

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**National Study on Rural Arts Features Vermont's Creative Economy**

***National Governors Association publishes Rural Action Guide for Governors and States***

Montpelier—A study released today by the National Governors Association suggests that “By using the creative sector—specifically, arts and culture assets—governors have a viable approach for strengthening economic opportunities and vibrancy in rural communities.” The study demonstrates that arts, culture, and creative enterprises often drive economic development in rural areas. Among the successful, high-profile creative sector initiatives showcased in the report are three in Vermont.

“Vermont, one of the most rural states in the country, has long recognized the importance of arts and culture in energizing communities and building economic value outside of urban population centers,” said Vermont Arts Council Executive Director Karen Mittelman. “Now, when Vermont is contending with declining population and persistent economic challenges, it is critical for us to harness the potential of the creative sector to catalyze change.”

Among the many initiatives cited in the report, the Vermont Creative Network is featured as an innovative example of a statewide support system for artists and creative entrepreneurs. According to Mittelman, “The Creative Network represents an important statewide commitment to position arts and cultural life at the heart of Vermont's future.”

The nationwide study also highlights the Danville Transportation Project, completed in 2014, which redeveloped a section of U.S. Route 2 that ran through the center of this small Northeast Kingdom town. The design mandate “was to strengthen the community’s sense of place and celebrate its natural, built, cultural and historical assets. Beyond that mandate, the artists helped resolve major divisiveness in the community over where the highway should be situated and how to keep the village center intact.” Find more information about the [Danville Project](#).

Also featured is the Jeffersonville Silos Project, made possible through a Vermont Arts Council Animating Infrastructure Grant, which brought the community together to hire an artist to create large murals on two abandoned concrete silos. Find more information about the [Silos Project](#).

The study, entitled *Rural Prosperity Through the Arts and Creative Sector: A Rural Action Guide for Governors and States*” is available [online](#).

### **About the Vermont Arts Council**

The Vermont Arts Council envisions a Vermont where all people have access to the arts and creativity in their lives, education, and communities. Engagement with the arts transforms individuals, connects us more deeply to each other, energizes the economy, and sustains the vibrant cultural landscape that makes Vermont a great place to live. Since 1965, the Council has been the state's primary provider of funding, advocacy, and information for the arts in Vermont. [www.vermontartscouncil.org](http://www.vermontartscouncil.org).

### **About the Vermont Creative Network**

The Vermont Creative Network (VCN) is a broad collective of organizations, businesses, and individuals working to advance Vermont's creative sector. Established by the Vermont Legislature in 2016 with support from the Vermont Community Foundation, this network of statewide creatives, economic and community development professionals, and nonprofit leaders has identified the need for comprehensive analysis of and action plan for the creative economy in Vermont. [www.vermontcreativenetwork.org](http://www.vermontcreativenetwork.org).

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