



**OZARK  
ARTISAN  
INNOVATION  
HUB**



# **Ozark Artisan Innovation Hub Summary of Research Findings as of March 2018**

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Summary of what we have learned so far from the research, and what work is still in progress

- About the project
- Research Findings
  - Case Studies
  - Feasibility Study Findings
- Work in Progress

# Ozark Artisan Innovation Hub – Scope of Research

Helping local artisans earn a better living and strengthening the region

## Concepts being explored:



### SHARED MAKERSPACES

*Create and Collaborate*

- ✓ Shared facilities and equipment
- ✓ Professional development
- ✓ Creative resource network



### MARKETING AND SALES

*Global Distribution*

- ✓ Generate demand for products
- ✓ Store sales and online marketplace
- ✓ Expand “Made in Rural America” initiative



### BUSINESS INCUBATOR

*Invest and Innovate*

- ✓ Connect entrepreneurs
- ✓ Small business counseling
- ✓ Shared office and equipment
- ✓ Shared Accounting, Legal and Marketing services

# Artisan Resource Network: The People

Since January 2017, we have built a network of 419 people (and counting) interested in an Ozark Artisan Innovation Hub.

Community Workshops

Community Outreach

Resource Network



**70**  
Artisans

**+**

**144**  
More Artisans

**=**

**214**  
Artisans



**84**  
Supporters

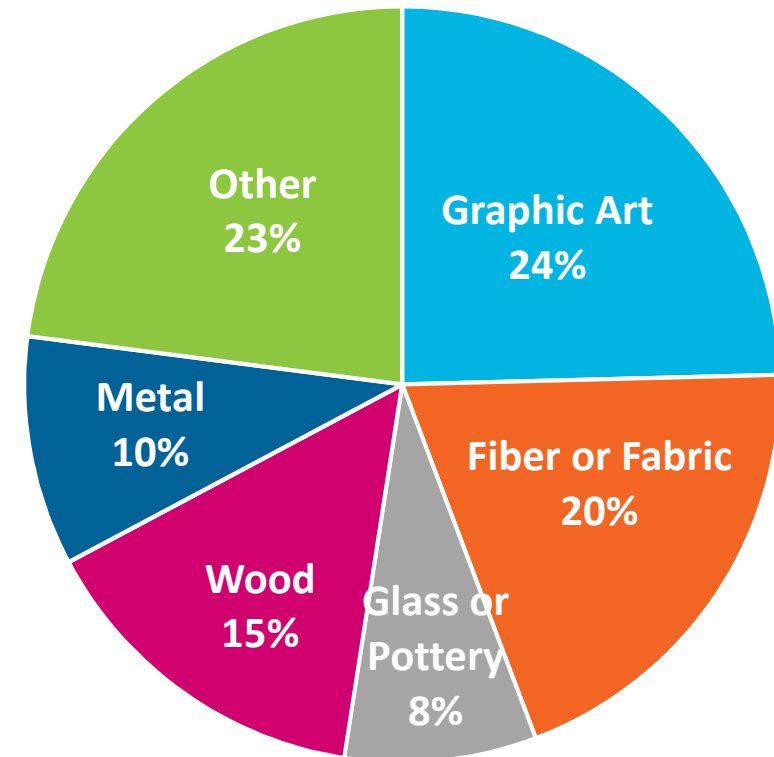
**+**

**121**  
More Supporters

**=**

**205**  
Supporters

**Ozark Artisans:  
What They Make**



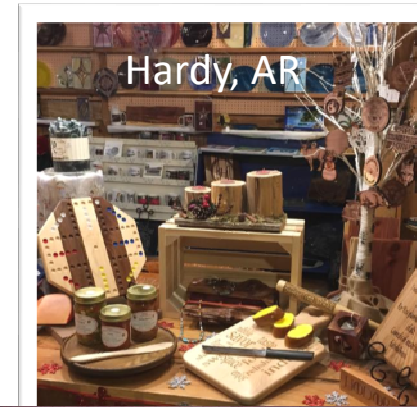
# Artisan Resource Network: Cultural and Regional Assets

We mapped assets across the region available to support artisans

## Sampling of Cultural and Regional Assets



- Blacksmith Shops
- Woodworking Makerspaces
- Craft Malls and Cultural Centers
- Co-working Space and Business Incubators



Hardy, AR



Hardy, Arkansas

<http://www.ozarkclassiccraftsmall.com/>



**ECHO BLUFF**  
STATE PARK

Shannon County, MO



Doniphan, Missouri



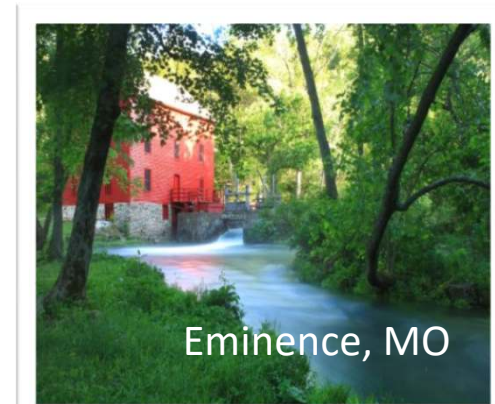
Van Buren, MO



West Plains, MO



Pocahontas, AR



Eminence, MO

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# Research

Learning from what others have done before



**Paducah, KY** - Southern Arts and Cultural Center - UNESCO Creative City  
Population: 25,024

## Public Arts and Education

- Artists relocation program (properties available for \$1)
- Lower Arts District, farmers market, several public arts centers
- Symphony orchestra
- Paducah School of Arts and Design
- Artist in residency program



## Sales and Marketing

- Local art galleries
- Retail stores and eateries
- Festivals and markets

## Entrepreneurship Support

- Local grants & tax incentives for artists
- Arts innovation hub (in development)

Built entire economic sector around artists, craftspeople, performing artists, writers and culture they create



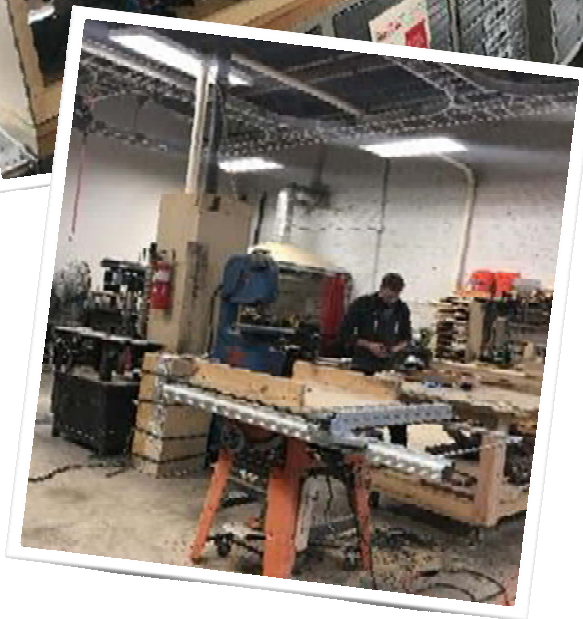
# Research

Learning from what others have done before



## Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub

North Little Rock, AR - Argenta Arts District



### Shared Makerspaces

- Temporary Gallery Space
- Digital Arts Studio
- Ceramics Studio
- Screen Printing Studio
- Design space w/ print making tools
- 3D and Laser Printers
- Carpentry Shop
- Presentation Equipment
- STEAM computer lab
- Metal Shop

### Educational Programs for All Ages



### Entrepreneurial Center

- Shared equipment and technology
- Meeting space
- Business center
- 24 hour availability to members
- Professional Development

Focus on education for artistic and economic development. Model for hubs across country.





# Research

Learning from what others have done before

## Thrive - Helena, AR

Population: 12,282

### Education and Community

- Partnership with Phillips Community College
- Free community workshops
- Artists in residency

### Shared Makerspace

- Collaborative product design studio

### Sales and Marketing

- Monthly Cherry Street Fair

Revitalized downtown and boosted local economy through arts and entrepreneurship support



### Entrepreneurship Support

- Business incubator with marketing and branding services
- “Helena Start-Up” helped start 18 new businesses



## Spring River Innovation Hub - Cherokee Village, AR

Population: 4,671

### Entrepreneurship Support

- Business incubator with marketing and branding services
- Shared Space and technology

### Shared Makerspace

- In talks to create satellite makerspace in Hardy, AR

Currently in development



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# Key findings from the feasibility study



SOUTHEAST MISSOURI  
STATE UNIVERSITY · 1873



## What questions did we answer?

- Is there enough outside demand for Ozark arts and crafts?
- Are there enough artisans to meet market demand?
- What are artisans' biggest unmet needs?
- What might an Ozark Artisan Innovation Hub look like?

# Is there enough outside demand for Ozark arts and crafts?

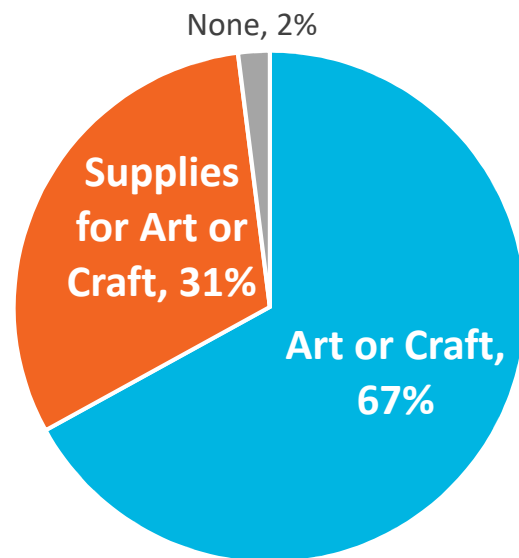
Yes. River enthusiasts with a connection to the area’s scenic rivers are interested in purchasing Ozark art and craft products.

## River enthusiast profile

45% have incomes over \$75,000

80% visit scenic rivers at least once per year

### Recent Purchases



**River Enthusiasts spend more per item AND regularly buy online**

- 37% purchased online
- 66% spend over \$20 per item
- 25% spend over \$40 per item

## Quotes from the survey

“I love shopping for artistic items as gifts”

“Having an online marketplace for Eastern Ozarks sellers would get people to see more of the artisans work. I could see the work of the person I met and also other artisans from the area”

“We need a fiber artists guild in this area”

“Need an online sales portal”

“I love this idea!”

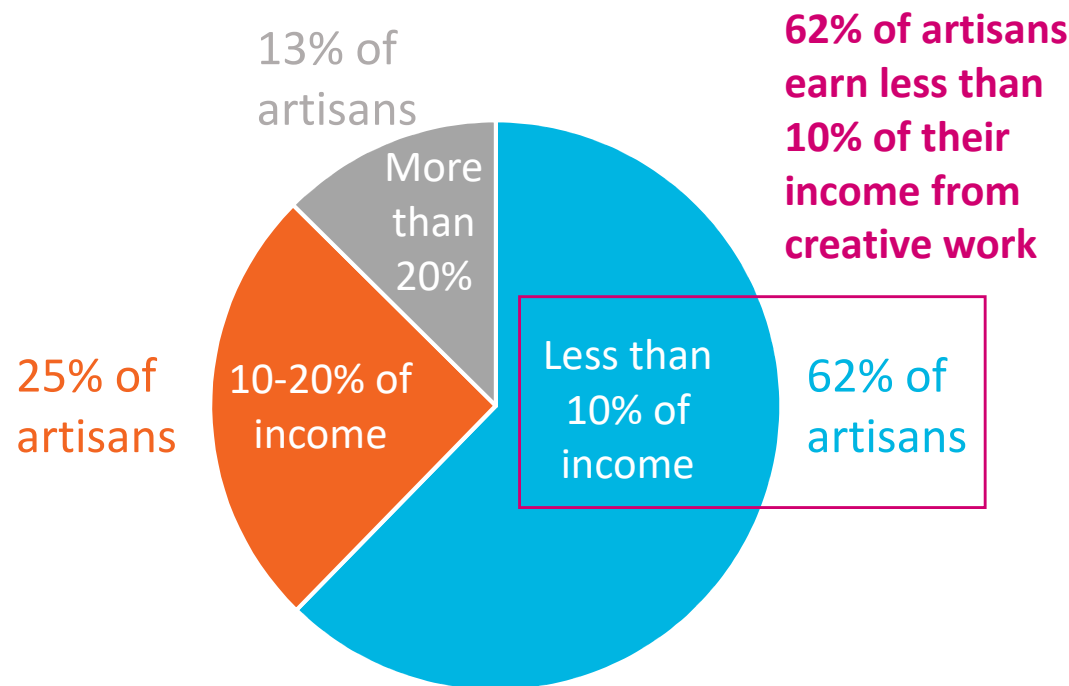
# Are there enough artisans to meet market demand?

Yes. There are enough artisans. They need to get online to reach a broader market for their unique, handmade products.

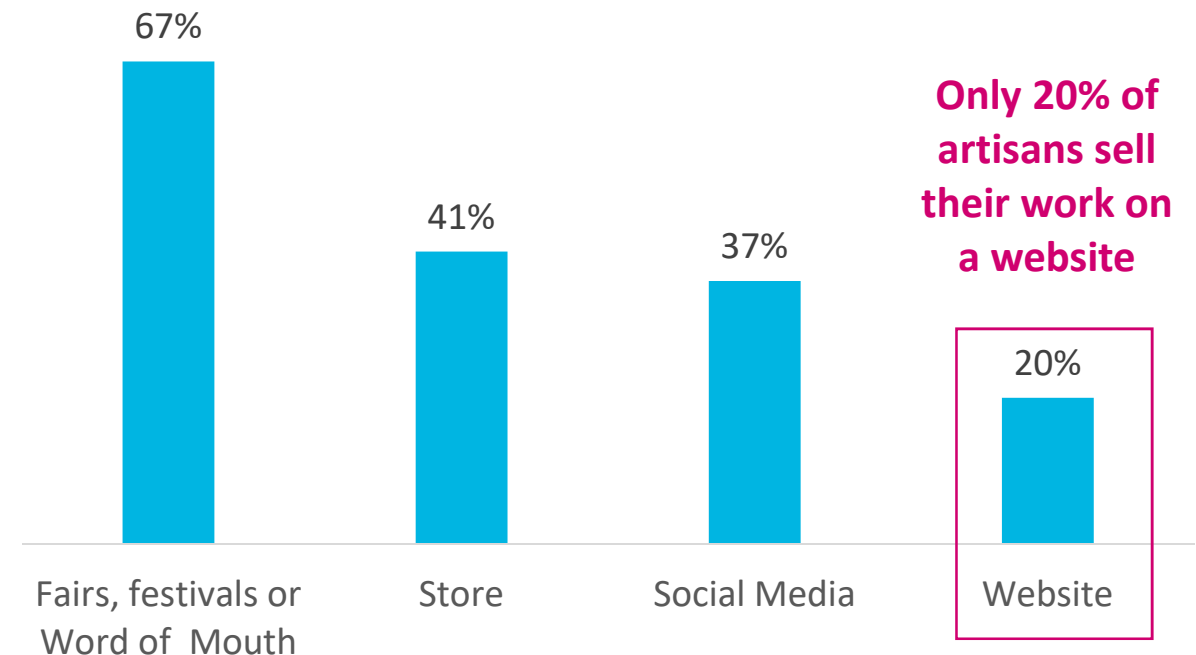
The majority of artisans earn less than 10% of their household income through their creative work.

The majority of artisans sell their work locally. Only 20% use an online store.

How much of your household income comes from your creative work?



Where do artisans market and sell their work?



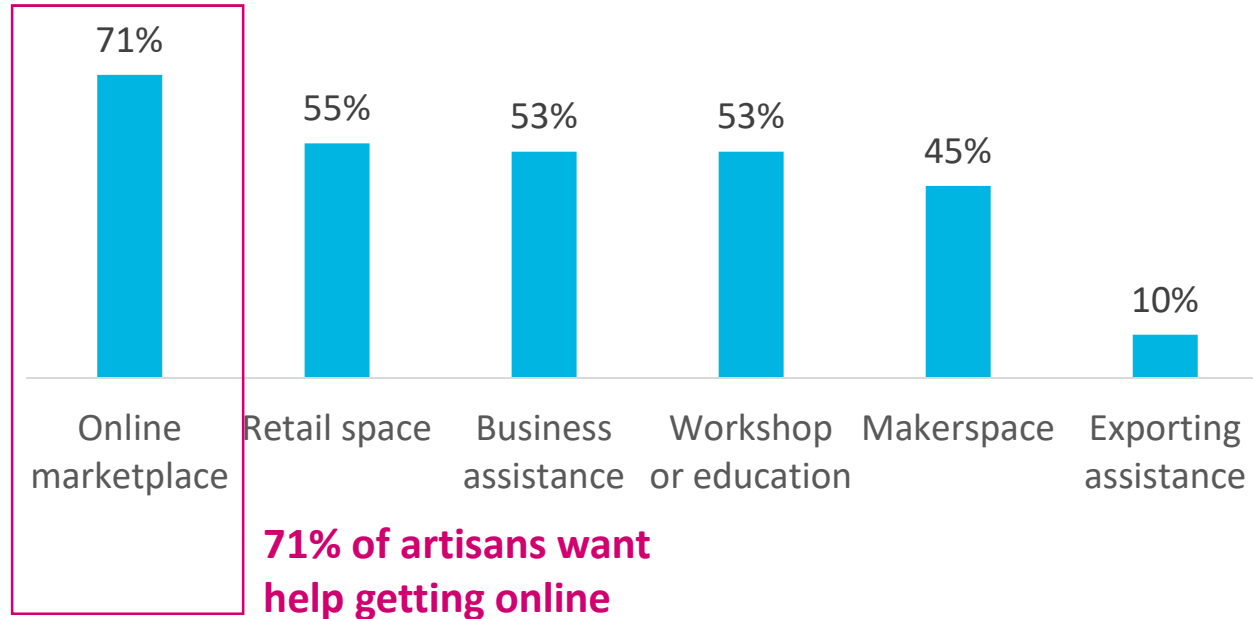
# What are Ozark artisan's biggest unmet needs?

Although most have the physical space to create, artisans need sales, marketing and business assistance.

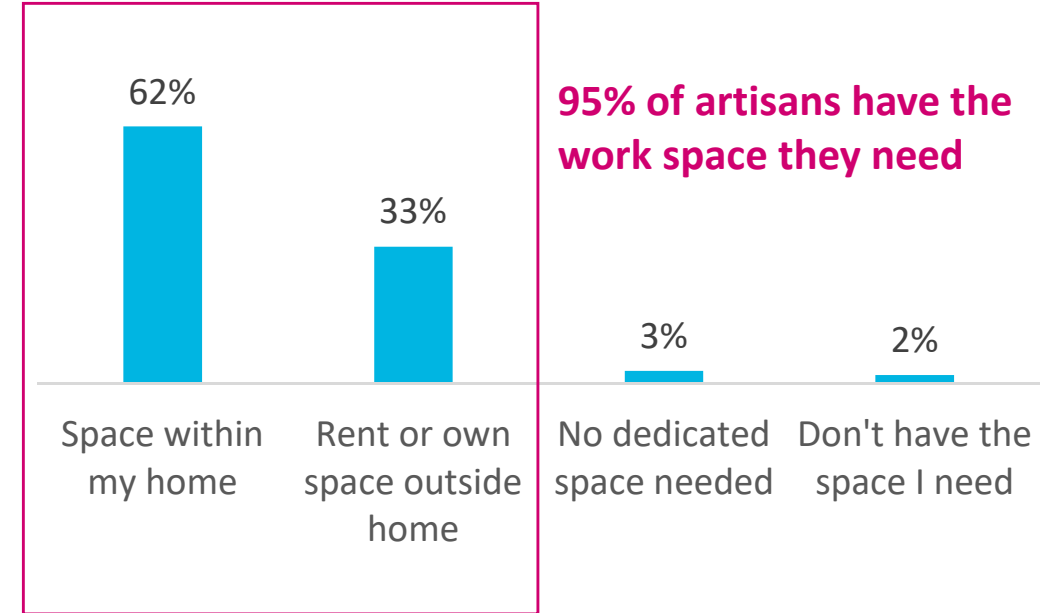
Most artisans want help getting online. Less than half would use shared makerspace, if it were available.

Most artisans have the space they need to work, either at home or outside the home.

**Amenities artisans would use, if available**



**Current work space situation**



# What might an Ozark Artisan Innovation Hub look like (1/2)?



A regional community of artisans, entrepreneurs, cultural assets and resources, connected to each other through a virtual network.

## 1. Build a Regional Community

- **Do not** rely on a single physical location to serve the entire region
  - 43% of artisans would *not* drive more than 20 miles for amenities
- **Do** build a virtual network connecting existing assets and resources



## Keys to Success

“Simulcast” meetings and educational workshops so no one has to drive more than 20 minutes to participate

Connect cultural assets across communities with audio and video capabilities

# What might an Ozark Artisan Innovation Hub look like (2/2)?



Shared resources to market Ozark artisans and products, festivals, heritage traditions and cultural experiences to outside audiences.

## 2. Marketing and Sales Support

- **Do not** jump too quickly into a centrally managed online store
  - High start up costs for technology, inventory and staffing
  - Need average price \$75 per item to sustain online store (Etsy avg. is \$25)
- **Do** operate centralized digital marketing and event promotion for the region (website, social media)



## Keys to Success

Test and learn which items are most popular, *then* create a regional online store



Promote “Ozark life” to drive traffic to existing sales outlets (festivals, shops, Etsy)



# Key findings from the research study\*

## Summary of Findings



SOUTHEAST MISSOURI  
STATE UNIVERSITY · 1873



1. **There is enough market demand** for Ozark arts and crafts. Start by selling more to “River Enthusiasts” when they come to town.
2. **There are enough artisans** in the region to meet market demand. They need to get online to reach a broader market.
3. **Artisans need sales, marketing and business assistance**...including help getting online. They have enough physical space to create.
4. **An Ozark Artisan Innovation Hub should:**
  - Use technology to **connect and share regional assets and resources**, rather than operating out of a single physical location. Provide **educational opportunities** and help artisans **collaborate**.
  - Provide **digital marketing and sales** support, starting with “**Ozark life**” branding to promote existing stores and festivals. Launch an **online store** *after* learning what sells.

\*Full report available for download at [OzarkVitality.com](https://OzarkVitality.com)

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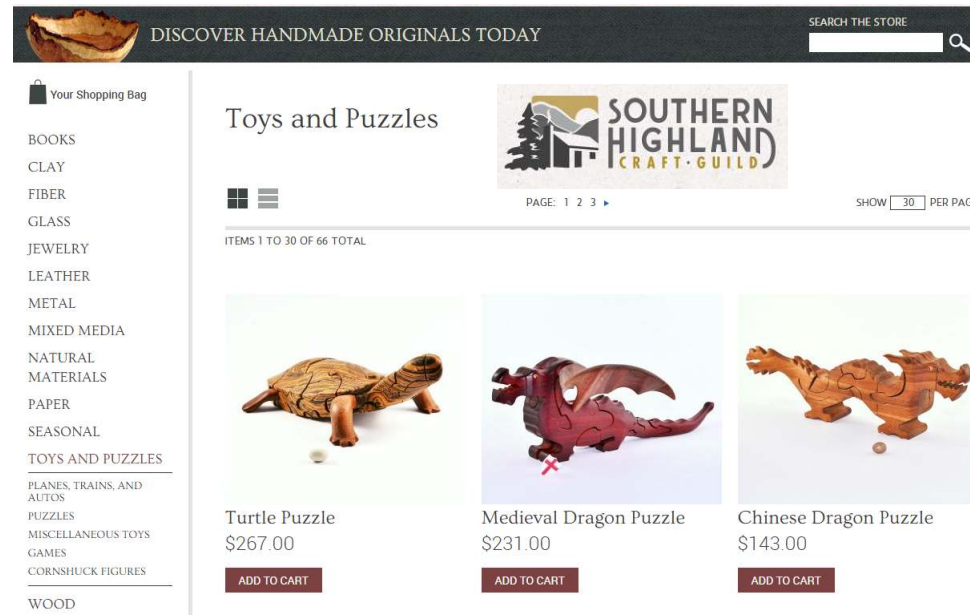
# The Research Continues: Marketing and Sales

## What can we learn from Southern Highland's experience in Appalachia?

### Case Study: Southern Highland Craft Guild (est. 1930) - Asheville, NC

#### Sales and Marketing

- \$1.7 million in sales per year (Craft Guild inventory)
- Folk art centers that bring in 250,000 visitors per year
- Retail stores and galleries
- SouthernHighlandGuild.org
- Bi-Annual Craft Fairs

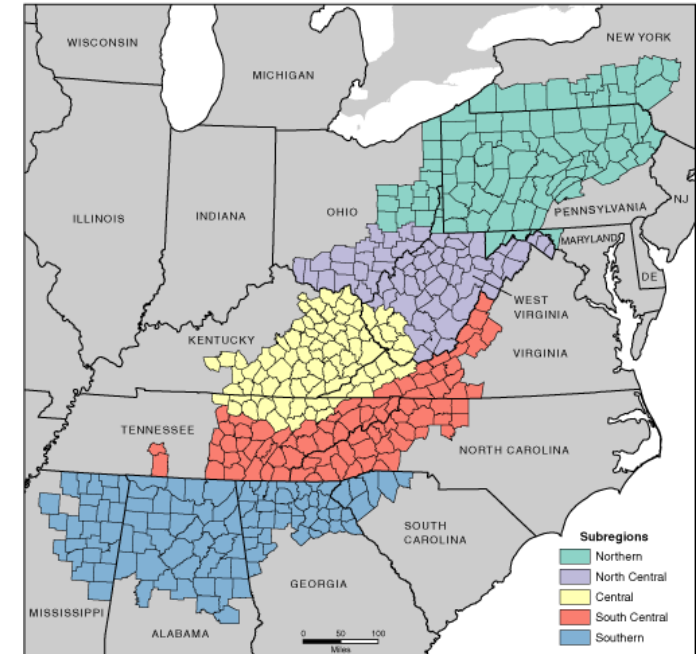


#### Creative Community

- Network of makers
  - Collaborative projects
  - Research on techniques
  - Marketing experience
- Connections with 8 regional Education Centers for continuing education
- Scholarship opportunities for craft-related travel and study

#### Membership

- 293 qualifying counties in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia
- Only about 20% of applicants make it through the juried selection process
- 50-75% working artisans; 25-50% hobbyists



Map by: Appalachian Regional Commission, November 2009.

Network of over 900 artists and craftspeople selling a variety of products including graphic art, jewelry, pottery, fiber, wood, leather, and metal works

# The Research Continues: Marketing and Sales



Can high quality digital “Ozark lifestyle” content increase traffic to existing artisan sales outlets and demand for artisan products?

## Partnering with Ozark filmmaker to develop short documentary series: My Ozarks

- Working to generate interest and compassion for the Ozarks, its unique experiences and people, and the products produced by its people
- Testing our ability, through digital media, to increase tourism to events and stores where artisan products will be offered for sale in 2018
- Guiding principles for digital content
  - Clear and simple messages
  - Memorable, beautiful imagery and visual storytelling
  - Personal and emotional stories that bring to life Ozark culture, craft and traditions

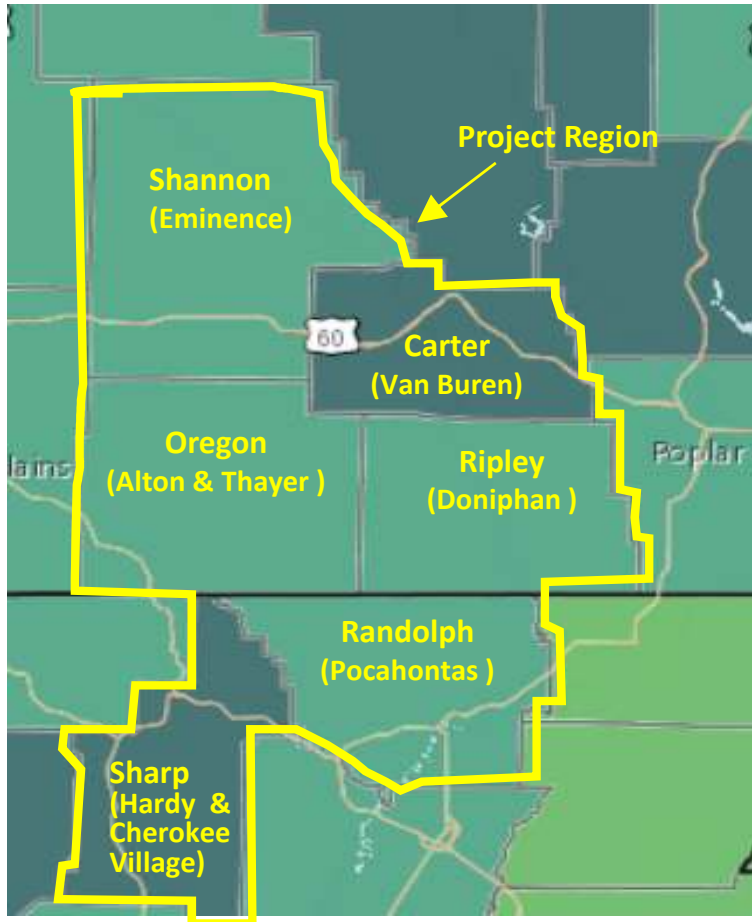


# The Research Continues: Maker Support

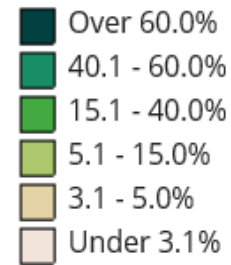
Could a niche market be developed for Ozark artisan specialty wood?

Preliminary report\* from MU Extension indicated an opportunity to create a new market for Ozark artisan specialty woods and wood products

Tree Canopy in the Project Region



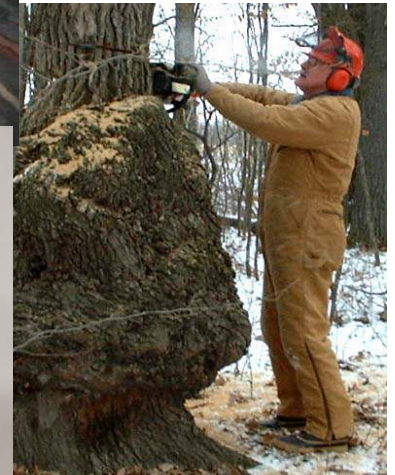
Area in Tree Canopy, Percentage by County, USGS NLCD 2011



Oak Burl \$29.95 (Ebay)



## BURLS



Pin Oak Slab  
\$650



## SLABS

Conference Table \$4000



## SHORT LEAF PINE

Inexpensive, tight ring growth in the Ozarks

