

# A UNESCO CREATIVE CITY

We think the world *of* Paducah.  
Now the world will think of us!



*In 2013 Paducah, KY was designated as the world's seventh Creative City of Crafts & Folk Art by the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization*

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2014





Photos by Brad Rankin  
Photography



**W**hen a group of civic leaders gathered in 1987 to visualize what downtown could be in 20 years, their plans were grand, but today, the reality of Paducah's renaissance has surpassed expectations. The list of national awards and accolades over the past five years alone is impressive. The National Trust for Historic Preservation awarded Paducah the Great American Main Street award in 2010 and chose it as one of the 2011 Dozen Distinctive Destinations. The list continued to grow as the Chamber of Commerce received the 2011 Chamber of the Year award and West Kentucky Community and Technical College was named one of the Top Five Community Colleges in America by Aspen Institute. It seemed Paducah was on a roll, but the Paducah Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) had their eyes on another prize as 2011 came to a close—the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Creative Cities Network.

Since the beginning of this millennium Paducah has built upon the cultural resources of the community. In fact, Paducah garnered the Cultural District Certification by the Kentucky Arts Council in February 2012. "Though Paducah boasts many state and national awards, the Creative Cities Network designation is one of international significance and rests on the merit of assets, events and activities that have been transpiring here for years," said Mary Hammond, Executive Director of the Paducah Convention & Visitors Bureau.

*"The application process was a golden opportunity to research and document the amazing influence Paducah's quilting and diverse arts community has made on a global platform."*

After an extended application process coupled with an organization restructuring period, on November 21, 2013, the dream was realized and the announcement made that UNESCO had designated Paducah, Kentucky, the world's seventh City of Crafts and Folk Art, making it a member of the Creative Cities Network.

## INITIAL ENCOUNTER WITH UNESCO & THE CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK

The Paducah CVB first learned about the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in 2008, four years after the program's launch, at an International Conference on Creative Tourism in Santa Fe, NM. The event was organized by the City of Santa Fe (UNESCO City of Crafts and Folk Art) in collaboration with the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. The goal of the conference was to teach participants how to develop creative tourism

as an economic asset in their home communities.

In September 2008, Rosemarie Steele, former Marketing Director at the

"This designation is a tremendous honor for Paducah and really the entire state and will focus worldwide attention on the incredible cultural richness of Paducah and in turn Kentucky. We are so proud of Paducah."

—Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet Secretary Bob Stewart

# 2014 ANNUAL FESTIVALS

## SPRING

**MID-APRIL** (Depending on the blooming of the dogwoods)  
Dogwood Trail Celebration - 50th Anniversary!  
Historic Downtown, LowerTown & beautiful residential areas

## APRIL 23-26

American Quilter's Society  
QuiltWeek® - 30 Year  
Anniversary Celebration  
Paducah Expo & Convention  
Center & Downtown venues

## MAY 16-17

LowerTown Art & Music Festival  
LowerTown Arts District

## SUMMER

### JUNE 6-7

Riverfront Rod Run  
Historic Downtown

### JUNE 20-JULY 20

Live Harness Racing  
Bluegrass Downs

### JUNE 23-28

McCracken County Fair  
Carson Park

From [www.paducah.travel/visitors/calendar-of-events/festivals-annual-events](http://www.paducah.travel/visitors/calendar-of-events/festivals-annual-events)



CVB, attended the conference with Robin Malpass, the CVB's marketing consultant, along with Jessica Perkins and Monica Bilak, former staff members of Paducah Renaissance Alliance. The international gathering was labeled a "global conversation" and brought together founders of the emerging creative tourism movement with leaders of creative industries.

"The Paducah team spent their mornings in conversational sessions with industry leaders, while afternoons were reserved for engaging in hands-on activities that characterized Santa Fe's culture and exemplified exactly how creative tourism is implemented on a local level," said Steele.

It was clear that creative tourism, an offshoot of cultural tourism, was gaining momentum and had the potential to bring a desirable economic benefit to the destination as well as many of its individual artists. Following the conference, the CVB team conducted a survey of hands-on creative workshops already being offered in Paducah. "The results were illuminating," said Steele. "Through classes offered by the American Quilter's Society, multi-day workshops at the National Quilt Museum by internationally acclaimed instructors, and a myriad of hands-on experiences available throughout the Historic Downtown and Lower Town Arts District, more than 6,000 people come to Paducah each year from all areas of the world to learn, share, or experience a creative activity or event."

In addition to having the creative tourism product in place,



Paducah's international audience was already established. Recent figures show that the National Quilt Museum draws visitors from all 50 states and more than 50 countries. The American Quilter's Society (AQS) has been promoting the accomplishments of contemporary quilters on a national and international scale since its inception in 1984. Bonnie Browning, AQS Executive Show Director, has judged quilt contests and taught workshops in Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, Switzerland, and Turkey. Yeiser Art Center, which has been presenting the juried Fantastic Fibers exhibit for the past 27 years, boasts a surprising number of entries by international artists for their contest exhibits. A group of Lower Town artists, known as the Paducah Arts

#### **JULY 4**

Independence Day Celebration  
*Historic Downtown & Riverfront*

#### **AUGUST 7-13**

Eighth of August  
Emancipation Celebration  
*Uppertown & Historic Downtown*

#### **AUGUST 8-10**

Paducah 48 Hour Film Project  
*Maiden Alley Cinema*

#### **FALL**

##### **SEPTEMBER 1**

Labor Day Celebration  
*Historic Downtown*

##### **SEPTEMBER 18-20**

Antique Gas Engine &  
Tractor Show  
*Carson Park*

##### **SEPTEMBER 20**

Dragon Boat Festival  
*Paducah Riverfront*

##### **SEPTEMBER 25-27**

Barbecue on the River &  
Market Days  
*Historic Downtown & Riverfront*

##### **NOVEMBER 6-9**

Rivers' Edge International  
Film Festival  
*Maiden Alley Cinema &  
other venues*

#### **WINTER**

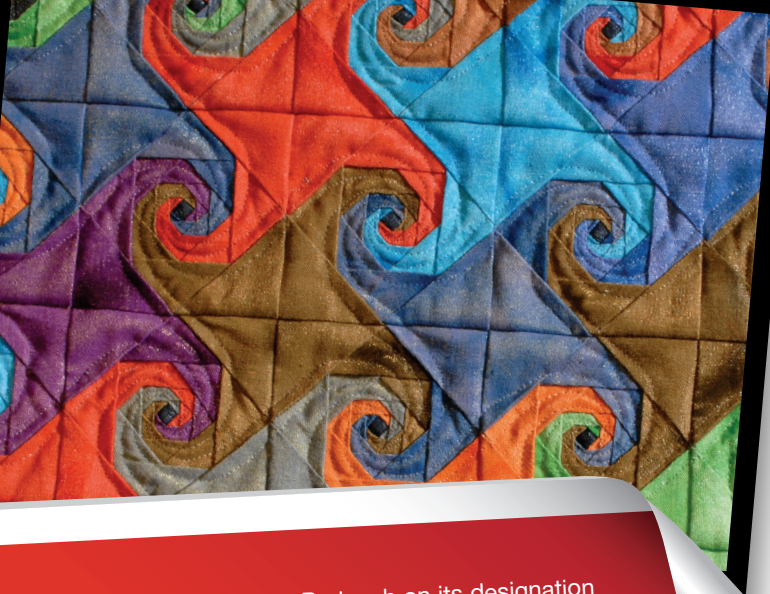
##### **LATE NOVEMBER & DECEMBER**

Christmas in Paducah  
*Historic Downtown & Noble  
Park*

Award Winning Paducah website:  
[www.awardwinningpaducah.com](http://www.awardwinningpaducah.com)

Paducah Visitors Bureau website:  
[www.paducah.travel](http://www.paducah.travel)





"We congratulate Paducah on its designation as a UNESCO City of Crafts and Folk Arts. As the beating heart of America's long tradition of quilting, Paducah embodies a cultural treasure unique to the United States. We are pleased and proud to have that treasure recognized by UNESCO—an action that will bring quilting and the history it represents to the attention of a global audience."

**—U.S. Department of State Acting Assistant Secretary Pittman**



Alliance, have hosted a number of artists from across the globe through the city-funded Paducah Artist-in-Residence program. In fact, a team of Paducah artists traveled to Innsbruck, Austria in May to exhibit and teach as a result of this cultural exchange. All these factors made it quite evident that, in spite of its size, Paducah was an impressive candidate for the Creative Cities Network.

## PURSuing THE DESIGNATION

After a period of research on the benefits of membership in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and the evaluation criteria for inclusion in the organization, the CVB board approved pursuing the designation in 2009. In September, the Paducah

City Commission passed a resolution affirming its position

in support of this application and endorsing the work to which the Network's members are dedicated. In

October, the original application was sent to the office of the Director-General of UNESCO in Paris, France, complete with the City Resolution, and letters of endorsements from the Kentucky Cabinet of Arts, Heritage & Tourism, US National Commission for UNESCO—US State Department and the two

existing America member cities—Iowa City, IO and Santa Fe, NM. The application portfolio, supporting documents, and the handcrafted clamshell box that housed them were all beautifully bound, wrapped and lined with marbled fabric and paper created by LowerTown artists Ike and Charlotte Erwin.

"Creating the original application was just the beginning," said Hammond. Finalizing the application proved to be a step-by-step process, which involved ongoing communication with a UNESCO Culture Sector program specialist and project coordinator in Paris and a U.S. Department of State

representative from the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO. An extended series of revisions ensued as the CVB sought to enhance the application's required criteria to match UNESCO's high standards. The criteria for the Crafts and Folk Art, the obvious theme of choice for Paducah, required that the destination prove a long-lasting tradition in a particular form of crafts or folk art, contemporary production of the craft, a strong presence of local artists living and working in Paducah, established training centers or educational facilities relating to the arts, a host of annual art festivals and exhibitions, and a relevant infrastructure in



the form of museums and art/craft supply stores.

"Though the research and documentation for the CCN application was labor intensive, the accumulation of information was like uncovering a gift—layer by layer," noted Steele. "The long lasting tradition in folk art arrived with the early settlers, who brought with them much of their cultural heritage—including the art of quilting." Linking that history and craft to Paducah and the present are the words engraved above the entrance to the National Quilt Museum of the United States—Honoring Today's Quilter. The Museum exhibits embody the broad spectrum of quilting by showcasing time-honored traditional designs and methods while simultaneously acknowledging and encouraging the art quilt movement that began in the mid-1970s. The list of exhibits by quilters from other countries over the years, including Canada, Australia, Europe, and Asia, gives a sense of the depth and breadth of the Museum's commitment to Crafts and Folk Art and particularly the international scope of that commitment. Their School Block Challenge program has reached across continents, even to the Western Cape of South Africa, to introduce quilting to the youth of the world.

Though the fabric and craft-related industries based in Paducah provide a favorable impact on the local economy year round, Paducah has built an entire economic sector around artists, craft persons, performing artists, writers, and the culture they create. "Paducah is a regional hub for health, education, and business. But Paducah also is a creative community with a variety of artists ranging from internationally-known painters to students who are just learning a craft," said Mayor Gayle Kaler. "Without a doubt, the arts mean business in Paducah." The Artist Relocation Program has become a national model for using the arts for economic development. The Paducah School of Art & Design is the first community college in Kentucky to offer an Associate of Fine Art degree.

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*A recent study by the Americans for the Arts showed that the nonprofit arts and culture are a \$39.9 million industry in Greater Paducah and supports 819 full-time equivalent jobs. It generates \$3.6 million in local and state government revenue and leverages a remarkable \$27.8 million in additional spending by arts and culture audiences—spending that pumps vital revenue into local restaurants, hotels, retail stores and other businesses in the region.*

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# The FABRIC of our Lives!

"International customers are a very important part of our business," says Justin Hancock of Hancock's of Paducah.

"We are fortunate to have customers from around the world visit us regularly. In November, a group of 14 from Australia came and spent two days shopping in our store. They also visited the National Quilt Museum."

When Justin asked the group about their itinerary for their trip to the United States, they explained that they wanted to see the points of interest important to them. Those included Washington DC (Smithsonian), Philadelphia and Bucks County (Amish Quilting), and Paducah (Hancock's and the National Quilt Museum).

"Every week we hear a special accent denoting an international customer. They are always interested in how we established a reputation from Paducah. They are always interested in what local sites, sounds, and tastes they should not miss," Hancock adds.

Hancock's of Paducah first began accepting on-line orders in 1994. A customer from Australia was in the first 25 orders. Today the company ships thousands of packages each month to international customers.

"We constantly work to bring them first class fabrics at a wonderful price," Hancock explains. "We regularly hear that our Indonesian Bali batiks cost more than double in Australia. We have shipped to most countries in Europe, Asia, and South America. We ship to Canada, Mexico, and Australia almost DAILY. We even have a regular customer in Botswana!"







## FROM PADUCAH, KENTUCKY TO SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

Though time lagged on with the application revisions, a new glimmer of hope sprung when Mayor Bill Paxton and representatives from the CVB were invited to attend the UNESCO Creative Cities Network conference in Seoul, South Korea, in November 2011, to provide a formal presentation of Paducah's request. The theme of the conference was Sustainable Urban Development Based on Creativity. Mayor Pro Tem Gayle Kaler represented Mayor Bill Paxton and participated in a Mayor's Roundtable discussion for sharing best practices, experiences, and insights in creative city development. Mary Hammond and Rosemarie Steele represented Paducah's tourism industry and met with UNESCO staff and delegates from Santa Fe and Iowa City. Presentations on each destination was a requirement of both member and candidate cities in attendance. Language interpretation devices were provided for all attendees, which included UNESCO staff, city officials, tourism directors, industry leaders and several Korean students who were interested in experiencing an international networking process.



"Though Paducah is not as large in area or population as most of the member and candidate cities, the presentation proved that Paducah's cultural assets and international networking projects are comparable to and, in some instances, more notable than other member and candidate cities," said Hammond. The presentation demonstrated how Paducah was currently engaging in dialogue and sharing creative concepts with many cities within and beyond the network—predominately through programs provided by the National Quilt Museum, American Quilter's Society, Paducah School of Art, and the Paducah Artist in Residence Program.

Team Paducah was extremely optimistic during the conference; however, shortly after returning home, the CVB received notice from Francesco Bandarin, Assistant Director-General, that the candidate evaluation procedure was temporarily suspended until a new structure for the program could be agreed upon. A two-year hiatus occurred, until recently the CVB team noticed that the application process was not only active, but was revised as an online format. Hammond and Steele continued to move forward, but good fortune intervened. In November 2013, notification was sent to Mayor Kaler that Paducah had been designated an official member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network as a City of Crafts and Folk Art.

## A CREATIVE CITY...FOR TODAY AND FOR PADUCAH'S TOMORROWS

Though creative tourism was the catalyst for pursuing the Creative Cities Network, the benefits are far reaching. Creative industries are gaining momentum as an economic development driver in today's growing global economy. The designation establishes Paducah as a leader in creative economic development and speaks to the quality of life residents enjoy. It provides a competitive advantage to businesses and





# WHAT *is* THE UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK?

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network is an outlet to showcase Paducah's cultural pedigree, develop local creative industries, and exchange ideas among other cities that acknowledge creativity as a driver for sustainable development.

## The Company We Keep

The Network currently includes 41 cities from all regions of the world recognized as cultural centers in the creative industry fields of Crafts and Folk Arts, Literature, Film, Music, Design, Media Arts and Gastronomy.

**Literature:** Edinburgh, Melbourne, Iowa City, Dublin, Reykjavik, Norwich and Krakow

**Film:** Bradford and Sydney

**Music:** Seville, Bologna, Glasgow, Ghent Bogota and Brazzaville

**Crafts and Folk Art:** Paducah, Santa Fe, Aswan, Kanazawa, Icheon, Hangzhou and Fabriano

**Design:** Buenos Aires, Berlin, Montréal, Nagoya, Kobe, Shenzhen, Shanghai, Seoul, Saint-Étienne, Graz and Beijing

**Media Arts:** Lyon, Enghien-les-Bains and Sapporo

**Gastronomy:** Popayán, Chengdu, Östersund, Jeonju and Zählé

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# WHAT DOES A CREATIVE CITY INVOLVE?

## Cultural Tourism

"Cultural tourism involves traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural and natural resources." —*The National Trust for Historic Preservation*

## Creative Tourism

"Creative tourism offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are characteristic of the destination where they are undertaken."

—*Greg Richards, Professor of Leisure Studies, The Netherlands*

"Iowa City's designation as a City of Literature has allowed us to tell our story internationally, giving our city a world-wide stage from which to tout our literary culture to readers, writers, tourists and educators. It also has afforded us strong relationships with literary centers around the world as one of seven Cities of Literature. We are able to share best practices, pursue collaborations and seek exchanges that will enhance our city and others in this sub-network. The larger Creative Cities Network of 41 cities and counting brings us into contact with some of the most creative people in the world, which brings new ideas to our community."

—**John Kenyon, Executive Director,**  
**Iowa City UNESCO City of Literature**



institutions that are working to attract quality business professionals and educators...enticing them to relocate here.

As a CCN member, Paducah can reach out to individuals in other thematic networks, including Literature, Film, Gastronomy, Media Arts, and Music and Design to exchange ideas and experiences and create opportunities to offer our community a diverse array of resources—resources that will expand the capacity to train our youth and students in creative, cultural, and international business skills and prepare them for the future.

The designation provides the CVB with expanded opportunities to attract tourists by showcasing Paducah's cultural assets and attractions on a global platform. "The dollars spent by visitors strengthen McCracken County's economy by creating jobs, supporting local businesses—from gas stations to retail stores—and generating tax revenues to support our community," said Hammond.

## IT TAKES A VILLAGE

"Paducah is poised for cultural and economic sustainability by creating partnerships locally and with other cities," said Mayor Kaler. Paducah's role as a hub of regional creative economic activity and tourism has been enhanced by the fundamental belief on the part of community leaders in the role of the creative industries in the city's present and future. Because of forward-thinking community leaders, the AQS, Paducah's various arts organizations, community festival organizers, museum and attraction directors and staff persons, educators, quilters, culinary artists, painters, potters, print and jewelry makers, who devote their time and talents to making Paducah a vibrant community—Paducah is now an internationally recognized member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. What this community does on a daily basis inspires and connects Paducah with people and places across the globe.

*Featured quilts are from the National Quilt Museum Collection and the personal collection of Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry.*



# CONNECTING CULTURES THROUGH QUILTING

Known as Quilt City USA,<sup>®</sup> Paducah is recognized worldwide as a mecca for quilters and fiber artists.

Paducah's long lasting tradition in the fine craft of quilting is the anchor that qualifies Paducah as an UNESCO City of Crafts & Folk Art. A rich infrastructure relevant to crafts and folk art includes museums, galleries, crafts stores and creative workshop venues.

- AQS QuiltWeek – Paducah and the National Quilt Museum have driven Paducah's recognition in the international arts scene over the past 30 years.

- A strong presence of Paducah artists are actively engaged in the contemporary production of crafts.

- Paducah offers training related to crafts and folk art through AQS, the National Quilt Museum, the Paducah School of Art & Design and a number of other hands-on workshops provided by various artists.

- Paducah promotes culture and diverse artforms through a variety of festivals including QuiltWeek,<sup>™</sup> LowerTown Art & Music Festival and River's Edge International Film Festival.



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# Many creations. One UNESCO city!

A variety of creative elements contribute to Paducah's richly populated artistic landscape. Below is a sampling of the

far-reaching cultural attractions and events that enhance the city's international appeal.

- Carson Center
- Clemens Fine Arts Center/ Arts in Focus
- Lower Town Art & Music Festival
- Market House Theatre
- Paducah Arts Alliance Artist in Residence Program
- Paducah School of Art & Design
- Paducah Symphony Orchestra
- River Discovery Center
- River's Edge International Film Festival & Maiden Alley Cinema
- "Wall to Wall" Murals
- Yeiser Art Center

For a calendar of upcoming events and complete listings, visit **Paducah.travel**.

"Paducah is a regional hub for health, education, and business. But Paducah also is a creative community with a variety of artists ranging from internationally-known painters to students who are just learning a craft," *said Mayor Gayle Kaler.*

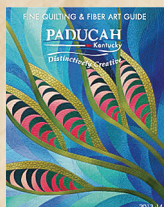
**"Without a doubt, the arts mean business in Paducah."**



## The ARTISTRY of fiber arts!

The Paducah Fine Quilting & Fiber Art Guide takes you inside the patchwork of experiences available in Paducah and the surrounding region.

Known as Quilt City, USA®, Paducah is a distinctively creative place that celebrates quilting's colors and rhythmic patterns as a world-class art form. The magazine-style guide show-



cases the diverse collection of experiences that draw quilters and fiber artists from around the globe to Paducah to connect and be inspired.

Feature editorials about key players in the quilting world highlight Paducah's importance as an internationally celebrated creative city. Discover the stories behind Hancock's of Paducah, the creation of a National Quilt Museum exhibit and acclaimed quilt artists like Caryl Bryer Fallert-Gentry and Eleanor Burns establishing locations in Paducah.

Download the guide at [Paducah.travel](http://Paducah.travel), or pick up a copy at the Visitors Bureau to begin exploring quilting and fiber art in Paducah. ■

