



October is Virginia Artisan Month all across the Commonwealth!

~ Virginia's artisan industry comprises an estimated 4,500 businesses strengthening the economy through a connective community ~

RICHMOND -- Governor Terry McAuliffe has proclaimed that October is Virginia Artisan Month, a time to showcase the culture of the Virginia artisan, which inspires appreciative audiences for its unique work and distinctive way of life.

Virginia currently hosts 27 community-connected and developing artisan trails representing 39 counties and 12 cities across the Commonwealth that are strengthening the economy through a connective community Artisan Trail Network. Virginia's artisan industry comprises an estimated 4,500 businesses, such as individual studios, farms, aquaculture, art venues, and market venues.

Virginia Artisan Month will kick off with American Craft Week, a well-established, national event, celebrating the tradition of American craft in artists' studios, galleries, museums, schools, and festivals. This year's official celebration will be Oct. 2 - 11, during which hundreds of diverse events will occur throughout the country. The state of Virginia has joined the movement in a big way, with more than 38 events already planned, including numerous events at Virginia's artisan trails and galleries.

"Artisans play a key role in our Commonwealth's economy," says Governor McAuliffe. "Virginia's artisan industry creates jobs, enriches civic life, drives tourism, and helps so many people all across our state stay in touch with what it has always meant to be a Virginian."

"Virginia has so many artisans in a variety of fields, which makes for interesting travel for visitors to the state," says Virginia Tourism President and CEO Rita McClenny. "These businesses and events bring travelers to Virginia year after year."

"From the "Top of Virginia" through the Shenandoah Valley to the western tip of Southwest Virginia, across the Bay Bridge to the Eastern Shore and all points in-between, Virginia Artisans, both creative and agricultural, are positively impacting their communities through creative, collaborative place-making... collectively establishing Virginia as the nation's destination for distinctive hand-crafted goods," says Artisans Center of Virginia Executive Director Sherri Smith

The culture of Virginia Artisans inspires appreciative audiences for its unique products while expressing a distinctive way of life. It invokes a natural order, firmly woven into the daily fabric of an artisan's life, embracing the familiar relationship between the acts of creating and living. Virginia's artisan culture links the past, present & future and reconciles "meaning" with "making". Whether exploring the artisan studios, galleries, eclectic shops, agri-artisan farms, aqua-artisan experiences, unique restaurants, lodging

amenities, and points of interest along Virginia's artisan trails, attending world-class exhibitions featuring the work of Virginia artisans or spending time to embark on a journey of discovery to learn an artisan skill, visitors are cordially invited to "*Take Home a Piece of Virginia: An experience, a memory, a skill*"

"Round the Mountain is excited about the increased awareness Virginia Artisan Month will generate for the high quality craft in the Commonwealth and the service area of Round the Mountain in Southwest Virginia." Kevin Byrd President, Round the Mountain: Southwest Virginia's Artisan Network.

"The Artisan Trails are the best way for artisans to earn income from the work of their hands," says Silvie Granatelli, co-owner of Troika Gallery on the Floyd Artisan Trail. "The Trails are a way to bring customers into the life of the artists. By forging this relationship I believe we as craftsmen educate our patrons not only as to how we make the objects we sell - but we let them know who we are."

"If you expect to be surprised, inspired and dazzled by the sites you will visit on an Artisans Center of Virginia Artisan Trail adventure be prepared, because you will experience it all. The artists and farmers dedication and passion will be clearly evident in every step of the trip. You will want to keep seeing more and will find yourself planning the next agenda. I often judge things by the thought of, "would I want to experience this again" and that day on the Artisan Trail gets a giant Yes!!!!!" Estelle Avner, Roanoke, VA (2015 Virginian of the Year)

"As the owner of a small family owned and operated winery on the Monticello Artisan Trail, we believe there is a connection between the land, the hand and the creative spirit. There is a skill level among agri-artisans and craft artisans which we all strive for, perfection of our craft, excelling in our business. Through the creation and selling of our boutique wines, specialty hand-made chocolates, local artisan wares, local agri-artisans goods, we now share this cultural connection with all who visit and celebrate the talent of the Virginia artisan." Jeff Sanders, Glass House Winery, Monticello Artisan Trail

"Local artisans and agri-artisans are such vital assets to our community. We are so fortunate to be a part of the Artisan Trail Network which brings together these assets to have a significant impact on tourism, economic development, and community pride." Mitchell Bond, Goose Creek Studio, Bedford Artisan Trail.

- For more information on Virginia Artisans and their activities, visit: roundthemountain.org or artisanscenterofvirginia.org
- For more information on Virginia's Artisan Trail Network, visit: artisantrailnetwork.org and [Artisan Trails of Southwest Virginia](http://ArtisanTrails.org)
- For more information on American Craft Week, visit: americancraftweek.com.
- For the official proclamation from Governor McAuliffe, [please click here](#).
- For more information of planning a trip to Virginia, visit: virginia.org.