

# SUCCESS STORY



## PADUCAH, KENTUCKY

The United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated Paducah, Kentucky a Creative City in the field of Crafts & Folk Art in November 2013. In the five years since designation, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network has been a dynamic differentiator for Paducah. The Paducah Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) has leveraged the designation to develop the city's brand as a cultural destination and raise its profile nationally and internationally.

The UNESCO Creative City designation was the culmination of a five-year process led by the Paducah CVB for sustainable tourism development based on the city's authentic cultural attributes. The designation positions the small western Kentucky city as a world leader in creative industry with authority to share cultural assets and create partnerships on a global scale.

The Paducah CVB has translated the value of the UNESCO Creative City designation to put the city on the map with regard to destination marketing and tourism development. These efforts stimulate visitor response and drive sustainable development that will preserve the local culture, enhance quality of life and elevate Paducah as not only a great place to visit but also a great place to live.

The three-day event gave Paducah an opportunity to substantiate itself as a viable destination for meetings and conventions. In fact, *Convene*, a leading global meetings industry publication produced by the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), recognized Paducah among unexpected destinations with the unique knowledge economies and cultural amenities to attract premier global events.

Launched in 2004, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network aims to strengthen cooperation with and among cities that have recognized creativity as a strategic factor of sustainable development. The Network is now comprised of 180 member cities in 72 countries worldwide, including U.S. cities Santa Fe (Crafts & Folk Art), Iowa City (Literature), Austin (Media Arts), Detroit (Design), Tucson (Gastronomy), Kansas City (Music), San Antonio (Gastronomy) and Seattle (Literature).

*Photos are from the 2017 UNESCO Creative Cities Crafts & Folk Art Annual Meeting in Paducah.*



## PADUCAH



*City of Crafts & Folk Art*

UNESCO CREATIVE CITY

## IMPACT STATEMENT

Paducah's designation as a world-class Creative City has directly generated growth in tourism, which in turn has an impact on the local economy as a whole. Major media outlets have profiled Paducah's creative economy, including *National Geographic Traveler*, *USA Today* and the *Chicago Tribune*. In 2017 alone, articles highlighting Paducah's affiliation with the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and distinctively creative culture contributed to a total reach of more than 217 million readers.

Tourism continues to grow in Paducah with direct expenditures rising from \$203.9 million in 2013 to \$233.9 million in 2016, according to *Kentucky Tourism Economic Impact Report*.

Far-reaching connections have also expanded with the *National Quilt Museum* now welcoming visitors from more than 40 countries annually and the *American Quilter's Society Quilt Week* events drawing record international participation and attendance.

*Americans for the Arts: Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 (AEP5)* demonstrated the value of nonprofit arts and culture as an economic driver and cornerstone of creative tourism. Economic impact of nonprofit arts organizations and their audiences totals \$27.5 million annually.

During the *Kentucky Department of Tourism's "Year of Kentucky Food"* initiative, the Creative Cities Network availed opportunities for Paducah to promote culinary creativity and traditions worldwide through *Sabores y Saberes* in San Cristobal de las Casas, Mexico and *Days of Bread* in Krakow, Poland.