

**“Valuing Regional Traditions: Program Development
at Mountain City Traditional Arts”**

(Sub-Contract Grantee Name/Authorized Signatory/Address/Phone)

(This is not the same person as the ATP faculty director.)

President Jonathan Gibraltar

Frostburg State University

101 Braddock Road

Frostburg, MD 21532

301-687-4111

(ATP project date)

September 2011 – May 30, 2012

(Date this document was submitted)

May 30, 2012

(Project director’s name, title, telephone number, and email address)

Dr. Kara Rogers Thomas

Assistant Professor of Folklore & Sociology

Final Report Narrative

Name of Project: Valuing Regional Traditions: Program Development at Mountain City Traditional Arts

Grant Period: February 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012

Grantee Name: Frostburg State University Project Director: Dr. Kara Rogers Thomas

Description of Project:

Under the direction of Dr. Kara Rogers Thomas, Sociology, Frostburg State University students enrolled in SOCI 350: Folklore in Appalachia, developed public programming for Mountain City Traditional Arts, a Frostburg shop and venue supported by the Allegany Arts Council, FrostburgFirst: A Main Street Community, and Frostburg State University. Students worked in teams to book artists from the Appalachian region to develop presentations and performances geared toward specific folklore genres. Students were given the primary responsibility for producing the events—including planning, production, advertising and documentation. Such programming is intended to heighten the recognition and appreciation for the venue, which will in turn create greater value for the traditional arts. Ultimately, participants hope this will translate into increased sales for artists and move the City of Frostburg closer to its goal of building per capita income through its investment in marketing its Arts & Entertainment District.

Activities:

Students enrolled in Sociology 350: Folklore in Appalachia participated in the Appalachian Regional Commission's Teaching Project, partnering with MCTA and working closely with MCTA interns. The majority of the programs took place in the Fall Semester, with two programs were added in early Spring. With assistance from MCTA interns, students were responsible for producing these programs and events—including planning, production, advertising and documentation

FSU students developed programming and hosted a total of nine events at Mountain City Traditional Arts over the course of the project period, garnering a total of more than 240 attendees.

The list of programs included:

- *Fiddle and Dance (26 attendees) with Gerry Milnes and Rebecca Hill of Elkins, WV
- *German Appalachian Folklore (60 attendees) with Gerry Milnes of Elkins, WV
- *Shawnee Wildcrafting (15 attendees), with of Friendsville, MD
- *Bear Hill Bluegrass (24 attendees), with Joe and Janet Winebrenner of Moorefield, WV
- *Cherokee Storytelling (45 attendees), with Joseph Stands With Many of Baltimore, MD
- *Traditional Glass Making (14 attendees), with Elizabeth Braun of PawPaw, WV
- *Storytelling (16 attendees), with Katie and Otto Ross of Ridgely, WV
- *TWANG! Barbershop Quartet performance (22 attendees), with all members from Western Maryland.
- *Moonshine History and Mayhem (25 attendees), with Tim Rowland of Hagerstown, MD

Project Outcomes:

- Nine programs booked, developed, marketed and produced beginning in October and running through early April.
- Participation in and Presentation at the December Appalachian Teaching Project Gathering in DC.
- Development of Poster documenting project made available at the DC Gathering and displayed at Mountain City Traditional Arts.
- Participation in the Frostburg Arts Walk, which featured the screening of the video project documenting the ATP Teaching Project.

- A library of the audio/video documentation of the project is available for viewing through Mountain City Traditional Arts. Segments of this programming will also soon be available on YouTube and the MCTA blog/website and through the Appalachian Independent online resource.

Problems Encountered:

Delivering such a project in a single semester is always a challenge. When beginning the course, most students have little to no background in folklore studies; and their knowledge of Appalachian Studies is limited at best. Thus students must be provided a foundation in both fields prior to being able to design programs and book artists. The vast majority of students weren't able to begin working with artists prior to October, and needing a minimum of two weeks to advertise the event, most programs took place in a six week time span between late October and early December. The programming may have been more effective had it been spread out more broadly over the course of the semester.

Moreover, because our project focused on program development featuring performers and presenters, there was a significant expense associated with the project's activities. We were fortunate to be awarded assistance from the Frostburg State University Foundation to carry out this project. That funding covered the performance fees, but there was little left over for advertising, which may have hindered our ability to generate an audience.

Program Continuation and Sustainability:

Our effort to continue to offer such student-hosted programming at Mountain City Traditional Arts is much dependent on our ability to raise funds for the project. An application to the Frostburg State University Foundation has been made for this project in 2013. A Decision on that funding is pending. Additional funding may be available through the Maryland Traditions Program of the Maryland State Arts Council. We do believe that this project was incredibly successful in assisting Mountain City Traditional Arts in building an audience and believe that future programs along these same lines will be successful.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Overall, this was a highly successful venture. In addition to benefitting Mountain City Traditional Arts by assisting it in audience and capacity building, the project provided students with the experience of planning and executing an event from the ground up. That background will be beneficial in multiple lines of career paths. If the ARC is ever in the position to increase funding for the Teaching Project, it would be lovely to be able to use some of those funds for project activities not specifically related to travel. For example, it would have been helpful to have been able to use some ARC funding for advertising.

Attachments:

FSU Press Release

http://www.frostburg.edu/news/searchnewsdt.cfm?id_number=6603

Samples of Program Announcements

<http://www.appindie.org/index.php/appalachian-culture/55-appalachian-culture/2794-glass-making-presentation-at-mountain-city-traditional-arts>

<http://www.appindie.org/index.php/appalachian-culture/55-appalachian-culture/2768-bear-hill-bluegrass-band-performs-friday-at-mountain-city-traditional-arts>

<http://www.appindie.org/index.php/appalachian-culture/55-appalachian-culture/2751-an-evening-of-traditional-fiddle-and-dance>

