



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - August, 23, 2013



Bedford County, VA: - The Artisans Center of Virginia (ACV), in partnership with Bedford County citizens today announced the initiation of the development of the Artisan Trail Network program in Bedford County.

Under the leadership of the Artisan Trail Bedford Pioneer Task Force in partnership with the Artisans Center of Virginia, Bedford County citizens are embarking on a new

public-private initiative to further strengthen the relationships and connectivity of their creative and agricultural businesses while emphasizing unique visitor experiences, special places and locally-made products.

According to Mitchell Bond, Co-Owner of the Goose Creek Studio Gallery and Custom Framing, and community organizer of the Artisan Trail Bedford Pioneer Task Force, *"Having an artisan trail in Bedford will provide a unique opportunity for visitors to experience our local creative community. More importantly, because the trail brings together folks from all over the county, it will also be a great way for those who live here to get to know their neighbors better."*

"The Bedford County Economic Development Authority and the Office of Economic Development got behind this project because we see a direct correlation between the strength of the arts and a community's quality of life," said Traci Blido, Director of Economic Development. *"The Bedford Artisan Trail will no doubt grow tourism and sales through its marketing efforts, but it will also bring a great awareness to the high amount of skilled craftspeople and businesses that we have here."*

AS A YOUTH TURNS.....

The Artisans Center of Virginia is proud to scholarship Caleb Brown, of Bedford County, as a "next generation" artisan member for one year and looks forward to introducing him to a

broader network of artisan entrepreneurs as he develops his woodworking skills and grows his "Pentastic" business.

"The hand turned wood and acrylic pens from Pentastic were a big hit at the Artisan Fair at Sedalia," said Sedalia Center Artisan Fair Coordinator Gin McCabe. "ACV's recognition of Caleb is well deserved. Not only is he a talented young artisan, he is also a creative entrepreneur."

CLICK HERE to become a "friend" of Caleb's Pentastic.



ABOUT BEDFORD COUNTY

Yes, the famed 19th century Beale Treasure is buried in the mountains of Bedford, Virginia. But here you also will find the gold that spills from the sunsets over Smith Mountain Lake, the glory of the Peaks of Otter at dawn, and the solitude of hikes along the Appalachian Trail. Bedford is a harvest festival, the world-famous National D-Day Memorial, fine wines, glorious apples, rugged trails and breath taking overlooks. Bedford is a treasure trove of experiences.

For more information on Bedford County **CLICK HERE**

"Bedford's Artisan Trail is providing us with the opportunity to showcase to our local citizens to to visitors the creations of our very talented and diverse artisans, our wonderful assortment of gallery spaces and musical venues, and our rich agricultural traditions." Sergei Troubetzkoy, Director of Tourism



GETTING STARTED



At its core, the ACV Artisan Trail Network with its community loops is designed to attract visitors to artisan studios, agri-artisan farms and local craft businesses, while creating opportunities for participating and supporting businesses, (Research, based on similar trails in western North Carolina, has shown that 97% of travelers make a purchase somewhere along the trail, artisan studios & farms have shown an increase of 23% in sales and craft shops and galleries reported a 28% increase in revenue). **Click here to review the complete study.**

"We believe the Artisan Trail is a fun and productive way of promoting Bedford Grown products and businesses. With the trail, it will build community involvement and unity to make Bedford County profitable as a grower and a consumer," says Ronnie Gross, Owner of Gross' Orchard

In addition to the craft, artist and agricultural artisan businesses, supporting sites such as locally owned lodging, restaurants and cultural points of interest are welcome to become participants on the trail.

"Today marks the beginning of our program to connect artists, their venues, galleries and retailers and agri-artisans/agri-tourism businesses in Bedford County, with points of interest, restaurants and lodging in the region into a community collaborative artisan trail," stated Sherri Smith, Executive Director of the Artisans Center of Virginia. Those interested in learning more about the artisan trail including any interest being part of this program are invited to complete the Artisan Trail Network survey as a means to determine interest and to create a baseline of information for assessing the success of the program over time:

[Click here to participate in the Artisan Trail Network Survey](#)

Individuals and businesses in Bedford County region who wish to become a trail site can download the "Artisan Trail Network Participation Guidelines" explaining the participation criteria and program details by **[CLICKING HERE](#)**. Or, by contacting the Artisans Center of Virginia at **trails@artisanscenterofvirginia.org**

ABOUT THE ARTISANS CENTER OF VIRGINIA

In 1997 the Artisans Center of Virginia was incorporated and on June 11, 2000, it was designated to the public as the "Official State Artisans Center." Service to the entire state and its artisan community has been at the forefront of planning and programming.

ACV realizes that in order to best serve Virginia's artisans it needs to attract the public and provide sustainable economic opportunities to developing craft businesses while working to train tomorrow's artisans and keep the culture of handmade fine Virginia craft alive and thriving.

ACV accomplishes these goals through the synergistic development of its Artisan Trail Network, Studio School and Retail Alliance Programs. The economic impact and benefits of the Artisan Trail Network, ACV Studio School and Retail Alliance programs are intended to:

- Provide additional economic opportunities and revenue stimulating programs for the region
- Preserve and promote the region's culture, heritage and traditions.
- Establish the foundation for regional cooperation within the artisan community
- Increase economic expenditures in the region
- Increase visitation to the region's other artisan venues and tourism offerings
- Provide business development (increased production, profits and new artist businesses) within the region
- Stimulate a job creation & the development of "next generation" artisans



The Artisans Center of Virginia (ACV) develops and implements systems and strategies to improve economic outcomes for Virginia artisans and their communities while assisting



them in promoting their local artisan culture.

What is a Craft Artisan? An Artisan creates objects of three dimensional craft, often to be used functionally, but always with a high degree of artistry and fine craftsmanship. For the Artisan form follows function, and the work of the Artisan speaks to the simple honesty of that paradigm. The Artisan pours himself into his craft, making his quality objects with pride, honesty, and integrity. Whether using hand tools or machines, the Artisan takes no shortcuts that might compromise the quality of the work. The Artisan does not attempt to compete with the large scale manufacturer, and the amount of time taken to make a work of fine craft is secondary to the result. That the goal of the Artisan is to achieve heirloom quality is an unspoken assumption.

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND/OR INTERVIEWS



Sherri Smith, Executive Director, Artisans Center of Virginia:
Phone: 540-886-1684: Email:
director@artisanscenterofvirginia.org

Additional interviews are available with:

- Bonnie Dominguez, ACV Board of Directors
- Mitchell Bond, Co- Owner Goose Creek Gallery, Bedford
- Sergei Troubetzkoy, Director of Tourism Bedford County

IN APPRECIATION

Very special thanks to the citizens of Bedford for their support and to the following sponsors:



Virginia 
is for Lovers

CLICK HERE to learn how you can become a supporting sponsor of Bedford County's Artisan Trail!

You may be receiving this issue as a courtesy. Please contact us if you are unsure whether your membership is current and to ensure internal communications and other benefits are not interrupted.

The Artisans Center of Virginia is officially registered with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, P. O. Box 1163, Richmond, VA 23209. You can write to this Department for all relevant financial statements and procedures regarding the solicitation of contributions.

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