



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



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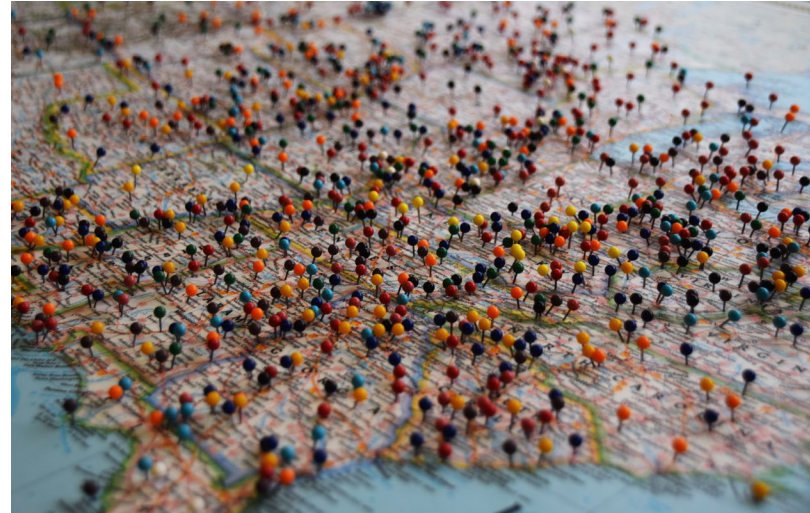
Museum on Main Street



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 1600 communities in all 50 states.





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

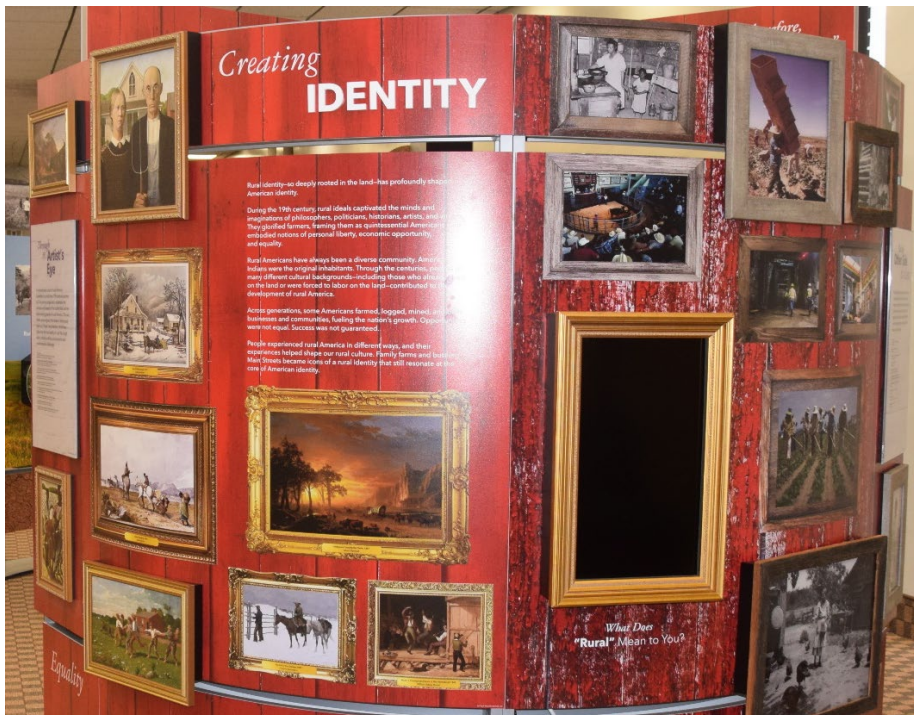
American culture is filled with romantic views of rural life and culture.

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?

As a Mayor, what would you do?

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



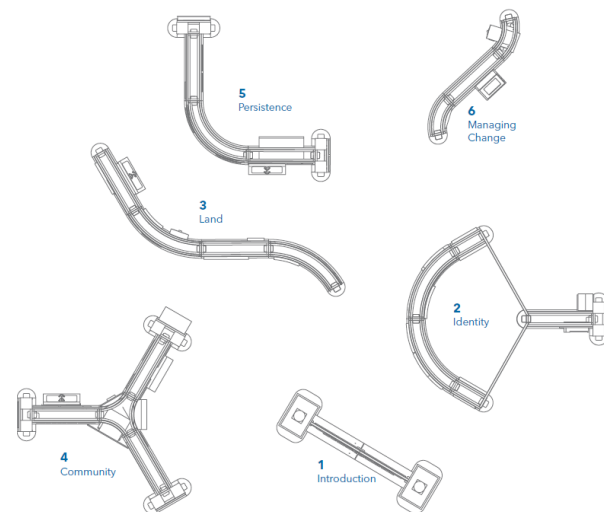
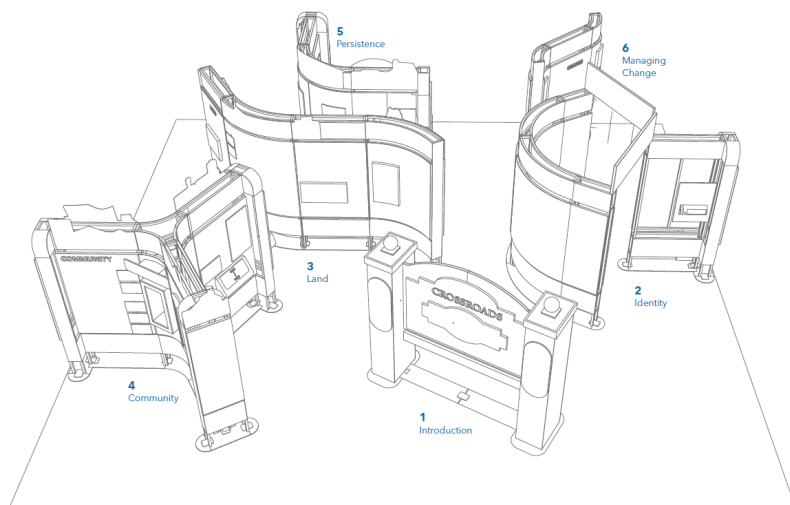


Specifications

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







TOWN HALL
AND
MACHINE HOODS

1878

REINHARDT

1880

MUNSON

1879

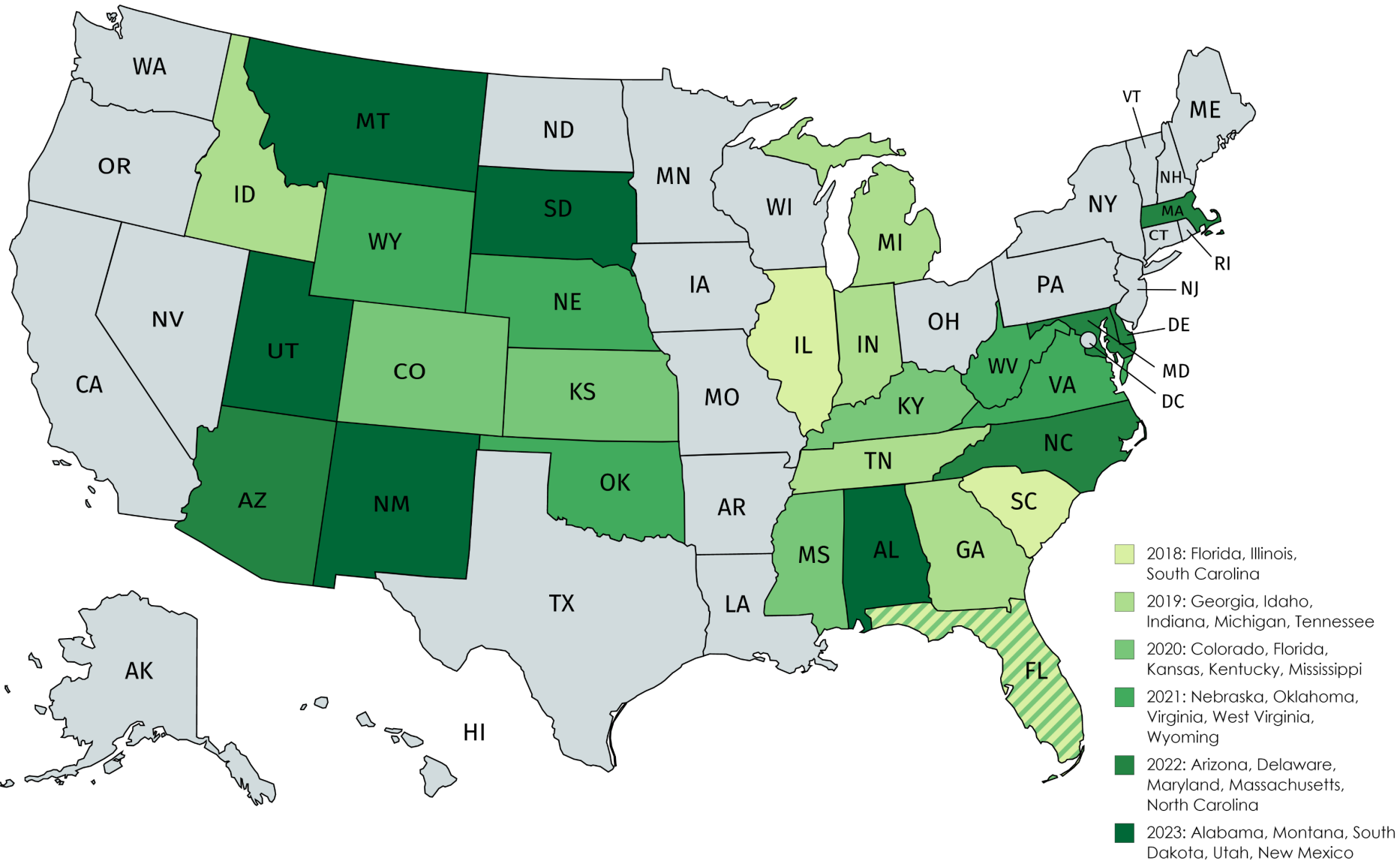
LEACH

oneLuckydog BAKERY



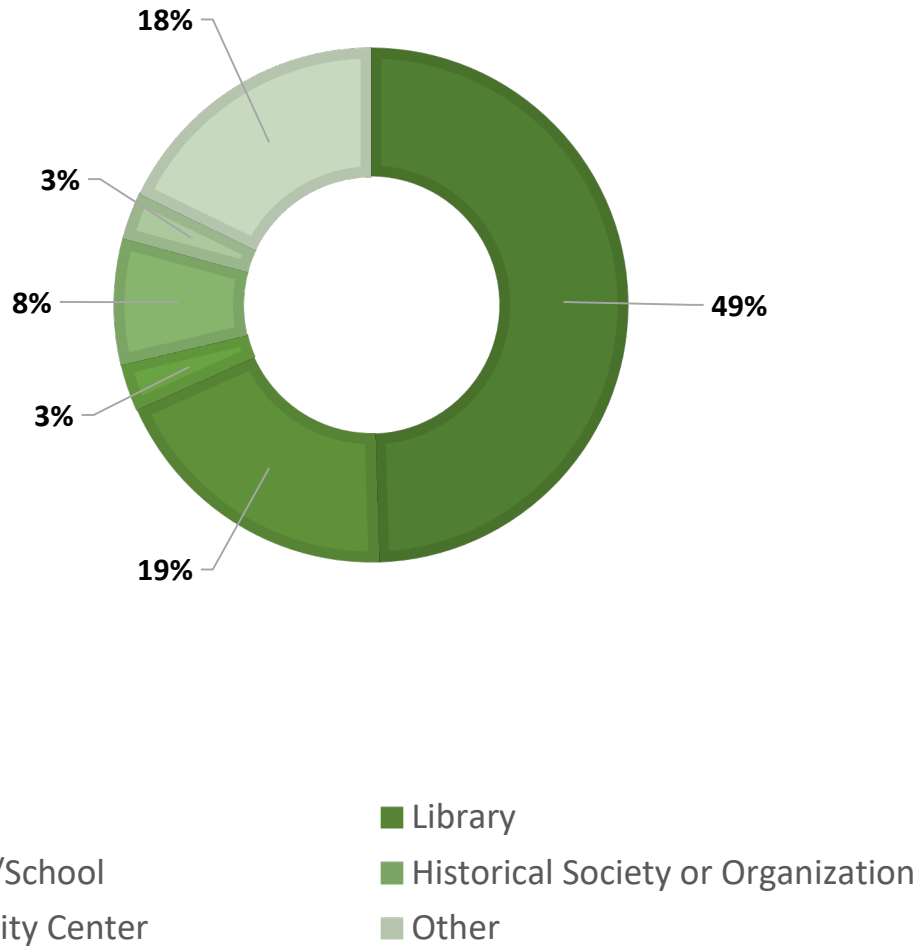
Statistics

Where is *Crossroads*?



Please note: Except for Utah, 2023 host states have placed holds but have not yet contracted

Types of host organizations



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

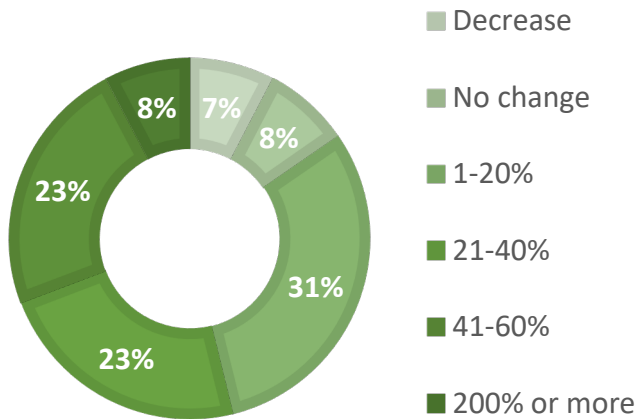
Resulting in a volunteer value of about
\$50,860,-- per community.*

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



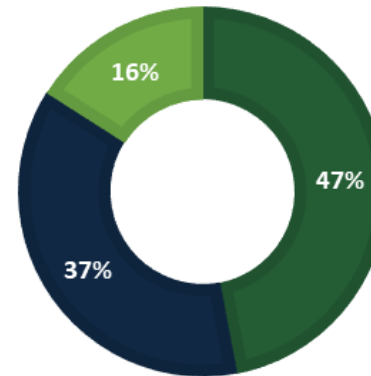
Attendance Profile

ATTENDANCE CHANGE

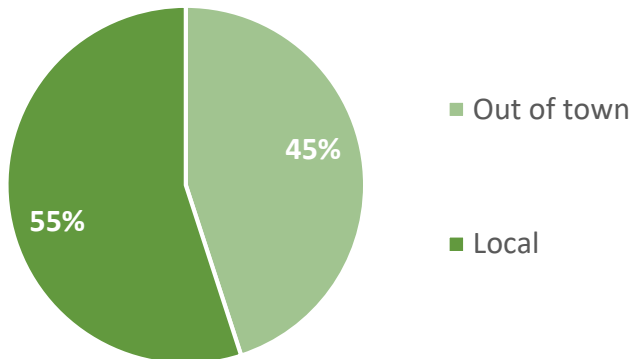


STUDENTS BY AGE BRACKET

■ Elementary School ■ Middle School ■ High School



VISITOR ORIGIN



ATTENDANCE

3175 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: 19,597 people

Attendance: 22,473 (239% increase)

In kind support: \$16,818

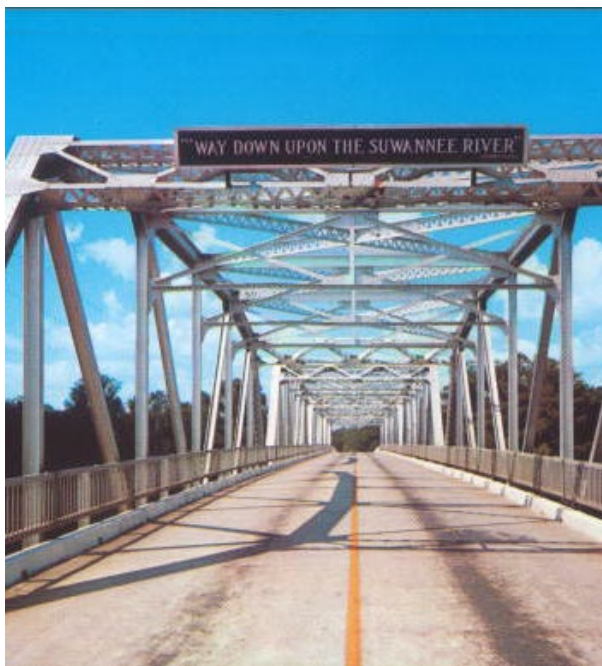
The local exhibition focused on changes in Polk County that have impacted jobs, health, technology, and transportation. It sparked conversations about the agricultural roots of the town and how rural landscapes have been replaced by emerging urban areas.

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.

Student 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.



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.

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.



Shelbyville, Illinois

Lake Shelbyville and UT Army Corps of Engineers

Population: 5,000

Attendance: 2801

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 an 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.



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



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



Dillsboro, Indiana

Aurora Public Library District, Dillsboro Branch Library

Population: 1,404

Attendance: 1,650 (72% increase)



Their 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



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.

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.



About Rural

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

How have views of rural America changed over time?

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



Constant Change, Resilient Americans



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.



Marion American Family, California, 1912



Early Family portrait, California, 1912



Early Family portrait, California, 1912

Identity



County Times
 VOLUME NO. 151 NUMBER 44
crowd welcomes Smithsonian Exhibit
 By CARMEN ENSINGER
 School Museum owners Trish and Andy Wallace began trying to get the exhibit to Winchester more than a year ago. "This has been a long we here while back to be

JOURNAL COURIER
 Breaking news at myjournalcourier.com
 Friday, October 26, 2018 • \$1
Smithsonian exhibit settles in at Old School
 By Angela Bauer
 "It's like the Rolling Stones were moving in. It arrived in 15 huge, rolling cases. We then had to take everything out and assemble it. Each kiosk deals with a

CROSSROADS
 Change in Rural America
 The wait is over—The Smithsonian Museum exhibit, "Crossroads: Change in Rural America" opens at the Winchester Old School Museum on Oct. 27 and will run through Dec. 8.

Smithsonian Exhibition of Rural America delights local residents
 By CARMEN ENSINGER
 explores how an attraction to and interaction with the land formed the basis of our rural culture, and how rural communities and small towns evolve and change. It also highlights how change transformed rural America, especially during the 1900s and how rural Americans are evolving for the future.

Smithsonian exhibit provides opportunity for school students
 By CARMEN ENSINGER
 An excellent opportunity to learn about history in rural America will be taking place at the Old School Museum in Winchester from Oct. 27 through Dec. 8 as the Smithsonian exhibit, "Crossroads: Change in Rural America" opens.

Scott County Times
 WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2018
 WINCHESTER, IL 62694
Smithsonian Exhibit to open Saturday at Old School Museum
 By CARMEN ENSINGER
 The wait is over—The Smithsonian Museum exhibit, "Crossroads: Change in Rural America" opens at the Winchester Old School Museum on Oct. 27 and will run through Dec. 8.

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 Main Street exhibit

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 Local Business
 AGRICULTURE
 D & L Project Management Inc.
 13178 Co
 Nemo, IL 6

Bluffs Students of the Month
 See page A5
WGS welcomes CD Davismeyer
 See page A3
SPORTS

Selected Press 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>

