



A Museum on Main Street exhibition from the Smithsonian traveling to 30 states through 2024



Tour Review

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Museum on Main Street

The Smithsonian invites hundreds of small museums, in towns with populations of 500 to 20,000, to participate in a national exhibition program.

With support and guidance from state humanities councils, host communities have the opportunity to create their own educational programs, cultural activities, and exhibitions that center on local culture and history.

To date, Museum on Main Street exhibitions have visited over 1800 communities in all 50 states.





SUNDAY FISH MARKET

TUNDRA
Russian &
TRADING

WINE
CASA
CASA

GOLD RUSH GLASS
GALLERY

NO
PARKING
LOADING
ZONE
BEGIN

Exhibition Overview

Crossroads' Guiding Questions

What does “rural America” mean?

How has our attraction to and interaction with the land formed the basis of rural America?

How have rural communities and small towns evolved and changed?

What makes these places unique?

How do we identify with them?



Major Themes



Changes transformed rural America (including global influences), especially during the 1900s.

What are some of these changes, and what have they meant for rural life?



People are holding on in their rural communities. Why and how?

What is rural life like today? How are rural Americans shaping their future?

Introduction

Americans come together at crossroads. Small towns are centers for:

- Commerce and trade
- Local politics
- Culture and ideas

Rural America changed significantly in the 1900s:

- Demographics
- Education
- Access to services
- Economic viability

Rural communities may face challenges as well as opportunities





Identity

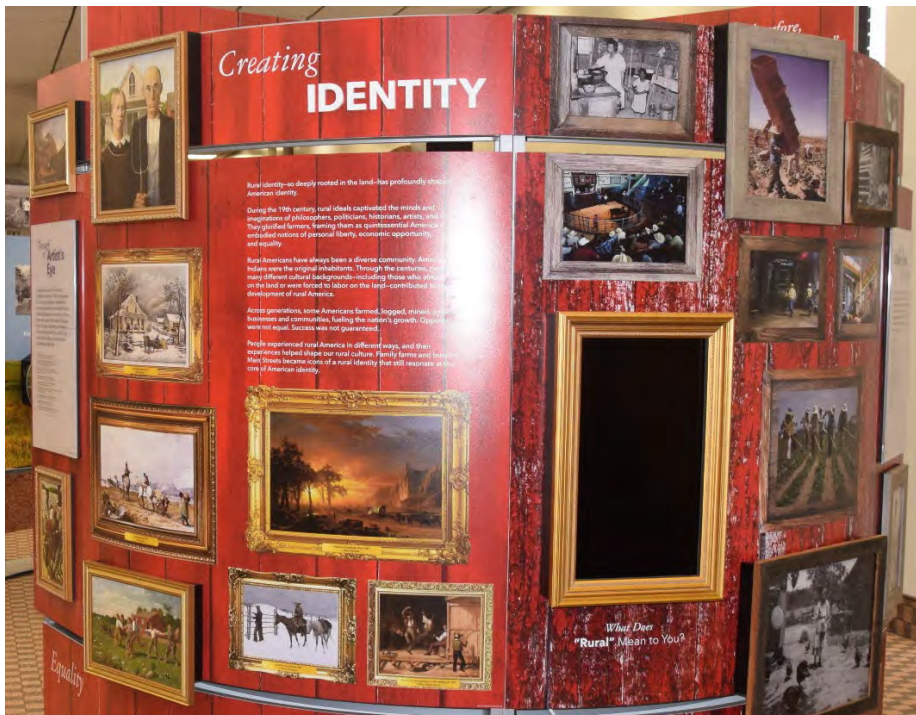
American culture is filled with romantic views of rural life and culture.

Living and working in a rural place can also be difficult.

How is rural America represented in books, songs, poetry, and art?

How do rural ideals square with American ideals?

- Economic opportunity
- Personal liberty
- Equality





Land

Land is core to our concept of rural life.

Our sense of place is powerful.
Many Americans express strong connections to the rural landscape.
Memories of recreation in rural places.
Natural beauty draws people to rural areas.
For some, rural landscapes represent hard work and isolation.



Not everyone is a landowner. Most Americans connect with rural places through public lands.

How do attitudes towards land ownership and access differ among Americans?

Are there stories of conflict over land in your state?

Community

Communities grew at rural crossroads

- People connect, exchange ideas, work towards common goals, rely on neighbors, and build the future of their community.

Sustaining communities

- Country Life Movement
- New Deal and rural electrification programs

Accelerated change

- Change in the second half of the 20th century
- Erosion of political power in some states
- Demographic changes
- Civil rights struggles
- Aging populations
- Challenges of inequality and poverty





Persistence

Rural Americans believe in their communities, and many choose to work to resolve issues rather than leaving.

Economic survival requires revitalization of small towns and inspires new ways of thinking about farming and extractive industries.

Many Americans are discovering the benefits of rural life. The slower pace and quiet surroundings, proximity to natural resources etc.

Popular culture connects urban and suburban Americans to rural life. Rural life and people are often romanticized or satirized.



Managing Change

Some rural communities face significant challenges.

Americans are confronting these issues and finding new and unique solutions.

There are many different voices to welcome into these conversations.

What will your town look like in ten years?

What has your community lost that matters most?

What change for good would you make in your town?

If you were mayor, what would you do?

Name three things you would miss if you had to leave.



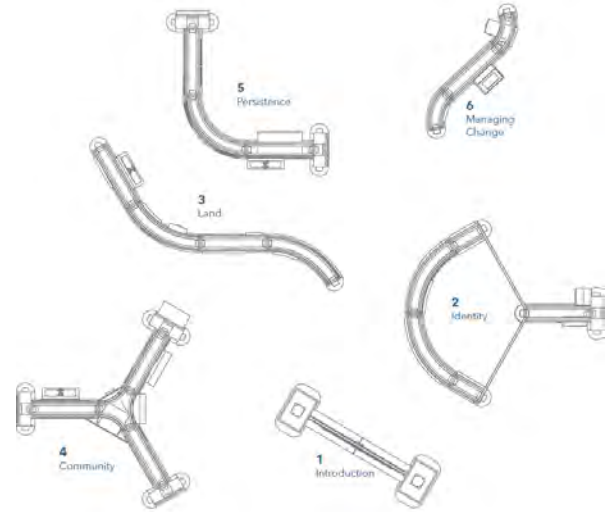
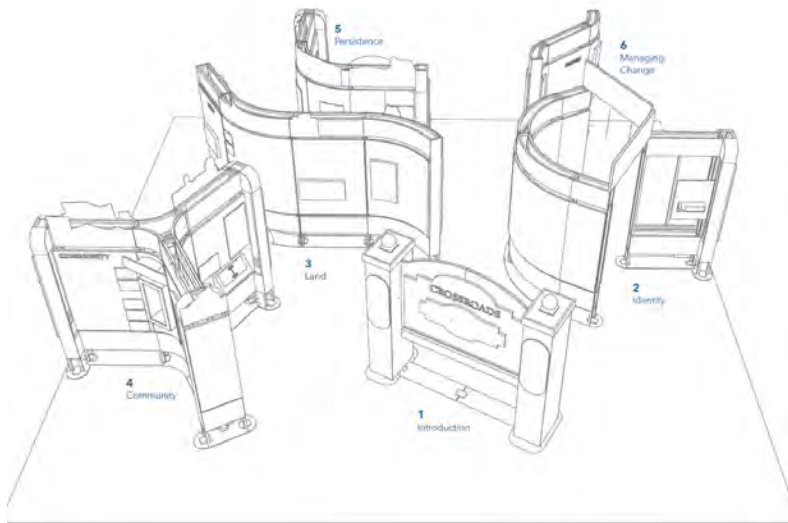


Specifications

Specifications

- Six free-standing sections
- Installation requires 750 square feet of space
- Five audio and video media components
- Mechanical, tactile, and low-tech interactives
- Various sized object cases
- Packed in 16 wheeled crates that fit on a 26-foot U-Haul truck







1835-GAZETTE-1895

TOWN HALL
AND
ENGINE HOUSE

1878

REINHARDT

MUNSON

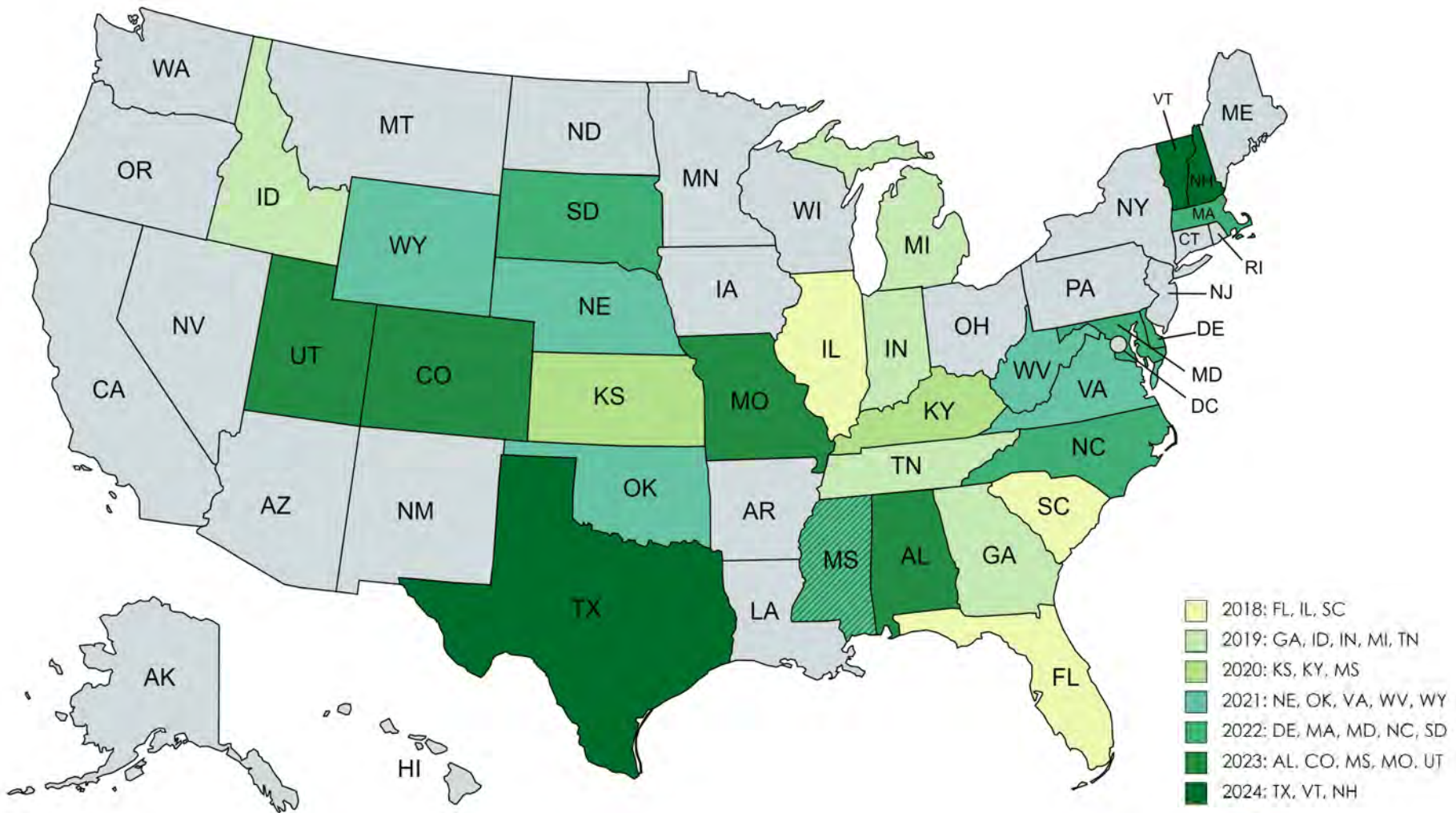
1879

LEACH

oneLuckydog BAKERY

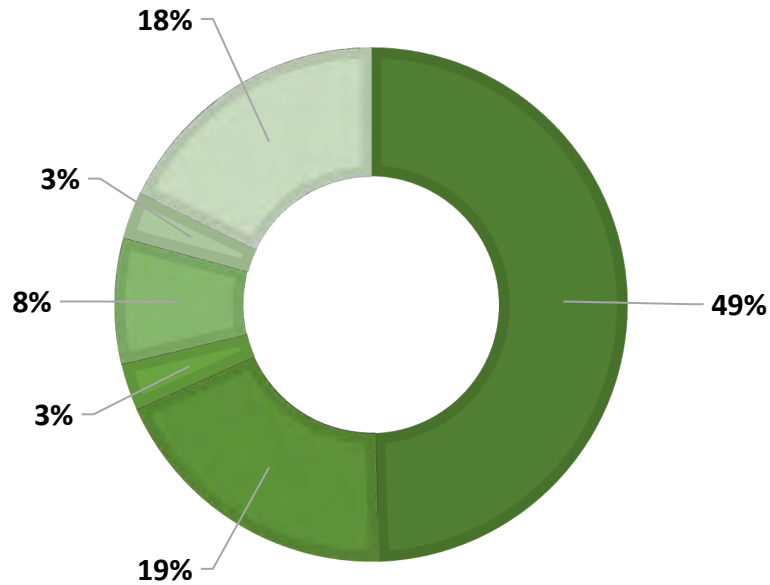
Statistics

Where is *Crossroads*?



Please note: Outlying years are subject to change

Types of host organizations



- Museum
- Library
- College/School
- Historical Society or Organization
- Community Center
- Other



Volunteer Profile

Hosting an exhibition happens through the help of many volunteers.

On average, a single community is supported by:

- **32** volunteers
- $\frac{1}{2}$ of the volunteers is new to the organization
- **2000** volunteer hours

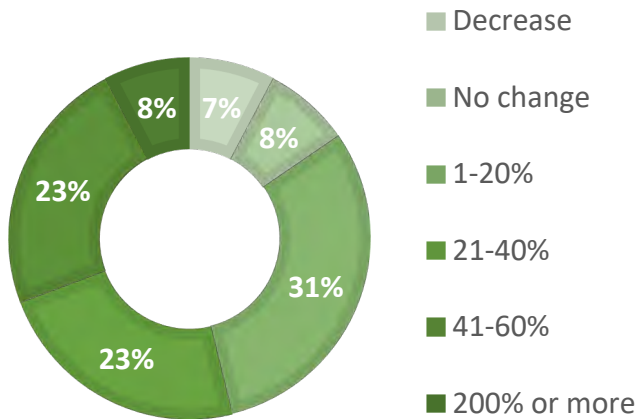
Resulting in a volunteer value of about
\$50,860,-- per community.*

* Based on the Independent Sector's estimate of the average value of a volunteer hour for 2019



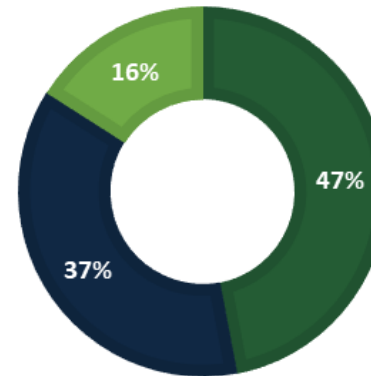
Attendance Profile

ATTENDANCE CHANGE

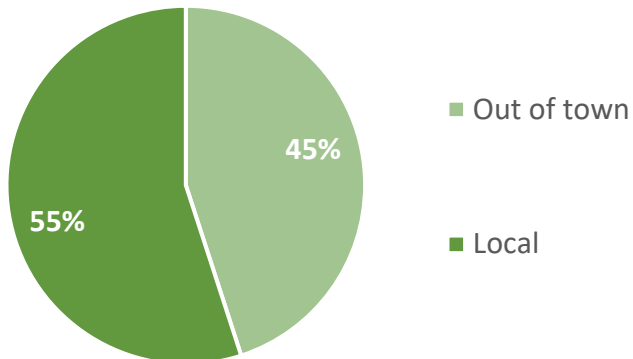


STUDENTS BY AGE BRACKET

■ Elementary School ■ Middle School ■ High School



VISITOR ORIGIN



ATTENDANCE

3,175 Average number of exhibition visitors per community

5,821 Average number of program participants.

Data based on numbers reported by former communities.



Heard on the road!

(Case Studies)

“The value of the exhibit to our community can not be measured. Not only was it a great display but the community felt pride in being selected to display it. Many people in the community will never be able to visit the Smithsonian exhibit so this traveling exhibit gave our residents something new, interesting and lasting memory.” -- Live Oak, FL

Bartow, Florida

Polk County Historical Center

Population: 20,640 people

Attendance: 447

For Exhibit: 250

For Programs/Activities: 197

In kind support: \$770



The local exhibition focused on changes in Polk County that have impacted jobs, health, technology, and transportation. It sparked conversations about the agricultural roots of the town and how rural landscapes have been replaced by emerging urban areas.

Residents and elected officials participated in a panel discussion, *Managing Change: Polk County's Future*. The Audience appreciated being part of the planning for the future of their county.

Students answered the postcard questions, brainstormed about problems and solutions for changes in the county, and completed an activity pack with their parents.



The local exhibit included information on Pughsville, an African-American community. The exhibit attracted many former members of this community, who had never visited the history center.

Cedar Key, Florida

Cedar Key Chamber of Commerce

Population: 700

Attendance: 19,377

Value of Volunteer hours: \$5,579

The host organization in Cedar Key used the Crossroads Exhibition to talk about the local working waterfront. It created an opportunity to explore how changing transportation methods have impacted the community over time.

Additionally, the community created a video about Cedar Key to accompany the Crossroads Exhibition. The video reached over 70,000 viewers on Facebook and is now a permanent fixture of the Cedar Key Visitors Center.

In preparation to hosting *Crossroads*, the community hosted a beach clean effort.



Live Oak, Florida

Suwannee River Regional Library

Population: 44,190

Attendance: 12,183

In-kind support: \$14,168

Oral History projects: 147

Preservation workshops: 1,872

Their local exhibition, “Photos of the Past,” attracted many residents, who could identify people in the photos and reminisce about a bygone era. Topics in a series of lectures ranged from agriculture to art, and from bootlegged alcohol to music and gardening.

The museum took the opportunity of hosting a Smithsonian exhibition to explore a wide variety of marketing reach across three neighboring counties. Their marketing efforts included flyers, postcards, road signs, and social media, and resulted in increased attendance and over 1000 likes on Facebook.



Blue Ridge, Georgia

Blue Ridge Mountains Arts Association

Total Population of Town: 2300+

Total Amount of paid staff: 6

Total Amount of Volunteer staff: 75

Total Volunteer Hours: 336

Total Volunteer Value: 9139.20

Total Attendance: 2884

For Exhibit: 925

For Programs/Activities: 1959



“Zero school groups visited, some child attendance was possible, but no school trips were made due to the pandemic. However, some students from the area were involved in the Stories YES video project and collaborated together to gather media about their town and create short stories. The overall crowd pleaser was the interactive audio box and the kiosk computer.”

-- Blue Ridge Project Coordinator

Cuthbert, Georgia

Andrew College

Total Population: 3500
Number of volunteers: 75
Total Hours Volunteered: 272+
Total Attendance: 2783
For Exhibit: 2558
For Programs/Activities: 225
Local – 70%
Out of Town – 30%

5 Schools visited with a total of 822 children

34% Elementary School
34% Middle School
32% High School



“Sharing ideas and opinions on the postcards highlighted both the serious/thoughtful comments and the comical/ridiculous ones. Amazingly, the local exhibits contributed a warm-homey atmosphere to the overall site, which inspired visitors to stay longer and talk more with one another and the docents. The postcard questions and the local exhibits helped to initiate impromptu stories that otherwise would have never been told.”

-- Cuthbert Project Coordinator

Moscow, Idaho

Latah County Historical Society and
Moscow Chamber of Commerce

Population: 24,000

Attendance: 2,335

In-kind Support: \$3,950

Moscow is a thriving rural community that sits at the crossroads of traditional American Indian trails, wagon roads, railroads, and now highways. IT has seen major changes to local industries, but also still relies heavily on agriculture to sustain itself.

The local exhibit, “Then and Now: Latah County Communities at the Crossroads,” juxtaposed historic photos and contemporary photos of various towns in the county. The exhibit focused on the ways transportation and agricultural technology remade areas communities. Some towns faded away while other re0imagine their futures.



Rexburg, Idaho

Museum of Rexburg

Total population of town: 28,000

Number of paid staff: 4

Number of New Volunteers: 20

Total number of hours volunteered hours: 64

Total Volunteer Value: 1416.96

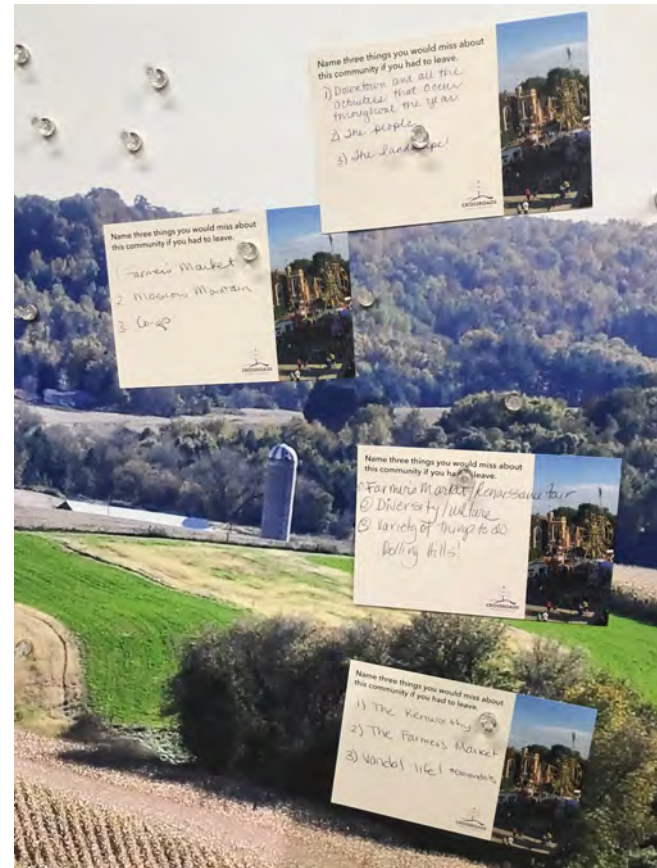
Total Attendance: 4,100

For Exhibit: 3600

For Programs/Activities: 500

Local: 80%

Out of Town: 20%



With the MoMS exhibit we encouraged to build our own exhibit to accompany it. Doing that exhibit helped to spur ideas and thoughts about our community and the relationships with the local university. We had a lot of great feedback about the exhibit and the things that they learned about their town.”



Illinois Humanities

Statewide Project

“The Country and the City: Common Ground in the Prairie State”



In support of *Crossroads*, Illinois Humanities created a discussion series that featured speakers from both urban centers and rural towns **engaging communities** in conversations about the same topics. Events were held in rural and urban places.

The series has continued to **attract attention** as interest in divisions between urban and rural parts of Illinois grow.

Illinois Humanities posted videos from each event on its YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6azPYjj2okHLCda1MhTBU0WkYRzrEO8M>

Atlanta, Illinois

Atlanta Public Library District /
Atlanta Museum

Town Population: 1,640

Attendance: 1,159

Donations: \$10,000

The local exhibition, “Classrooms & Community: Changes in Rural America’s Sense of Community” explores how changes in the educational structure, moving from one-room buildings to consolidated schools in the town, shaped ideas and perceptions of what community means. They were able to highlight oral interviews done in 2018 that focus on their sense of place, memories, and values.

By the end of the project, they created a community mural at their new Visitor and Welcome Center which highlights changes in their community over time. A professional artist worked with local residents, especially students at Olympia High School, to design and paint it.

“This was an amazing experience for our board and staff. It increased our capacity to integrate ideas, think about our community’s history, and work together in meaningful ways. It also generated considerable pride among members of the community.”

- Atlanta Public Librarian



Marshall, Illinois

Marshall Public Library

Population: 3,033 people

Attendance: 2,085

Student visits: 1,500

In-kind support: \$18,100

The local exhibition focused on rural health and changes in farming. Two centennial farms were used in the local exhibition as case studies highlighting changes in family farming over last 100 years.

Presented the screening of a documentary film about Dr. Tom Catena, one of the world's 100 most influential people by *Time Magazine* in 2015 for his work in the war-torn Nuba Mountains of South Sudan. He was trained in a rural medicine curriculum that was developed at a clinic in Marshall.



Shelbyville, Illinois

Lake Shelbyville and UT Army Corps of Engineers

Population: 5,000

Attendance: 2801

Value of In-kind support: \$63,008

Number of volunteer hours: 1,899

The main topics of discussion were changes over time with regard to transportation, innovation, industry, and recreation.

Host organizations worked with a variety of community businesses to create a companion exhibition that featured model tractors, old bank ledgers, and patents. By creating this type of community buy-in, it received over \$60,000 of in-kind support and involved lots of new volunteers.



Bristol, Indiana

Elkhart County Historical Museum

Total Population of Town: 1600
Number of paid staff: 5
Number of volunteer staff: 8
Number of Hours volunteered: 86
Total volunteer Value: 1,904.04
Total Attendance: 845
For Exhibit: 599
For Programs/Activities: 246
Local – 10%
Out of Town – 90%

The museum received new and renewed attention across the county and region. The exhibit with the Smithsonian's brand reputation, drew visitors who had never been here.



“The exhibit generally was a reiteration of ideas and themes we already consider in our content development. The identity section was useful in dispelling stereotypes. That section especially opened our eyes to new ways we can look at other subjects we are teaching at the museum.”

--Director, Elkhart County Historical Museum

Dillsboro, Indiana

Aurora Public Library District, Dillsboro Branch Library

Population: 1,404

Attendance: 1,650 (72% increase)



The local exhibition, “Dillsboro: Where We Were, Where We Are, and Where We’re Going” showed the resilience of the Dillsboro community over the course of the past 50 years.

Local students were inspired by the exhibit postcard question, "If you were mayor, what would you do?," and 275 students submitted essay responses. The town appointed a “Mayor for the Day: who enacted some of their wishes—giving popsicles to everyone in town. Younger residents could see that they have a voice in their community. They could be inspired and empowered to make change in their town.



“Crossroads” truly brought regionalism to Dillsboro. Some of our businesses have been working towards regional marketing and the new Dillsboro Arts/Friendship Gallery also attracts visitors from outside of our area. But, the Crossroads exhibit had a message that resonated with rural America far and wide.”

- Susan Greco, Town of Dillsboro Economic Development Director

North Manchester, Indiana

Center for History/North Manchester Historical Society

Total population of town: 6,100

Number of paid staff: 3

Number of volunteer staff: 25

Total volunteer hours: 1664

Total volunteer value: 43,520.00

Total Attendance: 1275

For exhibit: 454

For Programs/Activities: 821

Local: 70%

Out of Town:30%

“We had 9 different groups visit us in private “Night at the Museum” viewing. Mainly service clubs. They were relaxed, happy to not be in crowds and had all the time they needed to see not only the Crossroads exhibit but also our companion exhibits. They compared notes and shared stories and realized we had an awesome museum. We will continue this program in the future. Each group is invited back once a year to have their regular meeting and then have a private visitation.”



The exhibition gave insight into American history and culture by reminding the visitors that they are so much the same: people with very similar stories.

--Director, Center for History

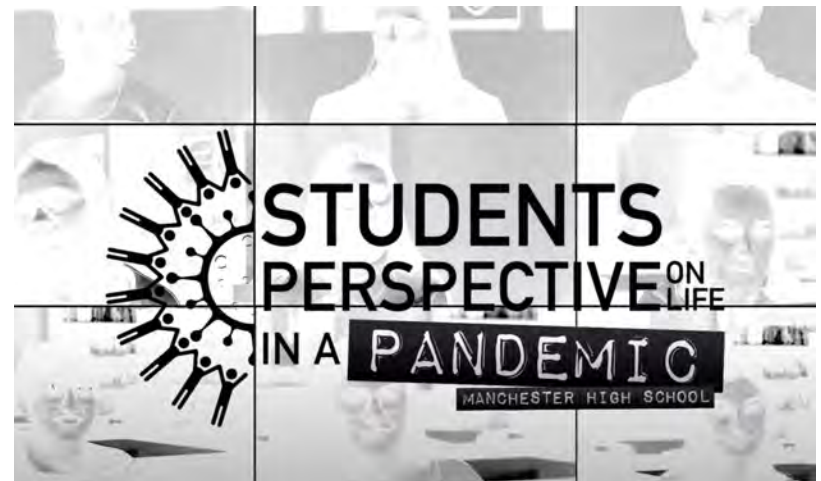
North Manchester, Indiana

Community Youth Project

Youth in **North Manchester** volunteered during independent study time to create two local history video, but when COVID-19 closures led to lengthy school disruptions, extracurricular activities were discontinued. Most of the original student volunteers then graduated. The staff at North Manchester History Center showed great resiliency in finding a new teacher who was willing to take on the video project.

Students interviewed each other about a year in a global pandemic: what they lost, what they gained and how they felt about the future. A strong relationship was built between the school and history center, and more youth projects about local history will be created in the future.

Watch [“Students Perspective on Life in a Pandemic”](#)



Humanities Kansas

Participated in statewide conversation about the future of rural communities through exhibitions and public programs

KH Grants: \$1,500

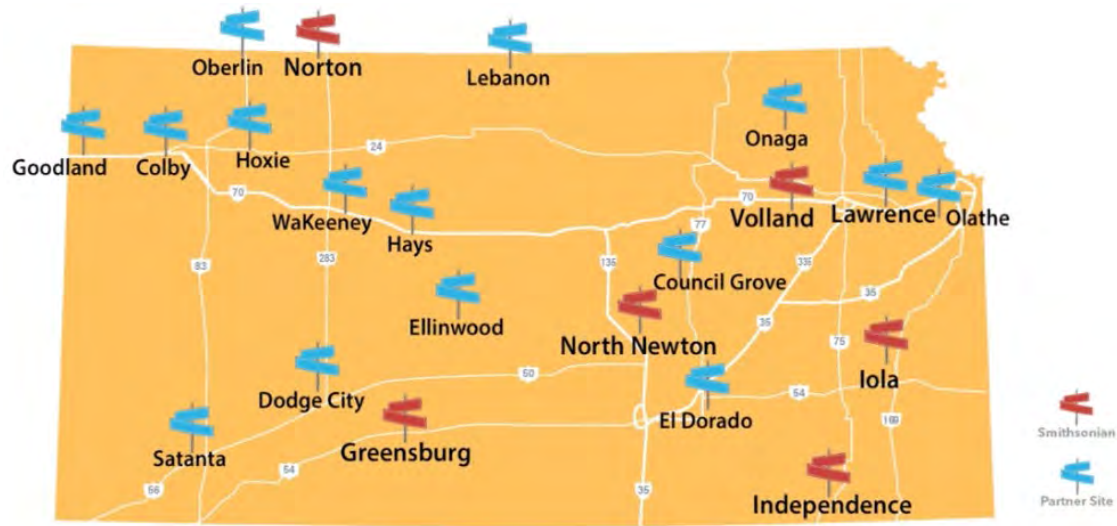
Total people reached: 1,217,023 across Kansas through ancillary and partner sight programs, website views, media coverage and social media

HK created the Crossroads Conversations Resource Catalog, a curated list of presentations from Kansas experts, book discussions, workshops, and at home programs designed to spark conversations about the challenges and changes facing rural Kansas. Communities could work with their local nonprofits to bring these opportunities to their hometown, or individuals could participate at home in activities such as our collaborative Crossroads Spotify playlist – which included songs with themes of home, rural America, change, and community or our reader's theater script called "Love at the Crossroads."



"Hosting a Smithsonian exhibit benefits host communities in numerous ways. When the Smithsonian comes to town host communities experience community pride, capacity building, community partnerships, funding opportunities, and a boost to tourism and the economy." - HK final report

Kansas Infographic



6 Kansas communities hosted the Smithsonian traveling exhibition

15 Kansas communities explored the *Crossroads* theme in their own town

17,000 Kansans visited the *Crossroads* exhibition and engaged in local exhibits and programming

2,500 people visited the online *Crossroads* companion website.

A special publication – *At the Crossroads: Stories of Change in Rural Kansas* – was distributed statewide featuring 16 Kansas stories.

Estimated reach for newspaper and magazine articles: 79 articles, 826,676 circulation.

The *Crossroads Conversations* Resource Catalog included free speakers and book discussions.

58 Kansas nonprofit cultural organizations organized history presentations to examine the *Crossroads* theme.

Alma, Kansas

Volland Foundation

Total population of town: 899

Number of paid staff: 4

Volunteers: 40 (including 19 new volunteers)

Total funds raised: \$18,765 (new memberships, gift shop sales, donations, active fundraising)

Virtual Audience: 16,016 page views, 431% increase

Local Exhibition: *Deep Roots & New Growth in Wabaunsee County* explores rural culture, community life, and ranching through the stories and portraits of local residents.

Through increased community collaboration and online marketing, more people became aware of the Volland Foundation. As a result, they reported visitation from people who had never been to the museum before, more families and bus tours from the retirement community.



The exhibition was installed in an historic general merchandise store re-imagined as a place for art and community, prompting conversations about economic and social factors that impacted the population. People pondered a variety of issues, such as what will happen to family ranches in the next generation, awareness of poor internet access, finding local health care, and closing of local grocery stores.

Iola, Kansas

Fine Arts Center

Total population of town: 5,000

Number of paid staff: 5

Total Attendance: 484

Local – 46%

Out of Town – 54%

“We experienced a wonderful example of how the Smithsonian brand can bring attention to the community hosting an exhibition. A gentleman appeared at our doors on the final weekend. He was from Virginia, and he was traveling for his job. He said he was a lover of the Smithsonian in D.C. but had not been able to visit since it had not been open for many months due to COVID. In his news feed, he read the Crossroads exhibit was in Iola and made the decision to drive 3 hours out of his way to visit the venue. A win win win for the Smithsonian, our venue, and our local economy.”



“Given COVID, we feel it was very timely for the Crossroads project to come to Iola. Many citizens in large populous areas are weighing how they are experiencing the pandemic in city vs. rural. It was a wonderful conversation starter for our county to see if there is an opportunity to guide those city crossroads in the direction of our community.”

-- Iola Project Coordinator

Nerinx, Kentucky

Loretto Heritage Center

Total population of town: 700

Number of paid staff: 5

Number of new volunteers: 26

Attendance: 1,317

Partner Organizations: 9

Students from the local high school used postcard questions and MoMS program resources to create a project about urban vs rural life. They worked with three 5th grade classes to do an art contest about their favorite part of the community. High school students also conducted oral history interviews about the last 50 years of the community and helped to staff the exhibition during open hours.

Marion County is a farming community that has undergone many changes. The local history exhibition of local people and places was very popular, and most visitors spent between 1.5 to 2 hours in the local and national exhibition. An area about military service from WWI to the present was very popular. It will become a permanent installation at City Hall.



The exhibit brought out feelings of pride for the strength and rich heritage of the local communities.

Western Marion County has a rich history that has undergone many changes and challenges over the last century, but the community remains close-knit and resilient.

- Nerinx Project Coordinator

Sample visitor responses to Crossroads postcards

If you were granted one wish, what change for good would you make in your town?

That everyone would be color blind.

The junked up places. A disgrace and ugly for the eyes.

Someone build some small buildings to rent out to the artists in our area. Make them look old. Bring the train back. Benches in downtown area for people to gather (morning coffee).

If you were mayor, what would you do?

Promote farmer's markets and have city recycling and compost pick-up.

Let's go back to all organic. No pesticides or herbicides!

Sidewalks—get people out and about safely.

What has your community lost that most matters to you and why?

The railroad – major tourist loss. Catholic school!!!

Father Brian helped with my faith. [Fr. Bryan Lamberson died earlier in 2021]

Military people because they risked their lives to fight for our country.

Love and respect for one another. Some people have forgotten common courtesy.

Historic buildings. We need to preserve our history and our charm.

Name three things you would miss about this community if you had to leave.

Ham Days parade, the nice citizens, the agriculture.

Our good church, good food, and family and friends.

The people, the food, the hospitality.

The closeness that you have living in a small town; low traffic; peacefulness.

Describe your town in ten years. Who is here and why?

Busting with townspeople and tourists. Cleaned up with various shops. Lots of fun things to do and see.

Glasgow, Kentucky

Museum of the Barrens and Mary Weldon Public Library

Total population of town: 14,028

Number of paid staff: 3

Number of new volunteers: 26

Attendance: 1,358

Crossroads arrived just as the museum was reopening to the public. The Smithsonian name and auxiliary programs helped draw people to the museums, however, schools were unable to directly participate due to pandemic restrictions.

There was a vast array of virtual public programs, including book discussions, demonstrations about local crafts like basket making, jelly canning and freezing and an art show, "My Rural Home".

Public programs included a cemetery tour of changes in the rural South and an exhibition about education in the Barrens including a film from the cultural center's one room school exhibit. They printed and distributed a booklet called "Voices of the Segregated Past"



Greenwood, Mississippi

Museum of Mississippi Delta

Total population of town: 12,946

Number of paid staff: 4 (2.5 fte)

Number of new volunteers: 35

Total volunteer hours: 495

Total Attendance: 863 even with restrictions due to COVID-19

Despite COVID closures, reported increased visibility of the museum through the press, talk radio, flyers, postcards, posters, and social media.

As a result of hosting *Crossroads*, reported improved professional practices among staff and increased knowledge of educational practices.

Local exhibition, *Hometown Heroes*, featured local athletes who went on to play professional sports and could have settled anywhere, but chose to come back to Greenwood to live. The exhibition highlighted the values and allure of their hometown as expressed by these athletes.

--Greenwood Project Coordinator



Senatobia, Mississippi

Northwest Mississippi Community College

Total population of town: 7,610

Number of paid staff: 14

Number of volunteer staff: 14

Total volunteer hours: 495

Total Volunteer Value: 12,275.05

Total Attendance: 848

Local – 85%

Out of Town: 15%

“Seeing people’s faces light up when they saw things that triggered their memories or past events or of their grandparents and listening to different people’s stories of their past and present. Meeting community members who came to see the exhibit was seeing and meeting rural America face-to-face.”

“One of the best experiences for me as a host of Crossroads was seeing our graphic arts instructor bring her students in and literally go through the exhibit panel by panel illustrating design concepts, she was teaching them in class. Many of our students are from very small, rural communities and to give them the opportunity to see a Smithsonian exhibit that is so well-designed and to incorporate it as part of their educational experiences was one of the most amazing moments of my career.”



Ardmore, Oklahoma

Johnston County Library
(Southern Oklahoma Library System)

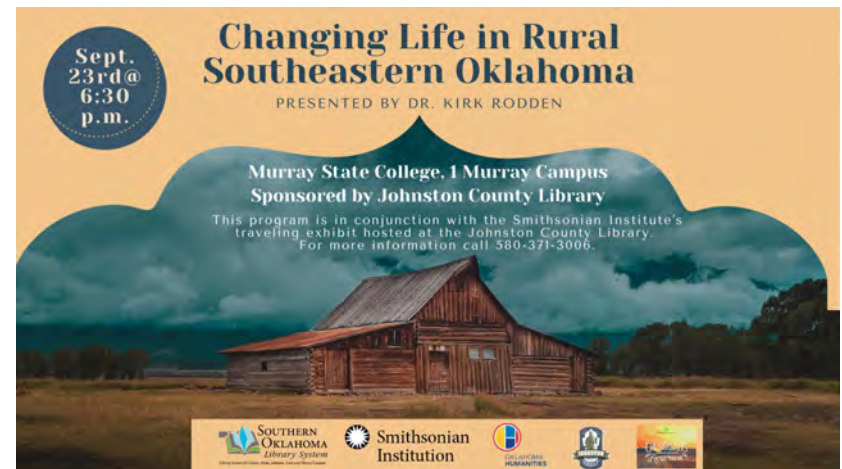
Population: 3,071

Attendance: 10, 594 reported a 1000% increase from previous year due to COVID restrictions.

Total In-Kind Support: \$37,617

Total Volunteer Value: \$3,321

The library partnered with several successful partners including universities, public schools, other libraries, historical societies, and private businesses.



“Oftentimes in rural communities it can seem as though life has passed us by, but that couldn't be further from the truth. Some of the best things in America come from rural areas and this exhibit and the corresponding programs allowed us to highlight them and inspire pride in our hometowns.

This exhibit and other Smithsonian exhibits like it, are a wonderful opportunity for small and rural communities. Attendees to these exhibits will in no way feel "short-changed", they will be getting the true Smithsonian experience in their local community.”

- Alyson Blankenship; Johnston County Library

Nowata, Oklahoma

Nowata County Historical Society

Population: 3,500

Attendance: 701, representing a 400% increase from 2019

Paid Staff: 0

Volunteer Staff: 50

Total In-Kind Support Value: \$10,895

“We, as many other sites, are struggling to survive and to grow, it helps to know we are not alone in our efforts to preserve a rural way of life and still thrive with finding new jobs, industry, and growth.

These aspects of the experience were the most rewarding for the community: First was pride in being selected to be a host site in the state. The next was partaking in the special extra events we had scheduled, playing with bulls, talking with bullfighters and bull riders, making butter, learning how to create amazing pieces of lace from threads and metal, working with Cherokee craftswomen making native articles, weaving and beading, making clothing, as well as enjoying real cowboy beans and coffee served from an antique chuck wagon.”

-- Frank Wallace, Nowata County Historical Society



South Carolina Humanities

Communal Pen Writing Programs



South Carolina Humanities and its long-time collaborator, the South Carolina Arts Commission, frequently work together on statewide arts and literacy projects. In support of *Crossroads*, the two organizations developed a creative writing program, *Communal Pen*, that used exhibition content to encourage participants to **write about their experiences and memories** of their hometowns. For *Crossroads*, workshops were held in each host community.

Communal Pen is now part of the MoMS experience for all host communities in South Carolina. Writing programs related to MoMS' *Water/Ways* exhibition expanded across the state when the project moved to a digital format during the COVID pandemic in 2020. *Voices and Votes* writing workshops programs will launch in 2022, taking the project into its fourth year.



Hopkins, South Carolina

Historic Harriet Barber House

Population: 3,023

Attendance: 836

Funding support: \$24,969

Value of volunteer hours: \$15,343



Crossroads was shown in the historic Harriet Barber House located on a 42-acre tract of land purchased in 1872 by Samuel Barber, who was a well-digger as a slave, and his wife Harriet. Barber was a farmer and a minister after the Civil War.

Over 100 people gathered at the exhibition opening for food, music, and to pay historical tribute to the Harriet Barber House. "Front Porch Music" was a popular event using traditional roots music to celebrate local culture and bring people to see *Crossroads*.

They hosted a series of teacher workshops in preparation for the exhibition to engage local teachers.



Dillon, South Carolina

Dillon County Theatre Association at the Dillon County Courthouse



Population: 1,611

In collaboration with the Dillon County Theatre Association, students in the nearby communities of Lake View and Latta, explored the county's past to gear up for the arrival of *Crossroads*. Nearly 20 young people, guided by educators, researched, interviewed and produced stories. After covering everything from Main Street to sports to agriculture, Lake View High School student stories aired on the school news program Gator TV Morning News. The stories developed by Latta Middle School were shown to the county school board. When *Crossroads* opened at the Dillon County Courthouse, videos produced by both schools were shown to visitors.

"Small towns in South Carolina are the backbone of its rich history." – Student, Latta, South Carolina

Wyoming Humanities

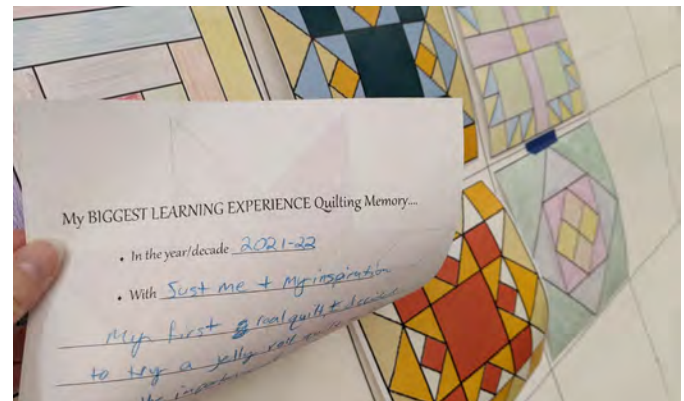
Crossroads has been awesome.... Connection to the land spoke to many with Wyoming having 17 million acres of BLM land. Every community has found a way to make the exhibit meaningful to them. The exhibit made rural folks feel understood and generated wonderful community programs and discussions. Especially for our council, inspired by the Crossroads themes, we have a statewide initiative to create conversations in all communities about change, persistence and identity in Wyoming today. I see this being a topic of ours for a long time.

--Lucas Fralick, Wyoming Humanities

(Right) Rural Wyoming programs in Laramie, WY.

Quilting Bee drew quilters and developed a sense of community and conversation about long held craft customs.

Two branch libraries sponsored a "Photo Challenge," displaying archival photos and encouraged community members to find photo locations and take new ones in the same spot. Side-by-side comparisons prompted conversations about changes, acknowledging the past and focusing on the future.



Cheyenne, Wyoming

Laramie County Library System

Total population of town: 65,132

Number of paid staff: 89

Number of new volunteers: 144

Attendance: 7,421

Local Exhibition: Art at the Wyoming Crossroads

Value of In-kind support: \$55,496

As a sparsely populated state, larger communities are also impacted by what happens in rural areas. Programs focused on rural cultural and historical identity. Local exhibition featured artists who grew up in Laramie county and who have careers in the newly-flourishing creative economy.

Though COVID restricted school tours, extensive media interest in Crossroads raised the visibility of the library. More than 330 people attended the opening celebration—largest ever!

[Crossroads] is successful in making rural history and culture feel personal....and allowed the viewers to feel like a distinct and important part of American history and culture.



Stuart, Virginia

Creative Arts Center

Total population of town: 1,675

Number of paid staff: 3

Volunteers: 13 (including 9 new volunteers)

Attendance: 5,619

Total funds raised: \$5,000 (grants)

Local exhibits included a *Tiny Houses*, a collection of tiny houses created by community members who responded to the prompt “what does home or community mean to you” and a photographic display of Patrick County over the past 100 years.

Programs included a hike and talk at Fairy Stone State Park, a Christmas parade, and a documentary screening and discussion of *Up & Down These Roads*, a documentary that examines the continuity and change of Patrick County, VA.



Lovingston, Virginia

Nelson County Economic Development and Tourism

Total population of town: 494

Number of paid staff: 3

Volunteers: 1

Attendance: 3,488

10 School groups visited (150 students total)

Students made music videos, researched family histories and created storyboards, took photos of rural places and framed them.

Nelson County is updating their comprehensive plan over the next 18 months, and they used *Crossroads* and particularly the Land section to launch discussions about land use and future growth for the county.



*I had a local artist stop by my office today – in tears – she was so proud!
She said that the exhibit validated why she lives in a rural area.“*

--Maureen Kelly, local coordinator for Crossroads in Nelson County

Arthurdale, West Virginia

Arthurdale Heritage

Total population of town: 1,084

Number of paid staff: 2

Volunteers: 40

Attendance: 695

Local exhibition showed how rural work and culture transitioned in the area and highlighted how “pride of place” is still a vital part of West Virginia identity

Arthurdale Heritage formed critical partnerships: working with WV University’s Humanities program to develop an honors course on the community and joining with a local community group to provide STEM activities for students



The MoMS exhibition spurred conversations between people of different ages, generations, and backgrounds, especially in the section that talks about persistence. There were many discussions on how we should define this work and what persistence looks like as the practices that will shape our future.

-- Darlene Bolyard, Director, Arthurdale Heritage

"What I stand on is what I stand for"
Wendell Berry, historian and poet

About Rural

Interpretations from artists, authors, and historians have played an important role in defining the identity of rural Americans. Through their tell stories of hard work, struggles in rural life, migration, or the joys of connection to nature, these writers have given us new expressions of what they believed rural life to be. Select a book and explore these authors' perspectives, from both past and present.

How have views of rural America changed over time?



Constant Change, Resilient Americans



Settlement

IF YOU WANT A LOT OF HOME
with little money
in **ARIZONA, TOPKA & SONS LANDS**
DON'T GO FOR WHAT LOOKS GREAT
but that's empty in the middle



Life at the Rural Crossroads

Change has always shaped rural life, including migration, business growth and decline, school consolidation, and conflict of class, gender, race, and ethnicity.

Rural families juggle multiple jobs. Some depend on seasonal labor opportunities to make ends meet. Most farm families have more off-farm than on-farm income. Many may be just one accident or family trauma away from economic jeopardy.

It can be a hard life. Why would someone choose to stay? Love of the land. Community spirit. Persistence and commitment. Family and personal relationships.

These are just a few of the many motivations that have helped rural and small-town Americans maintain resilience in the face of uneven opportunity.



Identity



Selected Press and Social Media Coverage

'Change in Rural America' exhibit attracts crowds – Farm Week Now (Illinois)

<https://farmweeknow.com/story-change-rural-america-exhibit-attracts-crowds-0-186909>

'Crossroads: Change in Rural America' – The Sault News (Michigan)

<https://www.sooeveningnews.com/news/20190118/crossroads-change-in-rural-america>

Smithsonian to Rural Regions: Your Wealth Is In Your Culture – PEW Charitable Trusts

<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2019/09/06/smithsonian-to-rural-regions-your-wealth-is-in-your-culture>

Smithsonian exhibit visits Voorhees – The Times and Democrat (South Carolina)

https://thetandd.com/news/local/smithsonian-exhibit-visits-voorhees/article_7c27cc78-1a29-5c93-84af-52d2776b9ade.html

EMCC Scooba library chosen for Smithsonian exhibition – The Meridian Star (Mississippi)

https://www.meridianstar.com/news/local_news/emcc-scooba-library-chosen-for-smithsonian-exhibition/article_958d5fd5-9ad8-5b53-96fb-bd4353d7d474.html

Smithsonian Exhibit About Rural America Makes Tracks to Salem – WBIW.com (Indiana)

<http://www.wbiw.com/2019/10/17/smithsonian-exhibit-about-rural-america-makes-tracks-to-salem/>

At the Crossroads: Rural communities spotlighted in traveling Smithsonian exhibit

- REMC Magazine (Indiana)

"Museum on Main Street" comes to Dillsboro

- Vevay Reveille Enterprise & Switzerland County Democrat (Indiana)

Smithsonian exhibit kicks off Indiana tour at Dillsboro library - The Journal Press (Indiana)

Coming to a Crossroads: Traveling Smithsonian exhibit explores six rural communities across Indiana.

- AAA Crossroads Magazine

Smithsonian exhibit settles in at Old School - My Journal Courier (Illinois)

<https://www.myjournalcourier.com/news/article/Smithsonian-exhibit-settles-in-at-Old-School-13338434.php>

Crossroads: Change in Rural America reopens at DeKalb County History Center

- Daily Chronicle (Illinois)

<https://www.daily-chronicle.com/2019/07/09/crossroads-change-in-rural-america-reopens-at-dekalb-county-history-center/ah4xg03/>

Smithsonian 'Crossroads' exhibit on tour in Illinois - AgriNews (Illinois)

http://www.agrinews-pubs.com/news/smithsonian-crossroads-exhibit-on-tour-in-illinois/article_2410ab9b-77d8-50e9-a991-3ff41b9a59ea.html

SC Artist represents state's rural landscape in Smithsonian exhibit - The State (South Carolina)

<https://www.thestate.com/entertainment/article221835760.html>

Grand opening for Smithsonian exhibit Saturday - The Monroe News (Michigan)

<https://www.monroenews.com/news/20190905/grand-opening-for-smithsonian-exhibit-saturday>

Rural America at a Crossroads: Smithsonian traveling exhibit opens at Atlanta Museum

- The Herald News (Illinois)

<http://newherald.news/rural-america-at-a-crossroads-smithsonian-traveling-exhibit-opens-at-atlan-p8567-103.htm>

Smithsonian exhibit opens at the Atlanta Museum - The Courier (Illinois)

<https://www.lincolncourier.com/news/20190129/smithsonian-exhibit-opens-at-atlanta-museum>

Indiana Humanities Crossroads review video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUyKdJl23r8>

Laramie County Library System
December 18, 2021

Check out these before, during, and after photos of our "Crossroads: Change in Rural America" exhibit installation!

Ever wondered what it takes to set up a traveling exhibit? Three library staff members, a Wyoming Humanities employee, and a library volunteer spent about 10 hours unpacking and installing the six different exhibit panels throughout the building.

After much hard work (and a little elbow grease) "Crossroads: Change in Rural America" is now on display! Come see it at the library any time before January 23.

This exhibit is part of *Museum on Main Street*, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and Wyoming Humanities.

Kelly Storey, Venetia Cook and 26 others · 1 Share

Laramie County Library System
December 21, 2021

The "Crossroads: Change in Rural America" exhibit asks visitors to answer questions about their community by filling out a postcard and returning it to the mailbox on the 2nd floor.

We've received some amazing responses so far, and wanted to share a few! We'd love to hear more answers to these important questions, so visit the library to fill out a postcard or share your answers in the comments below.

This exhibit is brought to Laramie County Library as part of *Museum on Main Street*, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and Wyoming Humanities.

4 · 2 Shares

Laramie County Library System
January 11

Have you seen the art currently on exhibit in the library? Come by before January 25 to check out "Art at the Wyoming Crossroads." The art is located on the first floor of the library in the display cases along the entrance gallery, in the display case by the elevators, and on the wall by the Book Sale Room.

Four home-grown artists have work on display in conjunction with the Smithsonian's exhibit "Crossroads: Change in Rural America".

Joshua Brady (Dirty Hands Art Workshop), Danielle Kirby (Danielle Kirby - Fine Art), Steve Knox (Fine Art by Steve Knox), and Narissa Kennedy all grew up and attended school in Cheyenne. Each of the artists contribute to the creative fabric of our community by beautifying the city with both their artwork and their dedication to making Cheyenne a vibrant and engaging place to live.

Learn more about these fantastic artists and "Crossroads" by visiting <https://k1stooline.org/crossroads/>.

Kelly Storey, Elaine Jones Hayes and 44 others · 1 Comment · 12 Shares

Laramie County Library System
November 23, 2021

The news is out! We are hosting the Smithsonian exhibit "Crossroads: Change in Rural America" from December 11 to January 23. The exhibit will be accompanied by a local art exhibit and lots of fun events, so stay tuned for more information!

Crossroads: Change in Rural America has been made possible in Cheyenne by Wyoming Humanities. Crossroads: Change in Rural America is part of *Museum on Main Street*, a collaboration between the Smithsonian and State Humanities Councils out... [See more](#)

WYOMINGNEWSNOW.TV

Laramie County Library to host Smithsonian Exhibit in December

The display features multiple panels going on the first, second, and third floor of the library.

Kelly Storey, Elaine Jones Hayes and 41 others · 10 Shares

Sample Facebook Coverage

When many hear the phrase "rural America," we have more assumptions than facts. There is so much more to the story of rural America. From our @sitesExhibits and @MuseumOnMainSt, #RuralCrossroads invites us to explore change in rural America.

-Tweet by Lonnie G. Bunch III, Secretary, Smithsonian



Sample Smithsonian Twitter Coverage

