

**Southwest Virginia
Cultural Heritage Foundation
Annual Report for 2012**



PREFACE

Section 2.2-2736 of the Code of Virginia requires the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation to submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly. Each year, beginning in 2012, the Foundation is to submit the report for publication according to the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems and posting on the General Assembly's website. The following information covers the Foundation's activities during calendar year 2012.

The General Assembly established the Virginia Cultural Heritage Commission by Chapters 654 and 659 of the 2008 Acts of Assembly. The provisions of the Code of Virginia establishing the Commission expired on July 1, 2011. However, the 2011 General Assembly through Chapters 521 and 548 created the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation (the Foundation) to operate as successor to the Commission. The Foundation encompasses the same 19-county and three-city area of southwestern Virginia as did the former Commission. Similarly, the Foundation is pursuing the same purpose as its predecessor organization: that is, the encouragement of economic development of Southwest Virginia through the expansion of cultural and natural heritage ventures promoting entrepreneurial and employment opportunities across the region. The 22 members of the board of trustees represent state, local and regional governments; state and local tourism, educational, cultural and music organizations and the Virginia General Assembly.

The legislature created the Foundation as a body politic and corporate to serve as the state's catalyst for regional economic development, drawing upon and enhancing the impact of resources available through a variety of state and regional governmental and private organizations. It continues to advance its purposes by working with existing ventures such as The Crooked Road Music Heritage Trail and Round the Mountain Artisan Network in collaborative efforts that promote new entrepreneurial and employment opportunities drawing from the region's rich and distinctive cultural heritage. From its prominent location in Abingdon adjacent Exit 14 on Interstate 81, the Heartwood Artisan Gateway, which will soon mark its second anniversary of operation, has become the focal point for the Foundation's efforts to draw state, regional and national attention to the music, culture and artisanal products of Southwest Virginia.



Foundation Activities During CY 2012

The primary activities the Foundation undertook during 2012 involved the growing role of the Heartwood Artisan Center and the advancement of other initiatives intended to enhance the promotion of regional economic and community development. During its second full year of operation, the Foundation was active in the following areas:

Operations and Marketing

To fulfill its mission with respect to the promotion of economic development within Southwest Virginia, the Foundation has pursued a number of strategies intended to increase awareness of Heartwood and associated ventures throughout the region, state and nation. The Foundation has identified the need for a more robust and cohesive effort at marketing and branding the region's cultural and natural heritage assets. It is now following up with actions intended to implement new marketing initiatives.

- In June, the Foundation began the transition to assign the ongoing implementation of the enhanced marketing strategy to in-house personnel.
- In furtherance of this effort, the Foundation established a broad-based marketing committee with Southwest Virginia and Heartwood specific sub-committees whose mission includes reformulating the marketing plan. Mike Maynard of Smyth County, retired from Proctor & Gamble, chairs the committee. The twenty members of the committee include representatives from state agencies, local and regional governments, the private sector, tourism and other interested parties.
- The Foundation's recent marketing activities include the launch of a radio program, "The Cultural Heart of Southwest Virginia: Authentic, Distinctive, Alive" on a local station. It features 30-minute weekly broadcasts and podcasts. The Foundation also established an alternating monthly presence at several local visitor centers around the region and initiated a marketing campaign highlighting regional venues.
- Guest Services, Inc., of Fairfax continues to manage food and retail operations of Heartwood. The company employs twenty- nine (29) staff members from Southwest Virginia.
- Numerous Southwest Virginia localities took advantage of special community showcase days at Heartwood: Southwest Virginia's Artisan Gateways during which they exhibited music, craft and food products identified with their respective communities. These community showcase events will continue in the future.

Products

The Artisan Center continues to use a juried approach to select the crafts and products to be displayed or offered for sale, assuring that they accurately represent the distinctive regional culture and resources of Southwest Virginia. In addition, providers of goods and services

associated with Heartwood are encouraged to draw on local resources that promote the regional economy and employment. The following items are a result of this approach:

- Three craft jury sessions have brought to 306 the total of juried artisans whose work products have been approved for placement in Heartwood.
- Southwest Virginia artisans and musicians have received \$218,036, not including local food purchases, from the sale of their goods and services.
- Products from one cidery, one brewery, twelve wineries and three coffee roasters have been juried in. Their products are now available on site and in retail.
- Approximately 170 book titles from Southwest Virginia authors have been approved for sale and are now available.
- A total of 148 CDs featuring Southwest Virginia musicians and bands are available; 477 copies of a special compilation CD featuring 50 of these artists were sold throughout the year.
- A dozen Southwest Virginia luthiers have made instruments made available for purchase.
- Logoed apparel from an apparel-manufacturing firm in Lee County is offered for sale.

Music

Music has long been one of the most significant and distinctive components of Southwest Virginia's cultural heritage. The Foundation has emphasized both music performance and music education, assuring that that the music is not only heard today but also that its enduring legacy is conveyed to future generations.

Music Performance

- The Crooked Road's Heartwood Music Series showcased communities within the region through their traditional music venues and youth music. By introducing new audiences to "JAMS" at Heartwood, guests receive a sampling of what they could experience in venues near their home locations. The series has also provided an opportunity to highlight a variety of different youth music groups and give guests examples of the tremendous young talent in the region.
- Programs in 2012 included:
 - 12 venue showcases which featured 60 musicians attended by 820 guests
 - 1 Crooked Road Music Fest featuring 70 musicians and presenters attended by 300 guests

- 1 Youth Music Festival at Heartwood featuring 150 musicians and presenters attended by 1200 guests
- 1 Valentine's Day concert at Heartwood featuring 4 musicians attended by 300 guests
- 54 gospel brunch performances featuring 162 musicians attended by approximately 5,400 guests

Music Education

The Foundation, in conjunction with The Crooked Road, has supported a vigorous program of youth music education, which preserves and promotes the traditional music of the Southwest Virginia culture. It is actively involved at the K-12 level and in higher education through the community colleges; this approach would include incorporation in the Standards of Learning as well as after school programs. Traditional Music Education Programs (TMEP) and activities in 2012 included:

- Publication of *Traditional Music in the Classroom – A Teacher's Guide*, which is designed to encourage bringing traditional music into the classroom through existing curricula in K-12 through college levels and beyond;
- After-school programs (*FloydJAMS*, *WiseJAMS – Coeburn/St. Paul*, *WiseJAMS – Big Stone Gap/Appalachia*, and *Dickenson County JAMS*);
- *Teaching on The Crooked Road*, a teacher re-certification course established at Virginia Highlands Community College to provide professional K-12 teachers throughout the region with skills in bringing traditional music into the classroom;
- *Youth Music Performance Series* at Heartwood where monthly performances provide a platform for interaction among young musicians, a professional setting for these musicians to gain valuable performing experience in front of a live audience;
- *School Assembly Programs* presented at three schools for over 850 students, teachers, and administrators; and
- The *Youth Music Festival* at Heartwood, which featured 150 musicians in performances and workshops for over 1,200 attendees. Recent grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Foundation for Bluegrass Music and D'Addario Foundation have helped support these activities.

Artisan Outreach

Besides working with the music community of Southwest Virginia, the Foundation actively encourages the participation of the region's artisans in activities that benefit them and broaden community awareness of their skills and products. During the year:

- 407 individuals participated in `Round the Mountain's educational programming
- 60 educational opportunities were presented throughout the 23 jurisdictions that make up Southwest Virginia

Community Development

The Foundation has actively supported initiatives that aggregate community and other available resources to promote tourism and investment in the region as a whole. By coordinating with the Virginia Tourism Corporation and locally based tourism and economic development entities, the Foundation anticipates promoting the Southwest Virginia brand as an umbrella for all tourism marketing efforts within the region.

- **Appalachian Spring Initiative:** Friends of Southwest Virginia, the nonprofit arm of the Foundation, received \$1,055,000 in grants from three federal agencies through the national Rural Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge project and, via a match, the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission, to plan and implement a sector based, outdoor recreation economic development strategy for Southwest Virginia that consists of:
 - Identifying and connecting major aggregated assets, e.g. the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Appalachian Trail, the New River corridor, Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area, the Clinch River Valley, Breaks Interstate Park, Jefferson National Forest (Wise County), and the Daniel Boone Wilderness Trail;
 - Promoting the entire Southwest Virginia region as an international destination for outdoor recreation and natural assets;
 - Developing a capital improvement plan for outdoor recreation improvements that will lead to economic development; and
 - Connecting the downtowns of communities with outdoor recreation and natural assets in their surrounding area.
- **Clinch River Valley Initiative:** The Foundation has increased the Clinch River Valley Initiative and added five working groups: water quality, state park development, access points along the river, downtown revitalization and development of an environmental education center to attract colleges and other students throughout the region and across the country.

- **New River Valley Initiative:** The Foundation is a lead participant in the New River Initiative, trying to find ways to access the entire New River for recreational uses including ways to allow access around dams. As part of this initiative, the work group will be doing community development initiatives with small communities along the New River.
- **Community Videography:** Filming is underway for the community videography program in which 15 localities will be the subject of videos on the Southwest Virginia website; in addition to the City of Galax prototype video, community videos for the City of Bristol, the City of Norton and the Town of Wise are complete. After viewing the completed videos, five additional communities have requested to participate in the program.
- **Downtown Revitalization:** The Foundation has been active in promoting and providing technical assistance in the revitalization of downtowns throughout the region, transforming downtown Southwest Virginia into a showplace of the creative economy aimed at attracting high tech entrepreneurs and businesses. This past year Cleveland, Damascus, Dungannon, Glade Spring, Haysi, Saint Paul and Wytheville have been active in planning for their downtown revitalizations.

Financial Sustainability

The 2011 legislation that created the Foundation as successor to the former Commission, included among the powers of the Foundation the ability to establish a corporation eligible for exemption from income taxation under § 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code to assist in carrying out the purposes of the Foundation.

- Friends of Southwest Virginia, a 501(c)(3) entity, continues to manage revenues, gifts, and grants to Heartwood and distribute financial support to Heartwood, `Round the Mountain, The Crooked Road, and, potentially, other cultural heritage entities. To enhance its effectiveness of the partnership between Friends and the Foundation, legislation has been requested that would increase the membership of the board of trustees of the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation from 22 to 23 by adding the Chairman of the Friends of Southwest Virginia

Locality Financial Support

- Thirty-one Southwest Virginia localities, including towns as well as counties and cities, have demonstrated their commitment to the efforts of the Foundation through annual investments of financial support. During 2012, they contributed approximately \$250,000 to the work of the Foundation.