



CALHOUN COUNTY CREATIVE INDUSTRIES INCUBATION NETWORK PROGRAM OUTLINE

Creative industry incubators provide inexpensive space, technical support, and business development services to emerging artists, arts groups, and arts-related businesses. Incubators help to grow and stabilize young creative ventures. They graduate successful artists and businesses back into the community, creating jobs, enhancing the local economy, and helping to build a critical mass for creative culture in the surrounding area. Creative industry incubators often also provide direct economic benefits to their neighborhoods by including visual and performing arts venues which draw patrons to events and who can spill over into other local businesses.

There are a number of model incubators across the country. While each one is unique, there are many common elements, as well. The Arts and Industry Council (AIC) has carefully examined a number of models, conducted a series of meetings and roundtables, and has spoken with numerous individual artists to elicit local market needs. Based on information garnered, the following plan has emerged for the creation of a Calhoun County Creative Industries Incubation Network.

Background

Spurred by the work of economist Richard Florida and numerous national studies documenting the economic impact of America's thousands of arts organizations, the beginning of the 21st century has seen American cities embracing the arts to foster economic development. As Florida postulates, America's innovative intellectual power has become particularly footloose in the last decades, settling not where jobs beckon, but in places with attractive qualities of life; they bring their innovative power with them, and the jobs follow. Among the most attractive features of the urban landscape for the "creative class" is a lively arts scene.¹

As the global marketplace becomes ever more dependent on customization and diversification of product lines, artists are also playing a critical role in product development processes. In a manufacturing state, which has lost numerous jobs over the past six years, it is more important than ever that development efforts support those industries that will propel this region into a successful economic future. There are numerous examples across the country where arts or creative industry incubators have been successful in revitalizing neighborhoods, creating jobs, launching new businesses and generating revenue.

Calhoun County is fortunate to already have two creative industries incubators in place. The first is ETC. Arts Studio in Battle Creek, launched April 2005. The second, Greenstreet Arts in Marshall, was launched in April 2006. Each incubator is unique in the population it serves, the services it offers, in its artistic focus, and in the products it generates.

¹ 2005, East Side Arts Incubator Feasibility Study, Bay Ridge Consulting in cooperation with East Side Business Improvement District #20, Milwaukee, WI

In order to grow the county's creative community it will be necessary to establish a strong arts infrastructure and to collectively create enough critical mass to facilitate a self-perpetuating "industry". Additional incubator space has already been identified in downtown Battle Creek, Albion, and Homer. The AIC will conduct an incubator needs analysis in the fall of 2006; if warranted, these additional incubator spaces will also be developed.

What is the economic impact of creative industries in Calhoun County?

Calhoun County is home to a diverse population, balanced by a mix of both urban and rural residents. A recent perception survey shows that 92.3% of the County's 137,985 residents agree that arts activities and cultural events are important to their quality of life².

Calhoun County's arts and cultural organizations have a significant impact on the local economy. In 2005, their collective expenditures exceeded \$6 million, they sponsored nearly 5,000 events, exhibits, performances and classes, and served 1.1 million people³. Nearly 8% of the County's workforce is employed in the arts, entertainment, recreation and food services arena⁴.

Calhoun County Creative Industries Incubator Association

In many communities, arts incubators are operated by a single organizational entity. The existing incubators in Calhoun County, however, are independently operated, each with its own board, budget, staff, and clientele. This allows each incubator to remain flexible and responsive to the needs of its respective community. However, they both have common unmet needs, especially in the areas of marketing and fund development.

In order to facilitate cooperation, communication, shared services, and a reduction in redundancy between the existing incubators, a countywide Creative Industry Incubator Association, is being developed and will be facilitated by the AIC. Through the Association, the AIC, will provide marketing support, access to a loan/grant fund, business development assistance to individual artists and arts businesses, and other education and support services as required/requested.

Business Development Assistance

The Calhoun County Incubation Network will include business development assistance and learning opportunities. Successful entrepreneurial endeavors require: 1) outstanding products, 2) strong sales and marketing acumen, and 3) sound financial management⁵. Since many artists are very talented product developers, but may not be skilled in or passionate about sales and finance, it is important that the incubators provide opportunities for learning and/or assistance in these areas.

² *2006 Awareness and Perception Survey*, Perspectives Consulting Group, January 2006

³ *Arts & Culture Survey 2005*, Battle Creek Community Foundation, Winter 2005

⁴ *Census 2000*, U.S. Census Bureau

⁵ Sirolli Institute, www.sirolli.com

Calhoun County artists have specifically requested courses/workshops covering the following business development topics:

1. Creating a business plan
2. PC skills, website development & e-commerce
3. Contracts, pricing and hidden costs, working with galleries
4. Accounting and financial record keeping
5. Purchasing and inventory management
6. Marketing, branding, presentation and portfolios
7. Insurance, risk management and protecting intellectual property
8. Production, packaging, exporting
9. Management, staffing, and employee relations

A number of these courses are already offered through state and local institutions, though they may need customization. The AIC will identify, package, and market these courses, and will contract for the development of any missing curriculum.

Many artists, however, do not follow standard business start-up models. Like many entrepreneurs, artists are generally passionate about their creative process and products. Even when equipped with a sound business plan, many entrepreneurs do not possess the skills or passion to aggressively market their products and to follow through on the financial planning and record keeping required for a successful business. It is not surprising that approximately 40% of small businesses fail within the first two years and 75% close their doors within five years⁶. Many entrepreneurs need assistance from individuals that are passionate about sales/marketing and finance. In order to provide business support services to these artists, the AIC will not only provide information and opportunities to attend business workshops, but will facilitate partnerships between artists and sales/marketing and finance professionals so that they may successfully launch new products and sustain their businesses.

Creative Industry Grants/Loan Fund

In order to provide financial support for emerging creative industry start-ups and incubator operational expenses (e.g., course catalogs, marketing, equipment and supplies, infrastructure, and reference materials), the AIC is working to secure funds for an emerging artist/creative industry loan fund and/or grant program. The AIC will work with community stakeholders to develop guidelines for an effective grant/loan process.

Apprenticeship Program

As newly incubated creative industries begin their production processes, there will be opportunities for interested participants to work side-by-side with master artists and craftsmen to gain hands-on experience, learn about product design and development, and strengthen their own skills. In order to create a formal pathway for students to participate in this process, the Calhoun Intermediate School District (CISD) has become a formal partner in the Incubator Network. Over the 2006-07 school year, the CISD, the AIC, existing incubators, and other Network partners will be working together to develop curriculum and formal apprenticeship opportunities that will be offered through the Calhoun Area Technology Center (CATC). The CATC is located in Battle Creek and is a provider of

⁶ Small Business Administration

career/technical education for 12 public and private area school districts, drawing students from both rural and urban areas across Calhoun County.

The benefit of having a K-12 partner is that students can be exposed to all of the business development components of entrepreneurial endeavor (e.g., sales and marketing, business plan development, finance and accounting, etc.), as well as the theoretical side of product design and development, while they are working alongside master artists and gaining hands-on experience.

The AIC is also working to bring additional apprenticeship partners into the Network. These will include a higher education component so that students may graduate from the CATC program and continue their studies locally. Other future partners will, hopefully, include Michigan Works! and local unions, both of which have access to talented craftspeople who may be interested in launching their own creative industries or working with one that is already established. In the ranks of unemployed Michigan workers, there is a tremendous wealth of outstanding creative talent. One of the main goals of the Incubation Network is to provide alternative pathways for regional job creation.

ETC. Arts Studio

The ETC. Arts Studio is a program of Community Inclusive Recreation (CIR) which fosters creativity and provides learning opportunities to area residents of all abilities. Woven throughout all of the incubator's programming is the message of inclusion and diversity.

Director:	Linda Linke
Address:	157 Capital Ave. NE, Battle Creek, MI 49017
Telephone:	269.968.8249
Email:	cirlady@aol.com
Website:	www.cir-inc.org
Hours:	M – F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Gallery M – F, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Org. Type:	501(c)(3)
Date Opened:	April, 2005
Square Feet:	5,000
Building Ownership:	Leased from adjacent church (\$1 per year for 10 years)
Artists Exhibiting:	15
Studio Artists:	9 Teaching Artists, 30 Participating Artists
Staff:	1 full-time, 3 part-time, 1 contracted
Board members:	15
Annual Budget:	\$130,000
Funding Sources:	Fee for service, grants, United Way, product sales, private donors, membership fees

Visiting Artists:

The ETC. Arts Studio often hosts visiting artists. The artists visit can be as short as one day or as long as a full year depending on its design. All artists must submit a Teaching Artist Application, which looks in depth at the artists' portfolio, experience and class/project proposal.

Art Instruction:

The ETC. Arts Studio offers a variety of visual arts classes and workshops that are inclusive and accessible to its participants. A typical *class* is 8-10 sessions long, with each session

lasting up to two hours. *Workshops* are typically a single-day experience lasting two to six hours depending on the subject or complexity of the topic.

Studio Projects:

ETC. Arts Studio operates artist studios as part of its program structure. These studios produce specific products for sale to the general public, client organizations, businesses, and CIR. Projects include commissioned work, demonstration pieces, public art pieces, and pieces for exhibit. Studio projects are facilitated and directed by Studio staff. Each project may include classes on how to produce the defined work, artist residencies to assist in instruction, and exhibits to show the final products.

Production teams are sometimes organized as “entrepreneurial companies”, i.e., a group of artists that come together to create products. These companies are required to complete business plans within six months of approval from Studio staff. Once the plan is approved, the “company” or team is considered an ongoing program of the Studio.

It is expected that studio artists will serve an internship period of at least 20 hours before they can earn a 35% commission from artwork they produce through the studio. They must be at least 16 years old to receive commission payments.

Studio A is producing heritage tiles, which are ceramic tile coasters with artists’ depictions of Battle Creek historical figures, architecture, and natural attractions. The tiles are made to order and can be customized to include any business logo or to fit any special need or event. The team also produces customized murals designed for and painted on any surface.

Greeting card and calendar production is also in progress and will be included in the new CIR ETC Art Studio catalog; this will showcase all production teams’ work, which is available for purchase. Also, custom tee signs by this production studio are available to enhance a sponsor’s exposure at golf outings.

Studio B is focused on fiber arts & textile exploration. Loominating Rug Weaver’s is this studio’s production team, coordinated by Vicki Antoine. There are also quilt-making, sewing, pin-weaving, hand-made paper, basketry, and felt making production teams and classes offered through this studio.

Studio C is focused on silk scarf design and production, taught by Artist Sue Beck-Ryan. Sue has taught art on Indian Reservations in the West and in galleries in South America, including Costa-Rica. This unique medium allows students the opportunity to create one-of-a-kind works of art.

Gallery:

Exhibits celebrate and reflect the inspiration and imagination of the artists, production team products, and studio programming. Curator Andrew Freemire works with exhibit design and construction apprentices to create each new exhibit space. Traveling exhibits are also created for display throughout the community.

Sculpture Garden:

The landscaped green space in front of ETC. Arts Studio offers individuals a meditative space in which all the senses are engaged. A combination of plants, hardscapes, and works of art create a pathway of expression through scent, sound, touch, and sight. This vibrant area creates a picturesque gateway to Battle Creek.

Greenstreet Arts

Greenstreet Arts is a design incubator with the express purpose of igniting a renaissance of handmade creativity and cottage industries. Its **mission** is to foster the professional and creative growth of artists and creative entrepreneurs by providing affordable studio and exhibit space, apprenticeships and a creative network.

Director:	Michael Peck
Address:	115 E. Green Street, Marshall, MI 49068
Telephone:	269.789.2379
Email:	greenstreetarts@sbcglobal.net
Hours:	M – F, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Sat., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Org. Type:	501(c)(3) application in-progress
Date Opened:	April, 2006
Square Feet:	Approx. 3,000
Building Ownership:	Leased from private owner (\$910/mo)
Artists Exhibiting:	30
Studio Artists:	3 private studios rented
Staff:	2 (both volunteer)
Board members:	11
Annual Budget:	\$37,000
Funding Sources:	Gallery fees, studio leases, grants

Greenstreet Studios:

Greenstreet Arts offers low cost artist studio workspaces. Tenants may reserve private or shared studio space with table, workbench, storage and wet-room facilities in an environment which encourages the exchange of ideas and resources and is conducive to learning and creative expression. Rental rates range from \$50 per month for 4 daily hours of shared space to \$300 per month for private studio space.

Greenstreet Showroom:

The Greenstreet Showroom is a fine and decorative arts gallery open to the trade and public for the showing and sale of one-of-a-kind and decorative arts products by artisans and apprentices. The showroom is managed by the Greenstreet Artists Association, a co-op staffing mechanism that supports the day-to-day operations of the showroom including contracting, and product sales. All artists wishing to exhibit in the Greenstreet Showroom are required to donate a minimum of four hours per month to the co-op. Showroom space rental is \$25 per month for a 6' by 10' (approx.) display area with two 4-hour volunteer shifts per month, or \$35 per month with only one 4-hour volunteer shift per month. Display areas may also be shared by more than one artist, which further reduces the cost per artist. Volunteer staff are available to assist with the sale of products during Greenstreet's regular public hours. No commissions are taken by Greenstreet on the sale of artwork.

Greenstreet Workshops:

Greenstreet Arts offers a referral service for arts education. Member artists teach classes in a number of different mediums for both youth and adult participants. Member artists may lease incubator space to hold private or group classes/workshops as desired.

Greenstreet Design Team:

A team of 12 member artists have joined to form the Greenstreet Design Team, working on interior décor products. They are currently developing the prototypes for coordinating folding room screens, lighting fixtures, handmade wallpaper, and tables. Utilizing the Creative Industries Incubation Network services, the team will be establishing agent/sales

relationships, marketing methodologies, and sound business plans for each individual business that will spin-off from the team. This team will also provide apprenticeship opportunities for students wishing to gain hands-on experience in product design and development. Partnerships will also be formed with regional manufacturers when large-scale production needs arise.

Greenstreet Creative Network:

Of all the services offered through Greenstreet Arts, perhaps most valued by the member artists is the opportunity to meet other artists, share resources, ideas and inspiration, and to collectively support the arts. Greenstreet hosts a quarterly Arts Café, a casual open-house for artists and the general public to meet, mingle and share information and ideas.

Additional AIC Creative Industries Support Services

In order to provide additional business support to individual artists and arts businesses, the AIC also offers the following services.

Arts Directory

Calhoun County is home to hundreds of highly talented artists. During a series of artist meetings from January through June 2006, artists requested AIC assistance in marketing their products and services. In response, the AIC contracted for the development of an online Arts Directory. This directory will allow individual artists and arts groups to create personal profile pages, which will list their contact information, along with photographs and sound samples of their work. Those looking for local artists will be able to search the regional database by artist name, city, art type, and availability for contracted services (e.g., performances, exhibits, instruction, commission work, etc.). For those artists that do not have their own websites, the AIC will provide a low cost avenue for webpage development. The AIC also offers discounted photography services to member-artists so that their work may be displayed professionally on the web and in print. The online directory will be formally launched in October 2006.

Arts & Culture Events Calendar: www.wherisart.org

For years, Calhoun County arts organizations and arts patrons have requested a “one-stop” source of information about arts and cultural events and activities throughout Calhoun County. As part of its new arts marketing services, the AIC will sponsor a regional arts and culture calendar. Visitors will be able to search the calendar and sort events by location, artist, venue, art type, and date. Artists and arts businesses will be able to feature their events on the calendar, which will be broadly publicized by the AIC. The website will also feature a ***Creative Classifieds*** section where members can post arts related classified ads at no charge.

E-Newsletter

Once the new AIC website and Events Calendar are launched in October 2006, anyone who is interested in receiving an online arts newsletter may subscribe via the AIC website at www.artsandindustrycouncil.org. Subscribers will be able to customize the information they receive by event location and art type. Member artists and arts businesses will be able to promote their products, events, and services through this electronic newsletter service.

Regional Arts Marketing Campaign: *Where is Art?*

In November 2006, the AIC will launch a countywide marketing campaign, including direct mail, print ads, and billboards to heighten public awareness of the impact of regional arts and creative industries on quality of life and economic development. The goal of this

marketing effort will be to make participation in the arts as much a part of citizens' daily/weekly routine as going to the grocery or filling up the gas tank. The campaign will be a global call for participation, as opposed to promoting a specific event or activity. Examples of national ad campaigns that reflect this type of global messaging are: "Go RVing" and "Got Milk?". Both present the advantages of participation or consumption without promoting a specific product.

Artist Health Insurance

Many artists and small arts businesses find it cost prohibitive to purchase health insurance. The AIC is working in partnership with the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo and the Arts Council of Greater Grand Rapids to collectively offer members an affordable "association" health plan option.

Immediate Business Opportunities!

As the Creative Industries Incubation Network has grown, a number of needs have arisen. These needs could be met by adding programs and services through the AIC, however, since the purpose of the Incubator is to generate new businesses and create jobs, it is preferable that these needs be met by local businesses which could be incubated in tandem with the product development enterprises. A few of the immediate needs, which have been expressed, are 1) a regional arts product catalog with online purchase options, 2) an artist supply store – there are none between Chicago and Detroit, and 3) local artist agents/sales representatives – individuals that can generate contracts for the local creative products being developed.

For further information about the Arts & Industry Council and/or the Calhoun County Creative Industries Incubation Network please contact:

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