culture can help a disinvested rural community weather significant challenges and envision a brighter economic future." It also cites a study by the First Peoples Fund (see this review's summary of [Establishing a Creative Economy: Art as an Economic Engine in Native Communities](#)) that found that 40% of Native American households on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota "depend on home-based arts enterprises."

Regional Arts Australia

[Regional Arts Impact Australia. That's a Fact!](#)

2015

Harvesting data from multiple studies, this brief report summarizes information about arts access and participation in rural and remote Australia communities.

Regional Studies

[Recasting the Creative Class to Examine Growth Processes in Rural and Urban Counties](#)

David McGranahan and Timothy Wojan

Vol. 41, Iss. 2 (April 2007), pp. 197-216

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

This article reconsiders the ideas of Richard Florida's *Rise of the Creative Class* (2002) vis-à-vis economic growth in rural and urban counties. It explores three "major limitations" of Florida's creative class theory relative to rural areas: (1) the unexplored question of "whether the creative class explanation applies to regional development more generally"; (2) the limitations of urban focused creative class metrics applied to rural context; and (3) the unfulfilled need for a test of the creative class thesis in a "multivariate framework." The paper concludes that "employment in creative occupations is positively associated with employment growth in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan (rural) counties." It also notes that there is evidence of a trend of members of the urban creative class moving to rural communities because they seek a lower-density environment. At the same time, members of the rural creative class tend to congregate in the more densely populated rural communities as they crave social and cultural interaction.

Rural Society

[Arts-Based Community Development: Rural Remote Realities and Challenges](#)

Peter A. Skippington and Diana F. Davis

Vol. 25, No. 3 (2016)

Based on interviews and a survey, this article looks at the perceptions within 12 rural Australian communities about leveraging the arts to support community development efforts. The research, it concludes, "identified little or no appreciation in remote/rural communities of the potential to use the arts to generate and/or support economic outcomes."

SaveYour.Town

[Using Rural Creative Placemaking to Build Connections](#)

2016

This is a checklist for identifying possible partners for rural creative placemaking efforts. It identifies the types of individuals, social networks, government agencies, nonprofits and businesses that may be good placemaking collaborators. It also recommends strategies for launching projects and for organizing effective meetings with potential partners. Economic development is a typical result of creative placemaking, though this document does not specifically address it.

Sociologia Ruralis

[The Contribution of the Creative Economy to the Resilience of Rural Communities: Exploring Cultural and Digital Capital](#)

Elizabeth Roberts and Leanne Townsend

Vol. 56, Iss. 2 (April 2016)

One focus of this article is on the importance of broadband and related digital technologies to "rural creative practitioners." Based on interviews with rural creatives in Scotland, it considers how poor Internet connectivity undermines the sustainability of a rural creative economy. In terms of policy, the paper notes that there "is a strong economic incentive to improve rural Internet infrastructure in order to attract and retain creative workers, thereby contributing to a diverse economy for rural development."

Springboard for the Arts

[The Arnaudville Experiment: Creative Placemaking and Economic Development in Rural Louisiana](#)

Nicole Rupersburg

2017

This blog post discusses the NUNU Arts and Culture Collective in Arnaudville, Louisiana, which formed as a cultural and community gathering place in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Its work eventually led to the state designation of the Arnaudville Cultural District, which enables businesses to sell local artwork tax-free. The volunteer organization's economic impact far exceeds its annual operating budget.

[Irrigate: A Toolkit for Mobilizing Local Artists to Solve Challenges in Your Community](#)

2014

This is a toolkit designed to enable the replication of "a community development strategy that mobilizes the skills and creativity of local artists to create innovative, meaningful, authentic solutions to local challenges." Arts based economic development is one potential use for the toolkit. Indeed, the group that created it, Springboard for the Arts, "is an economic and community development organization for artists and by artists." The toolkit is applicable to rural areas.

Tourism, Creativity and Development (edited by Greg Richards and Julie Wilson)

[Creativity and Tourism in Rural Environments](#)

Paul Cloke

From *Tourism, Creativity and Development* (Greg Richards and Julie Wilson, eds.), pp. 37-47
2007

This book chapter focuses on rural cultural tourism and suggests "that particular practices and performances, especially those associated with tourism, are influential in bringing together how rural areas are conceived and how they are lived." It addresses theoretical concerns, not economic issues. To wit: "In general, rural space is increasingly conceived as a commodity form, in which rurality is reproduced both as an object of desire and as a stage on which to perform. Much of the apparent creativity of rural tourism deepens the relationship with rurality, and therefore deepens its desire as a place of performance. Some performances enhance the traditional appeal of the rural; others appear to re-conceive rurality as a new space for adventure, entertainment, spectacle and the like. Equally, rural space is increasingly lived in terms of new portfolios of symbols and images by which dwellers and users experience and make sense of the rural."

United Kingdom's National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts

[Creative Industries and Rural Innovation](#)

Richard Naylor

From *Rural Innovation*, pp. 35-51
2007

Designed to inform "innovation policies aimed at developing rural economies," this essay is a primer on the "presence and role of the creative industries in rural areas." It addresses a number of constituent issues, including employment growth trends, diversification of the land based economy, societal changes, technological changes, the political environment, placemaking and cultural tourism.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

[Creative Economy Report 2013 \(Special Edition\): Widening Local Development Pathways](#)

Yudhishtir Raj Isar

2013

This paper looks at the various ways around the world that "culture and creative industries" have been leveraged to develop local economies. While it mostly features urban projects, it also

highlights examples from rural areas, including communities in Egypt, Japan and India. It concludes that arts based economic development is not the "prerogative" of urban centers and that "far more attention needs to be given to the regional and rural sectors of any cultural economy, not just in the global South but in the marginalized regions of 'developed' countries as well."

University of North Carolina

[Rural Economic Development in the Creative Economy: A Case Study of the STARworks Center for Creative Enterprise in Montgomery County, NC](#)

Christa Caren Wagner

2010

This master's thesis presents a case study of the STARworks Center for Creative Enterprise, which is an "arts-centered work community" located in a rural part of North Carolina that "promotes community and economic development by providing outstanding artistic educational programs and business ventures." By describing the center, its work and its outcomes, the paper highlights the "processes, partnerships, and approaches" that foster arts based rural economic development.

University of Western Australia

[The Arts and Social Well-being in Rural Communities: A Qualitative and Quantitative Assessment in the Mid West Region of Western Australia](#)

Julia Anwar-McHenry

2011

This Ph.D. dissertation looks at how the arts influence social wellbeing to determine why some rural communities in Western Australia better adapt to economic and political change in sustainable ways. It cites the economic benefits of the arts but focuses more on the "social indicators of well-being," such as individual resiliency, social capital and community capacity. The paper is based on mixed-method research that surfaced both qualitative and quantitative data.

The dissertation's ideas are condensed in two journal articles based from the project's research: [Rural Empowerment through the Arts: The Role of the Arts in Civic and Social Participation in the Mid West Region of Western Australia](#) (*Julia Anwar McHenry, Journal of Rural Studies*, Vol. 27, Iss. 3 [2011]) and [A Place for the Arts in Rural Revitalisation and the Social Wellbeing of Australian Rural Communities](#) (*Julia Anwar McHenry, Rural Society*, Vol. 19, Iss. 1 [2009]).

The Urban Institute

[Developing Artist-Driven Spaces in Marginalized Communities: Reflections and Implications for the Field](#)

Maria Rosario Jackson

2012

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

This article provides context about building spaces for creativity, which are often the nexus of creative economic development. Based in part on interviews with artists and developers, this paper highlights the key issues of creating artist-initiated and -driven spaces in various marginalized environments, including those in rural communities. It talks about organizational structures and resources, purpose and leadership, site selection, relationships with community stakeholders, and artist space sustainability.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service

[The Creative Class: A Key to Rural Growth](#)

David McGranahan and Tim Wojan

2007

According to this article in the USDA's *Amber Waves* magazine, the creative class isn't limited to urban environments. In fact, data shows that the creative class can thrive in rural regions, particularly in areas with lots of natural and cultural amenities, such as mountains and institutions of higher education, respectively. For example, rural communities with high proportions of residents working in the creative sector experienced higher rates of job growth from 1990 through 2004 than non-metro communities without a strong creative class.

[Factors Affecting Former Residents' Returning to Rural Communities](#)

John Cromartie, Christiane von Reichert and Ryan Arthun

2015

This qualitative report examines "return migration" to "geographically disadvantaged" rural communities and the factors that compel people who grew up and moved away from them to come back home. It finds that return migrants—who generally leave home because of college, a job, military service or a desire to see the world—are drawn back primarily because of family. While only a small number of people who leave return, those who do often have new skills and experience as well as an attachment to their roots, which can translate to community engagement and/or entrepreneurship that benefits rural communities. While this report doesn't address arts based development, it does provide context for understanding the economic, social and cultural conditions of rural communities—and it's an example of the kind of policy research that might benefit from the addition of an arts and culture component.

[Foundation Giving to Rural Areas in the United States Is Disproportionately Low](#)

John Pender

2015

This article in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) *Amber Waves* magazine illustrates the fact that U.S. foundations focus the majority of their grant making on urban communities. It is based on an analysis of data from the Foundation Center, the National Center for Charitable Statistics, the U.S. Census Bureau and the USDA's Economic Research Service. It notes that this geographic discrepancy in philanthropy accords with the perspective of many residents of rural America that they are becoming a forgotten population. The article does not address rural creative economic development, but provides a good context for understanding the need for it.

[Innovation in the Rural Nonfarm Economy: Its Effect on Job and Earnings Growth, 2010-2014](#)

Tim Wojan and Timothy Parker

2017

Drawing on data from the 2014 Economic Research Service Rural Establishment Innovation Survey, this report considers the "impetus, outcomes, and prevalence of rural innovation." The report defines innovation broadly as "the introduction of new goods, services, or ways of doing business that are valued by consumers" and focuses on rural manufacturing. It provides context for understanding the rural work force and related conditions conducive to supporting a creative economy.

[Rural America at a Glance, 2016 Edition](#)

2016

This brief report uses quantitative data from the U.S. Census, the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Department of Labor to provide an overview of rural America and Americans. It considers data points related to population growth, employment, household incomes, poverty and more. Though the report doesn't address arts based economic development, it is useful for articulating the challenges facing rural populations.

[Rural Manufacturing at a Glance, 2017 Edition](#)

Sarah A. Low

2017

This research bulletin considers the state of the rural manufacturing sector. It looks at employment, wage and other data from the U.S. Census, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis. It concludes that manufacturing is more important to the rural than the urban economy. Though the report doesn't address arts based economic development, it is useful for articulating the challenges facing rural populations.

[Rural Wealth Creation: Concepts, Strategies, and Measures](#)

John Pender, Alexander Marré and Richard Reeder

2012

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

This report articulates a "conceptual framework for rural wealth creation" in relation to rural development strategies. It discusses "rural wealth" not just in financial terms but also in terms of physical, human, intellectual, natural, social, political and cultural assets. A section on "nontraditional approaches" to economic development strategies and rural wealth creation discusses the value of the arts and fostering a "creative class." The report's authors provide a synopsis of their work in an article, [Creating Rural Wealth: A New Lens for Rural Development Efforts](#), in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's *Amber Waves* magazine.

[What Happened to the "'Creative Class' Job Growth Engine" During the Recession and Recovery?](#)

Tim Wojan

2014

This article weighs the "economic resilience of counties with high shares of creative class workers relative to other counties" using the U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service's Creative Class County Codes. It finds that creative class counties in the wake of the Great Recession were more likely than other counties to be "resilient." At the same time, a

greater number of metro counties had a resilient economy than non-metro counties despite the presence or absence of a strong creative class. For all of those with a creative class, about 30% of rural counties did experience employment growth following the Great Recession, twice the level of urban counties. One possible reason why non-metro creative class counties lagged behind their metro counterparts, according to the article, "is the much more important role that natural amenities and scenic beauty traditionally played in location decisions of the rural creative class."

This article is succinctly summarized by Richard Florida in a blog post, [The Fall and \(Partial\) Rise of the Rural Creative Class](#), on *The Atlantic's* City Lab.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration

Crafting a New Rural Development Strategy

Stuart Rosenfeld

From *Economic Development America* magazine, pp. 11-13

2004

In addressing the rise of the rural creative economy, this article broadens the concept of creativity to apply for policy purposes to a community, enterprise, product or service. It also describes creativity as a "defining characteristic of a specific kind of enterprise" and continues to discuss creative enterprise clusters, which consist of "companies and entrepreneurs that take their principal competitive advantage from a distinctive appearance, form, content, or sound that they embed or embody in their products or services." The article recommends the following public policies and private practices for fostering creative enterprise clusters: (1) "add art and design services to the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) and Cooperative Extension," (2) "designate a lead Small Business Development Center for creative enterprises," (3) "support networks and networking," (4) "bundle arts and design with entertainment and cultural tourism," (5) "embed art and design in education" and (6) "make greater use of community colleges." Finally, the article notes that because "creativity is found in all classes, races, genders and ethnic groups," it can "offer economic opportunities to people and places that have not been able to advance using traditional educational pathways or economic development routes."

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Sustainable Communities

[How Small Towns and Cities Can Use Local Assets to Rebuild Their Economies](#)

Nora Johnson, Adhir Kackar and Melissa Kramer

2015

**FEATURED
RESOURCE**

This report considers case studies from seven smaller cities (ranging in population from 2,900 to 98,000) that leveraged their local assets and resources to spur economic development. Rural creative economic development is the focus of the case study of Paducah, Kentucky. The report recommends the following strategies: identify and build on existing assets; engage all members of the community to plan for the future; take advantage of outside funding; create incentives for redevelopment and encourage investment in the community; encourage cooperation within the community and across the region; and support a clean and healthy environment.

[Framework for Creating a Smart Growth Economic Development Strategy: A Tool for Small Cities and Towns](#)

2016

This paper is a primer for how to implement "smart growth economic development," which it defines as a "strategy that builds upon existing assets, takes incremental actions to strengthen communities, and builds long-term value to attract a range of investments." The strategy has three core components, one of which—"Supporting Quality of Life"—factors in arts and culture resources. To this end, the paper recommends promoting vibrant downtowns and maintaining community character. The paper is not focused on rural communities, but its ideas could be applied to rural contexts.

[Using Smart Growth Strategies to Foster Economic Development: A Kelso, Washington, Case Study](#)

2015

This is a case study of how Kelso, Washington—a town of 12,000—implemented "smart growth economic development," which is a "place-based approach that aims to create long-term value and builds upon existing assets in small, incremental actions to strengthen communities." The strategy has three core components, one of which—"Supporting Quality of Life"—factors in arts and culture resources.

"Supporting Quality of Life" is one of the three core components of this strategy, and arts and culture resources are factors of maintaining a good quality of life.

Vermont Council on Rural Development

[Advancing Vermont's Creative Economy: Celebrating Models of Community Success](#)

2007

This report summarizes a 2007 conference focused on rural creative economic development in Vermont. The bulk of it focuses on the findings of the convening's eight working groups, which focused on (1) agricultural innovation, (2) building a "creative economy region," (3) arts and community facilities, (4) downtown activity and accessibility, (5) cultural organizations partnerships, (6) new creative businesses, (7) marketing the creative economy and (8) the Internet as a creative economy tool.

[The Creative Communities Program: Models for Advancing Vermont's Creative Economy](#)

2008

This is the final report of the Vermont Council on Rural Development's Creative Communities Program, which ran from 2006 to 2007 and helped 12 local communities in Vermont "explore ways of combining local culture, community, and commerce for a strong economic future." The project emphasized three main components of the creative economy: importance of place, creative partnerships and creative assets. The report profiles the 12 participating communities and their creative economic development efforts. Accompanying the report are [short videos](#) highlighting four of these communities.

[Vermont in Transition: A Summary of Social, Economic and Environmental Trends \(Chapter 8: Creative Economy\)](#)

Vince Bolduc and Herb Kessel

2008

This chapter—which is part of a report looking at 14 public policy issues in Vermont and how they have changed over 20 years—looks at trends in the state's creative economy. Citing quantitative data, it discusses the size and attributes of the cultural work force, the types of arts and culture nonprofits, and the health of the state's arts agency and its grant making, among other things.

Virginia Municipal League

[Responsible Tourism: How to Preserve the Goose that Lays the Golden Egg](#)

Edward T. McMahon

From *Virginia Town & City*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (May 2015)

This article from the organization's *Virginia Town & City* magazine addresses the question of how to "maximize the benefits of tourism, while minimizing the [related] burdens?" Focusing in part on rural communities, it argues that stakeholders should recognize the difference between mass market tourism and responsible tourism. It provides recommendations for fostering the latter, which include preserving historic buildings, focusing on "the authentic," building trails connecting neighboring communities and other things related to cultural tourism.