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Artisans Center of Virginia
...the state's official center for craft.

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Click to Find Virginia Craft Artisans
A New Online Resource

People seeking Virginia craft now have a new tool. Anyone with access to the Internet can quickly identify nearly 300 artisans and craft venues in a nine county region in the western part of Virginia.

The **Alleghany Craft Network** is a special project sponsored by the *Artisans Center of Virginia* (ACV). Work on the project began in September 2006 thanks to a grant from the **Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development** (DHCD). The service area includes the rural counties of Alleghany, Augusta, Bath, Botetourt, Craig, Highland, Roanoke, Rockbridge and Rockingham.

ACV executive director **Michael Dowell** says, *"The period was one of immense activity. The Alleghany Craft Network project has met all its goals and will be completed the end of August 2008. The majority of artisans and sales venues in the region have been identified and collected in a database, artisans and venues are featured on the Artisans Center's [website](#), a successful craft [conference](#) was held in the region, and a beautiful [exhibition](#) of Alleghany craft is now on display at the **Artisans Center of Virginia**."*

In a brief two-years, participation grew from an initial 64 to nearly 300 artisans and venues as well as potential partners not formally in the network. Dowell says, *"The web site now includes a photo directory, with a brief description and contact information for each participant. The listings were offered free to each participant thanks to the DHCD grant. The greatest reward of the project has been to serve an area of the state that, while rich in natural resources, lacks much of what is available in more populated areas of the Commonwealth. The Artisans Center seeks to expand the model to other areas of Virginia while maintaining the Alleghany Craft Network as an active, going concern. The benefits of establishing a comprehensive statewide craft registry will create new opportunities throughout the state and bring new life to regions in need, like the Allegheny region."*

The project coordinator engaged by ACV was **Stephen Clerico**, a former Charlottesville area artisan and craft advocate. Clerico said, *"Serving on this special short-term project was a joy. I spoke with hundreds of talented people and met many artisans while conducting outreach for the online directory. New categories were recently added and include the American Long Rifle, horning, traditional timber framing, and fly rod making. An added enticement was the opportunity to write about interesting participants who wished to expand conversations about the field of craft. As a result the public can now visit the [News Room](#) to learn first hand what a number of Network participants have to say about fine craft, community and education of the next generation. The experience has been a pleasure."*

With the closing of the grant, **Michael Dowell** says, *"The Artisans Center will now work to continue beyond the reach of the grant and hopes to create field officer positions charged with maintaining network and service communications statewide."*

For complete details about the grant project write to network@artisanscenterofvirginia.org, visit see www.artisanscenterofvirginia.org/network or call 877-508-6069.

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