

Creative Economies Town Hall Meeting

Atlanta – Center for the Puppetry Arts

January 16, 2008 2-4pm

Judy Renfroe – Scribe

Seventh in the series of 10 Town Hall-style Meetings across Georgia. Gilda Watters & Leslie Breland are present representing the Tourism Foundation, leader of the Creative Economies initiative. Camille Ronay from Georgia Made Georgia Grown LLC is also present. Brittney Gray, Metro Atlanta's Tourism Rep, has done a great job pulling the meeting together here today.

BRITTNEY GRAY: The Tourism Foundation is conducting these meetings to hear what artscentric business needs are.

GILDA WATTERS: The Creative Economies initiative's vision is to develop economic development programming that speaks to the artscentric businesses' needs. Info will be free, relevant and Statewide.

The Creative Economies include Georgia's artists, craft makers, theatre, dance, authors and agricultural products entrepreneurs. Basic economic development: identify, connect, provide the networking & training to thrive and move forward.

We are working diligently on a Web Registry for the Creative Economies. A corporate buyer, or a festival or a retailer could use the database to find artscentric needs.

The Tourism Foundation, allied with Georgia Made Georgia Grown LLC, has studied KY, SC and other key regions who have recognized art as an industry.

CAMILLE - We will go around the room and ask each attendee three questions:

- 1) What is your best asset?
- 2) What is your challenge or opportunity with your business now?
- 3) What can the Creative Economies initiative do for you?

SUZANNE from Douglasville is an interior designer & working with the city's new Hydrangea Festival Best Asset: Her event facility. And that she likes the big picture.

Opportunity: Get their name out. How do you find exhibitors for an art/craft event? Technology marketing.

DALE WILKIN – Godz Candy, Newnan

Best Asset: The candy is unique

Opportunity: Getting their name out. How do you get past the arts & crafts fairs?

DIANE KOVACH – lampwork, jewelry.

Challenges: Shows are advertised Handmade Work Only and sell crap. 80% of her sales are thru shows, so she needs to find the right shows for her work.

SHERRY DARLING – Blue Ridge, Turning Leaf Gallery. 1700 sq ft. Represents 64 artists, 54 of whom are local.

Best Asset: Herself & her determination & dedication.

Challenges: handling all the different hats of microenterprise

Competition from imports – mass produced crap

Managing a solid website

GILDA: We will be offering small business development, business planning, stickers identifying Georgia Made Georgia Grown. Would a broker to represent Georgia Made Georgia Grown products be useful?

GARY GARDNER – Wood turner

Best Asset: Sherry

Challenges: Imports

Education of the general public & teaching people to buy American-made, at least!

Every civilization is judged by its art.

DARLENE KNIGHT – Acworth DDA, Serendipity House.

Best Asset: Theatre, Gallery, Arts Alliance may be starting up

Challenges: Marketing

\$\$ to operate

Keep art & theatre in the schools!

What do we need? Money, a website locator for GMGG resources & products

DUCHESS ROWAN – Fabric

Best Asset: Herself. She's a perfectionist who creates special occasion dresses & jewelry

Challenge: lacks marketing skills

Seems isolated; needs networking

Looking for: guidelines for business plan (has the vision)

Marketing plan

Networking

NHAN DINN – Powder Springs Ec Dev

Best Asset: Silver Comet Trail, Southern Quilt Trail

Challenge: Antique Stores need help marketing

DEBORAH GRAYSON BAILEY – Wildflower dolls

Best Asset: Herself. IT background. Uses blogs. Is in an artist co-operative – the Beehive at 1831-A Peachtree St

Would be very helpful: Guidelines for getting through the red tape of starting a business

Showcasing artists' work in empty storefronts

MARY WILLIAMS – Storyteller from the Roswell CVB

Best Asset: Geek goddess

Challenge: Some (many) are technically challenged and lack business skills

JEAN – Storyteller (retired Air Force); also started jewelry business

Needs: Seal of Approval

Help workshops

KNOX STEINBRECHER – Clay, functional pottery. Fused glass. Sells mostly through shows. Would like to see certification program. Brought up the Artisan Center in Berea KY which represents 465 KY artists.

MARGARET AUSTIN LISI – Urban/rural community specialist. Ag background. Author.
Very much dedicated to the sustainability of small communities
We need a larger vision, beyond our own communities, cities and state
We need to think like a business

TREY – Coweta County CVB

CAROL CHANCEY – Director of 38 year-old Powers Crossroads Art Festival every Labor Day weekend. Festivals are struggling
Best Asset: 100-acre venue. Wants to partner with other events to keep visitors in the grounds.
We need: standards help
Co-op advertising
To clearly identify our audience
Powers Crossroads' grounds are available for a Georgia Made Georgia Grown Expo!

DEBORAH TIDWELL – Fine Arts Studio in Woodstock. We do First Friday activities.
Challenge: Woodstock is no longer affordable to live, work & play downtown.

BRYANT & YVONNE BETSILL – Nathan's Nearly Famous Kettle Korn
Best Asset: Ebroadcasts, building the sales network. Would very much like to expand product sales.
Works with MainStreet Newnan in its First Saturday May-December events on the Square.
Needs: Link to health regulations on georgia.org. So many food businesses just don't know where to go on the web.
Rating system of shows by vendors
Certification program indicating quality.
Demonstrating craft at shows.
Where can I find the Macys shopper?

GABI WALGHIST – fiber artist

GAIL ROBERTSOON – Acworth leatherworker
Needs: Crafters' insurance
Craft makers need to understand the value of their product and price accordingly
At festivals, directors need to understand food & music are distracting elements to the art.

STEPH – Douglasville Main Street Manager
Best Asset: Your Main Street Manager. They provide marketing, help with the grant writing process.
We are creating a database of artists in Douglas County. We'd love to have an arts district.

PHYLLIS WALKER – Hummingbird Studios, Lovejoy. Fine Arts Photographer
Interested in perhaps setting up a farmers market for local producers
Would like info re: working with corporate partners
Would like info about licensing.

KRISTIN KORN – Glass artist & treasurer of the Atlanta Glass Artists Guild.
Best Asset: the ability to promote others.
Would like help on: how to approach galleries
How to let the galleries know the artists
Would like to see recognition of galleries that carry Georgia Artists.
Marketing. Networking. Technology.

Camille suggests looking into the programming of the Arts Development Council of Georgia – www.adcg.org

NANCY CANN – Fused glass jewelry artist
Outgrowing traditional festival venue. What's the next level?

Camille suggests wholesalecrafts.com. Only buyers for shops & galleries are allowed on the pages set up by various artists across the country.

CAROL WEBB: Duluth, working studio. Mixed media, primarily glass.
Focus on educations – teaching other artists.
Issue: Advertising

Camille suggests artistsingeorgia.com. The site offers 5 pages free to each Georgia Artist.

DINAH ROSE: Woodstock, weaver/parttime accountant. Thank you for inviting me!
Needs: help with marketing
Networking
Respect
Time

Godaddy.com was mentioned as places to find solid templates for websites.

EMMANUEL PETKAS: Atlanta, woodturner, woodworker.
Best Asset: Interest in promoting industry and a Georgia Artist Assoc
Need: a location for multiple artists. Had City Hall East in mind, but that has been sold

Etsy.com was just featured in the NY Times. You have a budget per day and it is spent attracting visitors to your website.

Georgia Made Georgia Grown is aggressively marketed by the State's tourism personnel at trade shows.