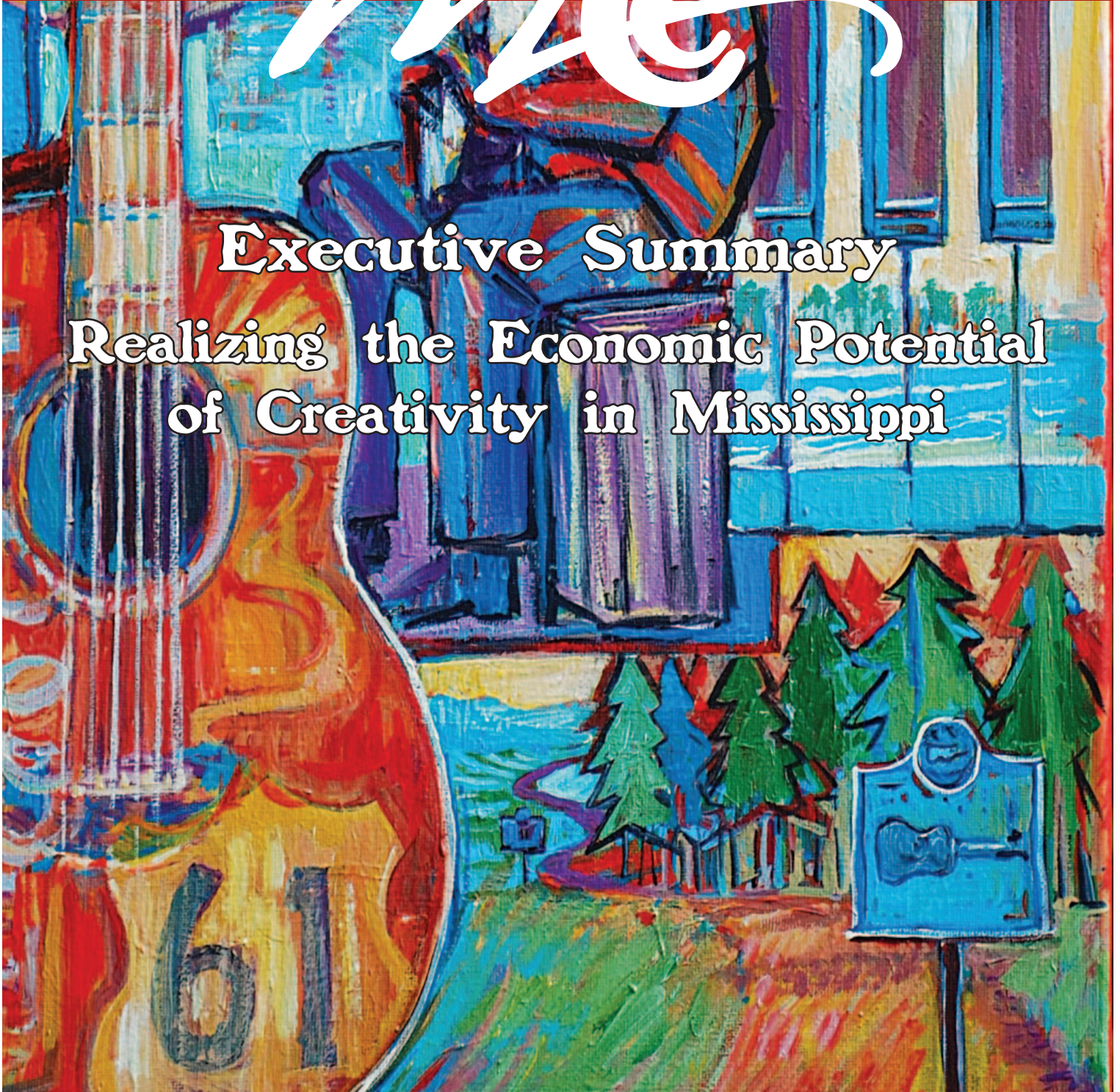


mississippi's **creative** economy

*ME*

Executive Summary

Realizing the Economic Potential  
of Creativity in Mississippi





# Welcome



Mississippi's rich creative legacy defines who we are as a people. The state is the birthplace of America's music and has produced some of the South's greatest writers. Our creative heritage continues to serve as an inspiration for countless artists, entrepreneurs

and innovators, and the creative spirit found in Mississippi is just as vibrant and alive today as it was in decades past.

The state's creative tradition has far-reaching implications, not only for its contributions to the arts and to American culture, but for its impact on the state's economy as a whole. To better understand this thriving facet of our economy as it exists today, the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA), the state's lead economic and community development agency, and the Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC) jointly commissioned a study of Mississippi's creative economy. It examines the scope of our state's creative economy and the various types of individuals, businesses and organizations that are at its core.

This study reveals that more than 60,700 people work in Mississippi's creative economy, a figure that includes both individuals employed by creative business enterprises and those who work in creative occupations for other companies.

Creative companies alone are responsible for over 40,000 jobs in Mississippi today, but the creative economy is more than just a significant source of employment. It helps define the high quality of life in many Mississippi communities, and it is one of the reasons they are excellent places in which to visit, to work, or to live. Additionally, our creative economy is a major amenity that attracts both tourists and talent to the state, and it kindles innovation and adds significant value to other leading industries in Mississippi, as well.

By understanding the creative economy as it exists in Mississippi today, we are better positioned to support and further develop this key sector. This portion of our economy has the potential to be a major catalyst for job creation and other economic opportunities in communities around the state.

In looking ahead, we must focus on our strengths and look at ways we can build upon them. In Mississippi, the creative spirit of our people is one of our greatest assets. By developing our creative economy, we can further strengthen and diversify our state's economy and better position many of our communities for a bright and prosperous future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Haley Barbour". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Haley Barbour  
Governor



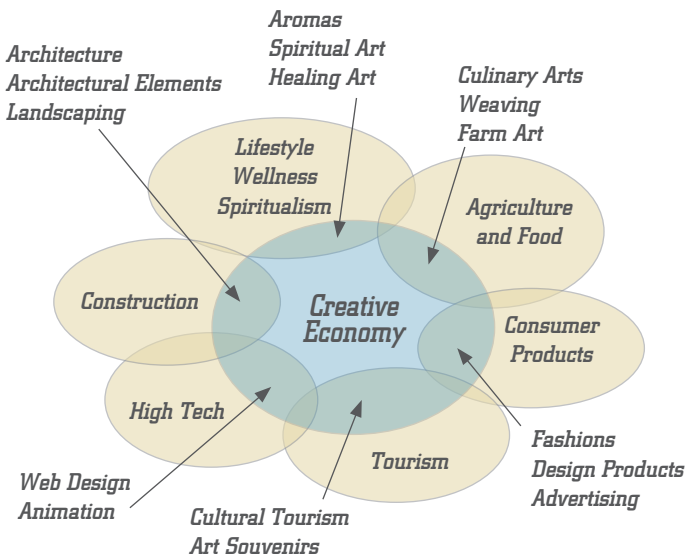
Powerhouse Community Arts Center, Oxford, MS

## Introduction

Mississippi's creative people, companies and institutions, past and present, are a vital part of what defines the state. Their achievements and talents contribute to Mississippi's distinctive ambiance. But these same creative people, companies and institutions collectively also add significant wealth to the state's economy, in ways that have been undercounted and under-recognized.

First, the creative economy is a direct source of economic growth, jobs, and wealth. Second, creativity can improve the competitiveness of manufactured products and services. Third, talented people, businesses that need talent, and tourists are increasingly drawn to places with a creative and cultural milieu, an environment that offers interesting attractions, entertainment and culture. Fourth, a creative environment stimulates innovation in science and technology. Fifth, an educational system that encourages and rewards creativity is the foundation for the 21st century work force, and the arts have demonstrated their success in increasing academic performance.

**Figure 1: Convergence of Clusters**

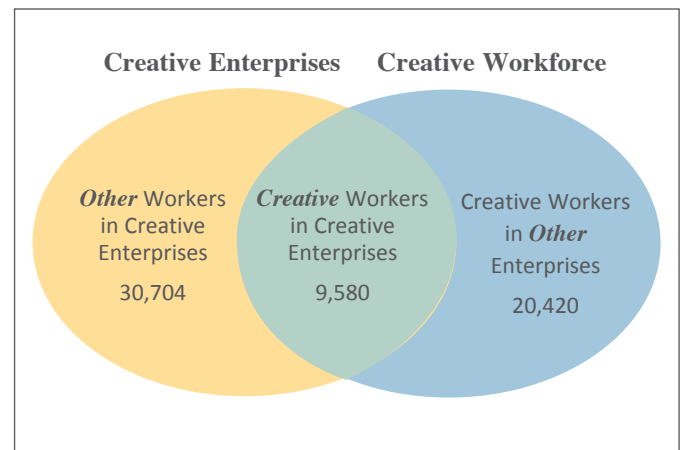


The cultural contributions of creativity are readily apparent—as in Mississippi's literary reputation, musical heritage, and internationally renowned ballet competition; the economic contributions of creativity are not so evident. This report describes the many ways that artistic people, creative enterprises and institutions, and cultural activities can and do attract and retain jobs, increase productivity, stimulate innovation and growth, improve learning, and generate wealth. It then suggests ways to strengthen that reality and promote the image of Mississippi as a heartland of creativity.

## Mississippi's Creative Economy: Counting, Aggregating and Comparing

Mississippi's creative economy, if defined by the combination of both employees of creative companies and employees of other companies who work in creative occupations, includes roughly 60,704 jobs, shown as the grand total in Figure 2. Mississippi's creative enterprises are directly responsible for the employment of 40,284 people in 2008 (the sum of the two numbers in the left hand oval in Figure 2) in approximately 3,000 establishments of which almost one in three—9,580—work in creative occupations. An additional 20,420 Mississippians are employed in creative occupations while employed in sectors of the economy that don't fit the criteria established for "creative enterprises."

**Figure 2: Mississippi's Creative Economy**



Those industry sectors that are included in the creative economy range from commercial printing and caterers to media related and advertising agencies. Many in these sectors are self-employed as sole owners of businesses, freelancers, and consultants. An estimated 5,250 self-employed individuals, or 17.5 percent of those in creative occupations, fell into this category in 2007 according to the U.S. Census Bureau. While the data presented in this report includes estimates of self-employed creative workers, it is not able to capture the many individuals with secondary jobs or informal incomes in creative fields, which undoubtedly add to the true scale of the creative economy.

Mississippi has 30,000 people employed in creative occupations, (the sum of the two numbers in the right hand oval in Figure 2.), jobs that require a significant level of originality and imagination. Creative occupations are not just found in the better-known creative sectors like dance theaters, art galleries and advertising agencies. Local governments in Mississippi employ nearly 9 percent of all creative talent, and faith-based organizations employ roughly 5.7 percent, primarily musicians.

## Trends and Patterns

In the past six years, Mississippi has been hit by Katrina, one of the worst natural disasters of recent history, only to then be plunged along with the rest of the nation into a major recession. Over the five-year time span from 2003 to 2008, the creative industries experienced more robust growth during boom times but also were more severely affected by economic contractions. Nevertheless, the creative cluster in Mississippi showed solid growth in employment over the five years. From 2002 to 2008, creative cluster employment grew by four percent in the state compared to six percent growth across all industries but surpassing growth other important value-added clusters such as advanced materials and agribusiness, food processing and technology. Remarkably, overall job growth in Mississippi's creative sectors exceeded growth in those same creative sectors across the rest of the nation, the exception being 2005 when Hurricane Katrina hit and the Gulf Coast's employment in creative sectors dropped more than six percent.

## Segmenting the Creative Economy

To better understand the state's creative economy, this report separates the creative enterprise cluster into the following six sub clusters:

- visual and performing arts
- design
- film, video, and media
- literary and publishing
- culinary arts
- museums and heritage

## Visual and Performing Arts

The purest segment of the creative economy is made up of those people who earn their living from their artistic talents, the most intentional originators of creativity who turn ideas and visions into art, craft, music, and/or performance. The music that originated in Mississippi's Delta region, for example, has influenced that art form around the world. Although the scale of this artistic talent is not as great in rural regions as it is in urban art centers, it is just as important in less populated places, and in some, far more important. In 2008, this sub cluster included more than 6,400 people employed in nearly 470 establishments. Based on the occupational data, however, about 1,800 Mississippians classify themselves as pure "artists" producing original work. This sub cluster includes a large number of self-employed people but also many others who work at their art on a part-time basis, supplementing income from other sources. It's especially difficult to earn a full-time living in music or theater in a sparsely populated region, where many of the artists are employed—for example, as waiters, teachers, or factory workers. The average annual earnings for the entire sub cluster is about \$19,000.

## Design

Design is an applied art form, applied to products, print and web-based content, buildings and landscapes. The most obvious applications are seen in architecture, gardens, advertising, interior design, and fashion-oriented products. Because the creative content of this sub cluster is not always self-evident, it is often overlooked as part of the creative economy. The creativity embodied in these enterprises is too often taken for granted, attributed to some other factor, and the firm is assigned to some different cluster. This sub cluster has the

second largest employment among the six sub clusters in the state's creative economy. Design-related businesses in Mississippi employ over 8,000 people in more than 700 establishments in 17 sectors.

## Film, Video, and Media

This sub cluster comprises 19 sectors that span the distribution and production of motion pictures, music, radio, cable and television programming and multimedia firms. The sub cluster is quite evenly distributed across the state. In 2008, it employed approximately 5,600 people in its 260 plus establishments with an average annual earnings of just over \$35,000. Thirty percent of the employment in the sub cluster is directly attributable to cable and other program distribution.

## Literary and Publishing

Literary and publishing have deep roots in Mississippi. About 9,000 people are employed in the sub cluster's 17 industry sectors, which represents about 28 percent of the state's creative economy. Mississippi is home to a treasure trove of writers that forms the core of this sub cluster that include some of the nation's most widely read and beloved fiction writers. William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, Willie Morris, Tennessee Williams, Shelby Foote, Richard Wright, Larry Brown, Richard Ford, Walker Percy, and Ellen Gilchrist are only the beginning of a list that goes on and on.



Tennessee Williams Park, Clarksdale, MS



Viking Cooking School, Greenwood, MS

## Culinary Arts

Mississippi is known for certain special foods and a rich foodways tradition. Although it may not have the culinary reputation of New Orleans, it has its own distinctive and authentic tastes. The criterion for being part of the creative economy is that the business, if an eating establishment, employ a trained chef, regularly change the menu, serve local fresh foods, and/or offer the customer a culinary experience. The Mississippi Hospitality and Restaurant Association estimates that roughly 10 percent of its 2,500 member restaurants have professionally trained chefs, and about 15 of those places also provide venues for art or music. In addition, there are about 30 independent coffee shops with baristas, and some of those roast their own coffees. The final definition includes catering companies, businesses involved in making and selling baked goods, confectionary stores, specialty food items and food processors, and those eating or drinking establishments that had special features associated with creativity.

## Museums and Heritage

Mississippi has an exceptionally strong and recognizable cultural heritage that serves to drive and inspire its creative economy. This sub cluster is composed of only three industry sectors, museums, historical sites, and zoos and botanical gardens, and these account for less than 700 jobs and 30 establishments. Although the smallest of the six creative economy sub clusters, it is the most difficult to quantify and is inevitably undercounted because many of the jobs are within government and because there are so many part-time and volunteer employees. While this sub cluster may not be large, it plays a critical role in helping many communities retain their distinctiveness, and it influences much of the state's music, literature, art, and tourism.

## Support Infrastructure

Because much of the value of creative economy is based on the manner in which its products are experienced and success of the buzz that it produces, the creative economy depends heavily on support from a variety of physical, intellectual, technical, and social sources to deliver or provide services to the creative economy. The ultimate strength of the creative economy is tied in large part to the quality and quantity of the social and support infrastructure that support it.

## Organizations

Guilds, councils, arts associations, advocacy organizations, and social networks represent the associational infrastructure that enables members of Mississippi's creative economy to connect to one another, to the state's broader creative economy, and to external sources of knowledge and creative inspiration. The approximately 200 arts organizations and networks that this study found include formal and informal groups of working artists, educators, and patrons and supporters of the arts.

## Education and Training

Mississippi's educational institutions assume many roles in the state's creative economy. They generate its labor force and entrepreneurs; provide access to new ideas, information, and people; and host entertainment and cultural activities in their communities. In each area of activity, Mississippi has significant strengths but also opportunities to do more. The state's talent is first nurtured in its K-12 schools, and Mississippi's Whole Schools Initiative is among the best programs in the nation, a model for integrating the arts in the schools. Most of Mississippi's community colleges are beginning to respond to the state's transition from a mass production economy to an idea- and experience-based economy and to the growing job market and student demand for applied creative arts in, for example, digital arts, graphic design, landscape architecture, and interior decoration. And many colleges and universities are important sources of and venues for art and culture, especially in the state's smaller cities.

## Events and Performances

One of the most important outlets for artistic expression is the multitude of festivals that are found in almost every county in Mississippi. These festivals serve as an asset for Mississippi's creative economy in several ways: as an active market for Mississippi artists; as a way to integrate and promote the arts to the

community at large; and as a way to generate economic impact for the community in which they are held. Festivals also provide the opportunity to tell a community's story and help create a sense of place.

## Places and Spaces: Creativity on Display

Many creative occupations and processes are individual endeavors, calling to mind the image of the solitary artist in a studio or the writer hunched over a desk. Indeed, creative individuals need such places to create, either alone or with other creative people. But they also need more public places to perform, exhibit and share their work. In Mississippi, hundreds of museums, galleries, theaters, concert halls, restaurants and pubs, historic sites, buildings and neighborhoods, gardens and public spaces serve as venues for the performance, exhibition, and dissemination of creative work.

## Resources: Investments and Involvement

The Mississippi Arts Commission and its network of partners are the most important resources and sources of support for the state's artists and organizations in the arts, providing direct grants to individual artists and operating grant individual arts councils around the state. Many of these organizations provide funding to support individual artists or community focused events and efforts. Mississippi also has an estimated 46 foundations based in Mississippi that name arts funding one of their areas of emphasis—for activities such as assisting after school programs; providing disadvantaged youth with arts instruction, supporting the many arts-focused festivals around the states; and making grants to support community theaters and symphonies. Other organizations that provide small business assistance include the Mississippi Development Authority, which provides technical assistance for promotion, marketing, and business development. The network of Mississippi Small Business Development Centers can assist businesses in start-up plans as well as around issues such as obtaining financing and expanding market share.



Powerhouse Community Arts Center, Oxford, MS

## V. Recommended Goals and Strategies

The size of the creative economy alone has a large and direct impact on the state's economy—nearly 3,000 establishments responsible for roughly 40,200 jobs that are engaged primarily in the production, distribution, and marketing of aesthetically or emotionally oriented products or services—is sufficient reason to invest in the cluster. It employs more people than the defense and security, apparel and textiles, and transportation equipment manufacturing clusters, all of which are important sectors of the state's economy. Add to that the effect of the creative economy on so many other sectors, such as tourism, agriculture, communications and information technologies, furniture and health care and its value as an amenity that attracts tourists and talent, and the potential value far exceeds the conventional view of the lone artist at a festival or performer on the street.

The following goals and strategies are based on what has been learned in this study and on the ideas and vision of some of the key stakeholders in Mississippi's arts, education, and economic development arenas. They are intended to help the state reap the full benefits of its creative people and creative economy.

### The Creative Economy

1. Is a direct source of growth (Goal II)
2. Adds value to other sectors (Goals IV, V)
3. Attracts talented people, businesses and tourists (Goals I, III)
4. Stimulates innovation (Goals III, IV, V)
5. Is the foundation for the 21st century work force (Goal VI)

### GOAL I: Facilitate efforts that make communities throughout the state more creative and vibrant.

In Richard Florida's *Who's Your City*, he demonstrates the value of place to people and to companies. "Where we live is the central factor that affects all others—work, education, and love—follow."<sup>1</sup> Although the book focuses on large metropolitan areas, small communities can even more easily

distinguish or brand themselves and attract people and firms who may be looking for less expensive, less crowded, and less hectic places. Those communities that are able to offer enough of the urban creative amenities and cultural attractions along with a slower, more family-friendly lifestyle can use that to their advantage to generate and retain wealth. Strategies that allow rural communities to convert their creative talent into economic activities are critical to Mississippi's future.

### Strategy A: Use creative talent and enterprises to promote community restoration and revitalization.

- Reinstatement of state funding for Mississippi's Building Fund for the Arts (BFA) program, a bond bill that could be used to refurbish and maintain buildings as cultural centers.<sup>2</sup>

*The fund, authorized at \$19.2 million and managed by the Mississippi Arts Commission, supported 93 projects between 2001 and 2007. Awards were based on artistic quality, plans, architectural and organizational capacity, and anticipated economic impact.*

- Offer financial or architectural incentives or technical assistance to make abandoned or unused downtown space available to creative businesses, galleries, and/or studio space in both urban areas and in small communities.

*Paducah, Kentucky has had one of the nation's first and most successful artists relocation programs. Recruiting artists nationally with zero interest loans and subsidies for architectural changes, the city attracts some 50 artists, which brought galleries and theaters to a previously distressed area of the city.*

*In Pittsfield, Massachusetts, a group of artists worked with the owners of vacant storefronts in the downtown. The idea was to give artists the opportunity to work in these spaces and exhibit their art, and to bring more foot traffic to the downtown. The effort succeeded in helping both the artists and the property owners, and downtown Pittsfield is now a more arts-active and vibrant place to live and work.*

<sup>1</sup> Richard Florida, *Who's Your City?* New York: Basic Books, 2008, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.arts.state.ms.us/programs/building-fund.php>

- Develop and communicate programs currently available through MAC.
- Consider a “Percent for Art” program such as is being implemented on university campuses and many federal projects. Set aside a percentage of funding for public buildings and public spaces to display art such as sculptures, murals and other decorative art in, for example, hotel lobbies, restaurants, banks, hospitals and outdoors.
- Consider zoning and private-sector set asides such as those done in the GSA Art in Architecture Program which commissions the nation’s leading artists to create large-scale works of art for new federal buildings. These artworks enhance the civic meaning of federal architecture and showcase the vibrancy of American visual arts. Together, the art and architecture of federal buildings create a lasting cultural legacy for the people of the United States. GSA reserves one-half of the estimated construction cost of each new federal building to commission project artists.

*The Alluvian Hotel, a cosmopolitan boutique hotel in Greenwood, Mississippi exhibits a collection of award-winning art by Mississippi artists.*

*The Mayor of Sheridan, Wyoming enacted Resolution 24-00 to establish an “Art in Public Places” program in July 2000 and the city of 15,000 now has some 50 sculptures with a western theme downtown. Originally on loan from the artists for \$500, about half now have been purchased and are permanent.*

- Support the designation and formation of “Creative Economic districts,” where creative people and enterprises are encouraged to concentrate, collaborate, live and work.

*The state of Louisiana recently passed enabling legislation that allows local communities to create Cultural Districts, and at least 51 districts have been created around the state to date. The Districts provide tax exemptions for the sale of one-of-a-kind art and tax credits to rehabilitate buildings to help create more vibrant downtowns.<sup>3</sup>*

*Granville Island was formed from a sandbar in the heart of Vancouver, British Columbia to hide the city’s heavy industries. In the 1970s a local politician led the move to change its image and rebuild the island’s economy on the*

*arts. They created a cultural center in abandoned factories with low rent space for studios and theater companies. Granville Island is now the artistic center of Vancouver and a primary tourist destination served by a steady stream of sea taxis.<sup>4</sup>*

- MDA and MAC would create a program that helps communities become certified (similar to the state’s Certified Retirement Communities program) and offer technical assistance to communities to inventory their creative assets and develop plans to meet criteria for being designated a “creative community.”

*Mississippi offers communities the chance to become Certified Retirement Communities, which is obtained after a three-month screening process, and to become recognized under the Mississippi Main Street Association program, supported by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Mississippi Development Authority.*

*The Maine Arts Commission established a program in 2001 called “Discovery Research that gave grants and methodologies to communities to map their creative assets, discover their own cultural resources, and provide funds to survey local events, artists, traditions, and tradition-bearers as well as cultural organizations which promote or support the performing, visual, craft or literary arts. The state is now transitioning from that discovery model to a capacity building model.*

*Vermont, based on recommendations of the Vermont Council on Culture and Innovation, encouraged selected communities to look at development through the lens of the creative economy, emphasizing the importance of place, creative partnerships, and creative assets.<sup>5</sup>*

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.crt.state.la.us/culturaldistricts/documents/act298.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> <http://granvilleisland.com>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.vtrural.org/creative-communities.php>.

## Strategy B: MAC to continue support and assist cultural fairs and festivals.

- MAC and MDA offers technical assistance and support for organizers of fairs, festivals and other celebrations through the Festivals and Events Coordinators Workshops. The program improves the promotion, marketing, fundraising and business planning efforts of festivals. These festivals and other forms of community and regional celebrations can be used effectively to showcase and market a place's special history, culture, creativity or even weirdness, an increasingly sought attribute.<sup>6</sup>

*The Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC) and the Mississippi Development Authority's (MDA) Tourism Division have been active supporters of many events through grants and other services. Both agencies recognize the challenges faced by community groups that produce festivals. To address these challenges, MAC and MDA have come together to produce workshops that provide training and networking opportunities for festival coordinators from around the state.*

*The City of Lowell, Massachusetts has an event called "Destination World" that brings together all of the city's immigrant and ethnic communities around a single event to highlight the contribution and work of the city's immigrant population. This also brings new audiences to the downtown.*

## GOAL II: Promote entrepreneurship and small business growth among creative firms.

The creative economy, with its emphasis on small scale, over mass production, is exceptionally entrepreneurial. But because the structure of this cluster favors highly flexible small companies with uncertain markets that are dependent more on the strength of reputation and connections than productivity, it is not well understood or served by the public agencies that assist small businesses. Business and capital assistance organizations typically are measured by employment growth, which biases publicly funded services against helping entrepreneurial companies that are considered "lifestyle" or unlikely to grow very large.

## Strategy A: Develop greater capacity to assist businesses in the creative industries. Improve ability of existing technical and business support infrastructure to support the self-employed and microenterprises.

- Help small business development centers, cooperative and manufacturing extension offices, incubators, MDA's Entrepreneurial Center and employment services to better understand the particular needs and markets of the creative enterprise. Continue to work through existing programs and organizations such as tech parks, incubator space, MDA's Entrepreneurial Center, etc.

*The current Mississippi Arts Commission program to help artists with business skills could be turned into a "train the trainer" program that would enable existing services to better understand and support the needs of artists and artisans.*

*www.visualarts.ms.gov. The Mississippi Arts Commission has created the Mississippi Visual Arts Directory Website. The website serves as a resource to all things visual arts in the state and provides artists with the opportunity to increase their visibility. The site is open to all visual artists and craftsmen, museums, cultural centers and galleries and visual arts organizations and all art education facilities.*

*Haywood Community College in western North Carolina hosts an arts business boot camp every summer during which artisans are taught about managing their business, finances, marketing, use of ecommerce, and budgeting. Most years, the camp is oversubscribed, with attendees coming from across the U.S. It's supported by the Arts Business Institute, co-located with HandMade in America in Asheville.*

- Expand Mississippi's existing "Arts Means Business" program to reach a greater number of creative enterprises and creative people, possibly working through membership organizations like the Mississippi Craftsmen's Guild and by training the staff of existing small business assistance programs and educational institutions to support creative enterprises.

<sup>6</sup> Joe Cortright, "'Keep Portland Weird' makes sense as a jobs strategy," Oregonlive.com, February 13, 2010.



*The Montana two-year college system developed a program called “artrepreneurship” in its arts and crafts program at Great Falls that emphasizes the business side of the arts. An evaluation of the first class of completers found on average a 152 percent increase in sales, 309 percent increase in out-of-state sales, and four new enterprises started.*

- Assist existing state programs and resources, such as the Small Business Development Centers and WIN Job Centers, to better understand and assist creative enterprises, with a special effort to target the development and growth of creative enterprises by underserved populations.

*In Kentucky, the state agricultural extension service has an extension agent in the poor, eastern-most and coal dependent part of Appalachia dedicated to working with artisans and artists and the University of Massachusetts-Amherst has an Arts Extension Service that has helped connect communities to the arts and has offered workshops and training for more than 30 years, now including a creative economy training program. <sup>7</sup>*

## **Strategy B: Support branding and marketing of the state's creative places, products and assets.**

- Work together across agencies to identify and communicate the state's creative brand, i.e., “Mississippi's Creative Spirit.”

*The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) Tourism Division contracted with North Star Destination Strategies to determine and define the state's true, unique and relevant brand position that will help the state stand out in the tourism marketplace. North Star conducted more than a dozen pieces of research to identify what differentiates Mississippi from its competitors. The result? Mississippi is the most southern of all states and the mother of southern culture - yesterday, today and tomorrow. From this, Mississippi's brand was created, “Find Your True South.”*

*Many places have branded their creative products, such as Kentucky Crafted, Native Handicraft from Alaska and Made in Montana. Fewer have successfully used creativity to brand a place, although Glasgow, Scotland calls itself the “Creative City” and the Berkshires in western Massachusetts use “Berkshire Creative: Creativity Lives Here” as a regional brand.*

- Build the state's artist's roster, develop a more comprehensive directory of the larger range of creative enterprises that includes, for instance, lists of writers, designers, architects, interior designers, music companies, animators, and graphic artists. Use the roster to reach broader and more distant markets for the state's creative products.

*The Georgia Tourism Foundation supports a web site called Georgia's Creative Economies that promotes Georgia people, places, and made and grown things. It can be searched by region, category, and subcategory. <sup>8</sup>*

*The Milwaukee Cultural Council is developing a comprehensive on-line database for all of the people and companies that are part of the creative economy in southeast Wisconsin as part of its creative economy initiative.*

- Consider producing a Mississippi Roots Music show that celebrates being the birthplace of America's music.

*The Boston Pops has an American Idol style competition called POPSearch. Held in the summer, it plays to a live audience of almost half a million and millions more on television. In 2004, the winner was a van driver for special needs children. <sup>9</sup>*

## **Strategy C: Help artists find new full-time employment that utilizes their talent.**

- Support the development of an artist's employment service, either through the Arts Commission or the Mississippi Department of Employment Security.

*In Southeast Wisconsin, the Kohler Corporation has an on-going Artists in Residency program that leads to its arts edition products. The company also has an art gallery. In addition, one of the hotels in downtown Milwaukee created a similar Artist-in-Residency program in which a local artist worked on his paintings in the lobby of the hotel. The program has elevated the visibility of the arts and artists and made the lobby of the hotel more attractive.*

*Northern Michigan University hosts an “Art & Design - Career & Employment - Art Jobs” designed to provide access to numerous art/design career and employment internet resources. Individuals can search for opportunities across the entire US and even globally.*

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.artsextensionservice.org>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.gamadegagrownproducts.org/index.php>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.myspace.com/popsearch>



### GOAL III

#### Help communities preserve and generate added value from the state's rich cultural and historic heritage.

The history and architecture of a place influence how people feel about their communities and the decisions people make of where they want to live. This, in turn, influences where companies want to do business. If a place is distinctive enough, values, and invests in that uniqueness, cultural heritage can generate wealth in its own right.

Mississippi represents a prime example of this phenomenon. The state's cultural heritage, particularly as demonstrated by its literature, music, and architecture, is a strong, internationally recognized brand. Literature is epitomized by Oxford, music by Clarksdale, and architecture by Natchez. But all three art forms are present in force in many other places across the state. For example, in 2008 Columbus was named one of twelve national distinctive destinations by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

If the heritage of a place can be preserved in the face of the growth pressures brought on by development, that brand can be used to promote all aspects of Mississippi's creative economy. Many other communities have some of these same attributes, but they are unrecognized or underappreciated. Taylor, for example, has been recognized as being "quintessential Mississippi [where] tourists come for photos."<sup>10</sup>

Mississippi should focus on those things which are authentically part of our Mississippi culture:

- Arts
- Literature
- Music
- Architecture
- Food
- Sacred places
- Civil War and Civil Rights

The state should help communities identify their assets; provide communities a template and best practices.

#### Strategy A: Encourage investment in and marketing of the state's cultural heritage in more communities.

- Help each community to inventory and assess the economic value of its cultural and historical assets including its architecture. Although Mississippi has a strong program for preserving and registering historic places, this step would look for a unifying theme that is distinctive and defining and tie it to development efforts.

*In Mineral Point, Wisconsin, the town used its early mining history to create the historic Shake Rag Alley. The nine buildings attract students in the arts and crafts to classes, and a nearby artists' community is home to 17 art galleries within a few blocks of Shake Rag Alley.<sup>11</sup>*

- Make better use of the state's strong investment in heritage sites and locations by linking them to the creative economy and the arts community.

*The city of Charleston, South Carolina has worked to establish itself as a center of historic preservation. This includes the location of the American College of Building Arts, which offers degrees in historic preservation, and Clemson University's Graduate Program in Historic Preservation.*

#### Strategy B: Involve the media, new and old, in promoting all of Mississippi's cultural assets. For example, promote literature and strengthening the market for literary products.

- Create a year-round arts colony with an emphasis on writers and composers somewhere in the state. The prestigious Mississippi Art Colony for painters is now more than 60 years old, and a similar "camp" for writers would further enhance Mississippi's brand as a literary cluster.

*In Arkansas the Writers Colony at Dairy Hollow in Eureka Springs, renamed the Communications Arts Institute, gives about 50 writers each year a place to work free from distractions and in a community of people with similar interests with whom they share ideas and receive constructive feedback. Typically, writers—now extended to songwriters*

<sup>10</sup> Christine Schultz, "You could say that some people's careers find them," Southwest Airlines Spirit Magazine, May 2010.

<sup>11</sup> <http://shakeragalley.com>



*and composers in the new “composers’ cottage”—spend between two weeks and three months, but usually about a month in residency.* <sup>12</sup>

*The Jentel and Ucross year-round art colonies in Sheridan, Wyoming, combine the literary and visual arts. The residents describe their work at regular community meetings and Ucross has a stage that puts on musical and literary events for the community.* <sup>13</sup>

## **Strategy C: Further promote the image of Mississippi as a “global literary capital.”**

- Suggest that Oxford apply to UNESCO for Oxford to be designated a “City of Literature.” This designation will attract international attention to a community that is so rich in literary excellence.

*The Southern Literary Trail is a collaboration of eighteen towns from Natchez, Mississippi to Savannah, Georgia that celebrate internationally renowned writers and playwrights who were inspired by uniquely southern places. The Trail maps visitors travel to a region that is home to great writers and timeless stories. The Mississippi trail features such writers as Tennessee Williams, Eudora Welty, Shelby Foote, Margaret Walker Alexander, Richard Wright and William Faulkner. The Mississippi Development Authority is currently developing a Mississippi literary trail modeled after similar trails such as the Blues Heritage Trail, tamale trail and agri-tourism trail.*

*Mississippi communities host a number of literary festivals and events around the state such as the Tennessee Williams festival in Clarksdale, the Natchez Literary and Film festival and the Oxford Conference of the Book.*

## **GOAL IV: Enhance the competitiveness of the state’s business and industry through increased use of art and design.**

Throughout the 1980’s and 1990’s, Mississippi successfully helped its industries develop or adopt the new technologies they needed to compete, investing in R&D and in technical assistance. Now that those process technologies are readily available and have been adopted in places with much lower operating costs, the competitive advantage has disappeared. The challenge for the 21st century will be to adopt innovations driven by the user

and the market, not just R&D, and to make similar investments in helping companies use creativity and design to distinguish and establish new products in the market and new markets. During the course of this report, we learned that while manufacturers in the state recognize the value of consumer-driven design and innovation to their success, they do not yet use it to their fullest advantage.

## **Strategy A: Help manufacturers understand the importance of creativity and value of design as a competitive advantage.**

- Create a Creative Economy Toolkit, a resource for business focusing on the relationship between creativity and economic growth and how they combine to create value and opportunity.
- Recommend that the Mississippi Manufacturers Association establish a council on manufacturing design or a design association within the organization for both education and application of design among manufacturers.

*The Center for Design Innovation in North Carolina’s Piedmont region brings in top designers to meet with local businesses and is working on forming a design council. It hosts an annual Design, Art, & Technology Symposium and brings in frequent internationally known speakers to give workshops.* <sup>14</sup>

*Winzelear Gear in Chicago, which has been making gears for industry for more than a century, advertises its gears as an art form and the company has a partnership with the School of the Art Institute with fashion designers experimenting with incorporating plastic gears into unique garments and accessories.* <sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.writerscolony.org>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.ucrossfoundation.org/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.centerfordesigninnovation.org/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.winzelergear.com/>



## Strategy B: Help business and industry connect to design resources and expand design capabilities.

- Include product design support among the services of the state's Manufacturing Extension Partnership.

*The Manufacturing Extension Partnership, which was originally formed to help small and mid-sized manufacturers learn about and adopt newer production technologies, is well positioned to extend its services to helping small and mid-sized firms identify, develop, and use their design competencies and pursue user-driven innovations.*

- Provide state tax credits for investments in design capabilities similar to the state's Five Year R&D Skills tax credit. Look at incentives similar to those used in technology businesses.

*Such credits have existed for many years for science-based research but have not been applied to user-driven, design oriented development. The legislation refers to scientists, engineers, and research professionals. Similar tax credits could be given for positions in design.*

## Strategy C: Facilitate and support networking among creative people and companies

- Offer incentives in existing incentive or grant programs for proposals by three or more firms operating as "flexible design networks" to encourage sharing design capacities similar to those given by some 20-30 states in the 1990s for "flexible manufacturing networks" to promote industrial modernization in small and mid-sized manufacturers.

*USNet was a 15-state program of Regional Technology Strategies, Inc. supported by NIST to train economic development officials and business leaders in collaborative approaches to innovation, marketing, and learning.*

- Encourage and support cross-discipline associations of creative people that mix and blend creative ideas from different perspectives and across different ages and cultures and propagate creativity.

*Oregon Creative Industries was formed in 2008 as a non-profit association to provide a way for creative people, whether artists, film makers, designers, and architects, to intermingle, exchange ideas, and make deals.<sup>16</sup>*

## GOAL V: Enhance the support and networking infrastructure for creative talent across the state.

Creative people tend to be heavy users of digital social networking but not necessarily joiners of associations that bring people together face to face. Yet the evidence is that younger creative people, in particular, seek places where they can meet in person, socialize, share ideas, and build different kinds of relationships than they can on Facebook. Across all age groups, creative people in Mississippi expressed a desire for more opportunities for socializing and networking than is currently available.

## Strategy A: Promote cross-disciplinary creative networking.

- Support local initiatives which encourage more networking opportunities and activities, particularly those that involve young creative people.

*Berkshire Spark is a networking activity of Berkshire Creative. It occurs monthly at a different locations (e.g. museums, art galleries, banks, etc.). The events bring together several hundred people (artists, cultural organizations and for-profit businesses) to meet and explore new ways of collaborating and partnering. In Milwaukee, Spreenkler Creative is a social networking site for creative people and students that informs them about events, internships and job opportunities, holds events, and provides a blogging site.<sup>17</sup> It also has a "meetup" page for young talent.*

<sup>16</sup> <http://blog.oregoncreative.org/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://spreenkler.com/>.



## Strategy B: Expand knowledge of, and familiarity with, existing arts and culture within the private sector.

- Promote the value of incorporating and displaying art and music in private and public facilities and grounds, such as at hospitals, offices, casinos, and manufacturing plants.

*Duke hospital in Durham, North Carolina, has on-going artists in residence —artists, craftsmen, musicians, and writers—all supported by North Carolina Arts Council.<sup>18</sup>*

*In Sheridan, Wyoming, establishments ranging from the local Holiday Inn to Arby's restaurant feature the work of local artists on their walls.*

- Continue to assist transactions between artists, designers, and businesses

*In New York City, a firm called Art Assets serves as a broker between artists and businesses that want to either buy or rent local art work. "Art has the power to transform space. Art Assets harnesses that power to communicate the vision and philosophy of each client to imbue their space with a special sense of value and sophistication"<sup>19</sup>*

## GOAL VI: Build Capacity to grow & retain Creative Talent Living and Working in Mississippi

For the fastest growing sectors of the economy, a surplus work force is no longer a sufficient asset to attract investment. Companies depend on talent, generally, but not always, as measured by levels of education, and many firms make their investment decisions based on where that talent already resides or is willing to move. Mississippi should first grow its talent by expanding educational programs for the creative sectors. Second, it should work to retain and recruit creative and talented people by providing environments with the amenities they seek. There is growing evidence that a significant portion of the talent population is looking outside the metropolitan areas for places that have more space, lower costs, and less traffic.<sup>20</sup>

- Create a life-long learning experience;
- Encourage the state to adopt creative strategies in education

## Strategy A: Expand and strengthen post secondary degree programs in creative fields of study.

- Expand the culinary arts programs at community colleges, include artistic content, and offer international internships.

*Tampere College in Finland formed a network of community colleges, which includes U.S. colleges, to seamlessly combine the business side of a restaurant with interior design, service, menu, image, and pricing principles. During 4-6 week placements abroad students learn these skills and develop new catering products in teams of three that include a caterer, chef and baker.*

- Establish a new two-year associate of applied science degree program in film/video/music production and convert the exiting one-year pre-architecture program to a two-year program with minors in historic restoration and community design.

*Guilford Technical Community College in Jamestown, North Carolina established the Larry Gatlin Entertainment Technology Center. It offers one and two-year degree programs and continuing education in a range of employment and freelance opportunities in all technical aspects of the industry.*

- Expand programs in design disciplines at the state's four-year colleges and universities and integrate the arts and design into science, engineering, and business.

*The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Engineering supports research projects that involve three engineers and one artist to encourage creative solutions.*

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.ncartsforhealth.org/CulturalServ.htm>

<sup>19</sup> <http://artassets.com>

<sup>20</sup> "In Praise of Boise: Why space really is the final frontier in the Internet age," The Economist, May 13, 2010.



## Strategy B: Promote the retention of graduates and the return of former graduates of creative degree programs in Mississippi.

- Use social networks to maintain connections among graduates who stay or leave and organize creative alumni groups in major cities.
- Consider creating a “MS Monster.com-type” employment listing

*Social networking now makes it easier for graduates who spread out across the country to stay in touch with each other and their roots. By giving some structure to Mississippi-based networks of creatives, and providing ways to stay abreast of opportunities and events back home, some of those who leave may choose to come back.*

## Strategy C: Use creative career programs to increase school retention rates in Mississippi

- Establish a “middle college,” that combines grades 11 and 12 with two years of postsecondary education, that focuses on art, design, and multimedia. Such schools, located on community college campuses and heavily supported by the Gates Foundation, have proven to increase attendance and completion rates among underserved populations.

*A middle college that emphasizes creative career paths can both attract non-traditional learners and develop the state's talent base.*

- Offer more curricula choices in creative fields such as music, film, and digital arts in ways that produce basic skill competencies as well as offer career opportunities.

*The Arkansas Science & Technology Authority established the EAST initiative (Environmental and Spatial Technology) to use digital arts media to facilitate the teaching of math and science. The program includes My Community, where students make documentary films about their communities and culture.*

- Establish new career and technical education secondary school programs in digital fields including gaming and animation.

*McKinley Technical High School in Washington, DC, which serves a low-income minority population and utilizes creative endeavors such as broadcasting, gaming, and web design to produce the city's highest level of STEM skills. The school, with federal grants, started an Institute of Urban Game Design.*

*The Mississippi Alliance for Arts Education received a grant from the Dana Foundation to provide training to Mississippi artists interested in working with teachers in school settings so that students may benefit from authentic experiences in specific art forms and to make cross-curricular connections among the arts and other core subjects. The goal of the workshops is to increase the number of artists included in the Mississippi Arts Commission's Teaching Artist Roster. Schools that engage artists routinely consult this roster for a description of an artist's skills and a recommendation of the quality of his/her work in the arts and in education.*