

Community Development through the Arts in Rusk County

A Report on the Community Arts and Culture Assessment Project

**By Facilitator, LaMoine MacLaughlin,
Executive Director, Northern Lakes Center for the Arts,
as part of Arts Wisconsin's ArtsPeers Advisory Network**

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On Monday, August 18, 2008, thirty Rusk County residents met at the Tee-Away Golf & Supper Club in Ladysmith to participate in a community cultural assessment with facilitator, LaMoine MacLaughlin, Executive Director of the Northern Lakes Center for the Arts in Amery, Wisconsin. The participants expressed their ideas about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (a SWOT analysis) relative to arts and culture programs and activities in Rusk County. Participants were divided into five small groups to facilitate input and discussion; each group responded to five basic questions (listed below) and then shared their answers with the entire group. The session concluded with an opportunity to share a vision for the arts and culture in Rusk County. On Tuesday, September 30, 2008, a follow-up session focused upon the development of goals to implement ideas which came from the original meeting. What follows is a summary of participant input, including an appendix which lists all of the actual participant statements. This report points to a beginning. Goals need to be further specified and detailed, responsibilities need to be clearly assigned and accepted, and implementation resources need to be identified and secured. There is more work to be done.

Special appreciation belongs to all participants for giving of their time and creative thought, and to Nancy Wheeler of the Rusk Area Arts Alliance and Anne Katz of Arts Wisconsin for organizing this project and these sessions. Andy Albarado also deserves special thanks for his brilliant transcription of the original materials.

An Analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Relating to the Arts and Culture in Rusk County, Wisconsin

The Strengths: What do you see as the strengths of the arts and culture in Rusk County?

Participants perceived the following as strengths relating to the arts and culture in Rusk County:

1. There is a strong and diverse arts presence in Rusk County.

There is a strong and established network of artists in Rusk County as evidenced by their involvement with such organizations as the Flambeau Valley Arts Association, the Rusk Area Arts Alliance, ChaliceStream, the Community Singers and others. The artists are many and represent a diverse range of talents and abilities ranging from the visual arts and dance, to music and writing.

2. There is an active arts education presence in the community.

The schools (including community education) offer a wide range of classes and offer various music and visual arts programs.

3. There are several opportunities to participate in arts and culture activities in Rusk County.

Several organizations exist to involve local residents in arts and culture activities with offerings extending from visual arts classes and exhibit opportunities to music performances (e.g., the Community Singers).

4. There exists a strong existing arts facility infrastructure in Rusk County.

Rusk County has an historical museum, a library/art gallery, a movie theater, and the high school auditorium. Art galleries exist throughout Rusk County. And beyond those, local schools and churches are willing to make exhibit and performance space available.

5. There exists strong public support for arts and culture activities throughout Rusk County.

Arts and culture activities are well attended by local residents in Rusk County as evidenced over the years by the Flambeau Valley Arts Association's arts presentations and more recently by ArtrainUSA attendance. Local newspaper and radio promotion and Community Development/Tourism support have played a part in this success. Beyond these, the visitor/information center and the Northwest Heritage Passage booklet promote area arts and culture activities.

6. The natural beauty of the Rusk County area helps to inspire area arts and culture development.

The beauty of the area's natural environment, supported by its park system, inspires and draws tourists to the area. As one participant stated it, in Rusk County there exists a "synergy between nature and the arts."

The Weaknesses: What do you see as the weaknesses of the arts and culture in Rusk County?

Participants perceived the following as weaknesses relating to the arts and culture in Rusk County:

1. There are limited financial resources to support arts and culture activities in Rusk County.

Rusk County is an area of low income and high poverty. Frequently local financial resources leave the county and so does the local audience.

2. There are limited human resources to support arts and culture activities in Rusk County.

The population of Rusk County is small. There is a small town fear of the unknown and general unwillingness to change. Leaders are small in number. People do not often think outside the box and lack the self-confidence to take risks. One participant described volunteering on a board as a "life sentence." There is limited youth involvement beyond school and sometimes local artists and the arts are perceived negatively.

3. Rusk County has a limited arts and culture facilities infrastructure.

Frequently experiencing the arts means a long drive to wherever they are happening, very difficult during the winter. Downtown Ladysmith is sometimes perceived as a less than vibrant downtown, one with boring architecture. There is no area arts center and not enough galleries to exhibit local artwork. The area is not a tourist destination, but remains an area which tourists drive through toward some other place. There was an expressed need for more places to eat, congregate and socialize, including using the arts as a means to bring more tourists into the area.

4. Rusk County has limited arts and culture support services.

Often promotion of arts and cultural activities is limited and not timely. Outreach and promotion should probably extend to a wider variety of community members as well as beyond the county. There is no database of local artists, galleries, and activities. As a result there is limited exposure for local artists and local artistic activities.

The Opportunities: What do you see as the opportunities for the arts and culture in Rusk County?

Participants perceived the following as opportunities relating to the arts and culture in Rusk County:

1. There exists much human resource development potential for the arts and culture in Rusk County.

There is a current economic and personal enthusiasm for the arts in Rusk County. There are various arts celebrations, opportunities to partner with area schools and a chance to bring arts and culture to the children. The population is changing, the community is growing, and the passion is present.

2. There exists an opportunity for physical infrastructure development relating to the arts and culture in Rusk County.

Rising gasoline prices may result in a relocalization of the area; housing is still affordable. Ladysmith is at a cross-roads relative to downtown revitalization. There are under-utilized recreational tourism spaces. The rural setting of Rusk County offers opportunities for multiple and varied arts and culture venues and activities, including utilization of the library, schools and churches.

3. There exists the potential to expand arts and culture promotion opportunities.

The Rusk County website, and the internet in general, could be better utilized to promote an awareness of the arts and of art activities in Rusk County. The Visitors Center could also be better utilized if its profile were less modest.

4. There exists the potential for developing many new arts and culture activities in Rusk County.

The summer concerts in the park could be continued. There could be public art to stop tourists, as could an art crawl, and special arts events such as the Ladysmith historical musical, all listed on an arts map or perhaps in a regular newspaper column. During the winter there could be regular performances at the library and in restaurants. Local artwork could be displayed in non-traditional venues such as in restaurants, clinics and schools. An arts mentoring program could encourage young people and adults, individuals as well as families, to increase active participation in the arts.

The Threats: What do you see as the threats to the arts and culture in Rusk County?

Participants perceived the following as threats relating to the arts and culture in Rusk County:

1. There exist threats relating to the development of human resources in the arts in Rusk County.

Young people are leaving the area and the population is aging. A limited population means a limited leadership working with limited numbers of volunteers who are burning out. There is a certain defeatist attitude which fears the unknown and is unwilling to take risks, and nothing is accomplished as a result. Sometimes artists are seen in a negative light as weird or odd. Sometimes people feel that success in the arts simply cannot be achieved in Rusk County.

2. There exist threats relating to the development of financial resources for the arts in Rusk County.

There is limited private and public funding for the arts in Rusk County. The economy is in a downturn and schools are facing budget cuts. There seems to be a general resistance toward investment in the future.

3. There exist other external threats or barriers to the development of the arts and cultural activities in Rusk County.

The Interstate routes people away from Rusk County. Certain government policies, e.g., signage, discourage growth and development. Living in this part of Wisconsin, often there is a feeling of isolation, and sometimes certain issues divide the city from the county.

While considering the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to the arts and culture in Rusk County, Wisconsin,

We Dream of:

1. Wider acceptance, support, and arts involvement in the community, including enhanced opportunities for arts participation.
2. A clearinghouse and a central location to support and coordinate all scheduled events and a marketing venue to promote them.
3. Rusk County as a place that encourages and supports diverse artistic expression through individual and community participation enriching the lives of people with a town square and community gathering space for the meeting of arts and minds and hearts, a place of connection/community spirit, farmers market, band shell, community center, arts center/cooperative, performance space, places to sit/talk/play.
4. A newspaper arts and entertainment column (or page!) using information from community reporters to give event information.
5. A café with great food, live music, relaxed atmosphere, decorated with local art, occasional readings and possible theater performances (could be fairly small).
6. Building on people's passion and enthusiasm, creating an environment that is supportive of the arts to make the arts an important part of the community character by developing an annual plan with immediate and long term goals such as supporting arts programs in the schools, encouraging public art and increasing the number of live performances.

Henry David Thoreau said in *Walden*, "...if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours." And later, "If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them." Keeping in mind the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the development of arts and cultural activities in Rusk County, and focusing upon the dreams described above, what remains is to develop concrete goals and objectives to make that foundation a reality for all the artists and residents of Rusk County, Wisconsin.

Community Development through the Arts in Rusk County Community Arts and Culture Goals

We dream of:

1. Wider acceptance, support, and arts involvement in the community, including enhanced opportunities for arts participation.

Preface: Acceptance is personal/internal outside our control. However, through conversation and invitation, persons can be brought to look at the possibilities with the proper publicity and a suitable place. RAAA is heading this way.

Goal:

Develop a support (a financial challenge, including human energy and initiative) and involvement initiative resulting in an infrastructure providing education and participation opportunities at both ends of the age spectrum. Schools might bus young people to events such as FVAA; there might be complimentary tickets. With regard to adult education, Flambeau community education and WITC might offer non-credit or credit classes providing individual as well as group opportunities for enrichment.

Other possibilities/considerations:

Perhaps develop a broader understanding of art – include garden club, etc.

2. A clearinghouse and a central location to support and coordinate all scheduled events and a marketing venue to promote them.

Goal:

RAAA seems well positioned to be a central clearinghouse, without reinventing the wheel, but enhance and add spokes (other partners: community, businesses, government). Involve other association/groups, FVAA, Writers Group.

Other possibilities/considerations:

Mount Senario commons area

-Info Center

-Brochures with maps to various galleries, etc

-Phone – arts line

Visitors' Center

Library

- 3. Rusk County as a place that encourages and supports diverse artistic expression through individual and community participation enriching the lives of people with town square and community gathering space for the meeting of arts and minds and hearts, a place of connection/community spirit, farmers market, band shell, community center, arts center/cooperative, performance space, places to sit/talk/play.**

Goal:

Infuse all arts into existing places, venues, and events throughout the County seek cross-cultural/arts events.

- MSEC-Art Center
- Music and art at Farmers Market
- FVAA & RAAA
- Artists at Community Singers where appropriate
- Community singers at Winter Magic – Library
- Hospital

Other possibilities/considerations:

Who is/will be responsible for implementation?

Encourage individual entrepreneurs

RAAA increase membership and add as a goal to RAAA to encourage pursuit

- 4. A newspaper arts and entertainment column (or page!) using information from community reporters to give event information.**

Goal:

Meet with the Ladysmith News publisher with proposal for arts & entertainment page/column:

- Column written by “arts coordinator”
- Previews, reviews, artist features,
- Restaurant reviews
- Arts Facts & Fancies all in one place
- Gallery listings
- Ads for arts & entertainment events
 - School plays, regional plays, bars w/bands
- Information not just in printed paper, but online site, other regional papers (e.g. Barron, Bloomer, Rice Lake, Eau Claire)
- Link to online arts & newspaper site
- “Arts” Coordinator – write column, coordinate with local arts organizations, make sure things are done in a timely manner
- Provide information for local radio station as well

Other possibilities/considerations:

Who is/will be responsible for implementation?

- 5. A café with great food, live music, relaxed atmosphere, decorated with local art, occasional readings and possible theater performances (could be fairly small).**

Goal:

If it is to be a restaurant with good food, it has to be a private business. However, support for such a venture could be given to a new or existing restaurant.

One possibility is to have this as part of an existing business or a restaurant that has been proposed at the Mount Senario Education Center. An alternative on a smaller scale would be a coffee shop at the Rusk County Community Library.

A traveling art/entertainment café could be implemented. It would feature a different restaurant each month.

Other possibilities/considerations:

Who is/will be responsible for implementation?

- 6. Building on people's passion and enthusiasm, creating an environment that is supportive of the arts to make the arts an important part of the community character by developing an annual plan with immediate and long term goals such as supporting arts programs in the schools, encouraging public art and increasing the number of live performances.**

Goal:

Organize and hold an annual community arts meeting to develop short term & long term goals for arts and culture in the County.

- RAAA could host
- Invite Rusk County Foundation, Economic Development, Chamber, etc.
- County and City representatives, schools – encourage them to develop an “arts grant”
- Identify major goals, i.e. schools, increasing live performances, Public Art, authors, presenting the variety of artistic experiences.
- Each year, activities to meet these goals
 - Evaluate last year's goals and activities
 - Re-evaluate
 - Gather input from community
- Develop an annual calendar

Appendix 1: Session Participants

Initial SWAT Session, August 18, 2008 Participants:

Andy Albarado – Rusk Co. Economic Development Dir. – Ladysmith, WI
Dorothy Atchley – Artist – Ladysmith, WI
Randy Bandli – Student – Tony, WI
Michael Doran – Artist – Ladysmith, WI
Anna Marie Eitenmiller – FVAA – Ladysmith, WI
Karen Ek – Artist – Ladysmith, WI
Ron Erickson – FVAA – Bruce, WI
Margaret Foss – FVAA – Ladysmith, WI
Jeff Gilbertson – Physician Recruiter – Rice Lake, WI
Gary Hecimovich – Weyerhaeuser Music Teacher – Weyerhaeuser, WI
Gary Hoagland – Artist – Minneapolis, WI
Alta Hutchens – FVAA – Ladysmith, WI
Mike Johnston – Owens Corning CEO, Ladysmith – Ladysmith, WI
Nancy Kraft – Mt. Senario Learning Center – Sheldon, WI
Winnie Lee – City Council of Ladysmith, President – Ladysmith, WI
Taylor Molstad – Student – Ladysmith, WI
Rycki Moravec – Ladysmith Schools Rep. – Ladysmith, WI
Bonnie Ohmstead – Artist – Bruce, WI
Ori-Anne Pagel – Greater Ladysmith Area Chamber of Commerce, Dir. – Ladysmith, WI
Sandy Roth – Radio Station Owner – Ladysmith, WI
Leslie Schenk – Pastor – Ladysmith, WI
Susanne V. Schroeder – Artist/Business Owner – Bruce, WI
Randy Tatur – Rusk Co. Board Chairman – Rice Lake, WI
John Terrill – Ladysmith Newspaper – Ladysmith, WI
Janelle Thompson – Artist – Ladysmith, WI
Dorothy Volkman – Community Member – Ladysmith, WI
Dana Woebbeking – Artist – Ladysmith, WI
Kevin Westlund – Art Teacher – Bruce, WI
Nancy Wheeler – Rusk Area Arts Alliance – Ladysmith, WI
Eileen Ziesler – Artist – Ladysmith, WI

Follow-Up Goal Setting Session, September 30, 2008 Participants:

Andy Albarado – Rusk Co. Economic Development Dir. – Ladysmith, WI

Dorothy Atchley – Artist – Ladysmith, WI

Michael Doran – Artist – Ladysmith, WI

Ron Erickson – FVAA – Bruce, WI

Alta Hutchens – FVAA – Ladysmith, WI

Rycki Moravec – Ladysmith Schools Rep. – Ladysmith, WI

Bonnie Ohmstead – Artist – Bruce, WI

Ori-Anne Pagel – Greater Ladysmith Area Chamber of Commerce, Dir. – Ladysmith, WI

Leslie Schenk – Pastor – Ladysmith, WI

Jonathan Stanley – Musician - Ladysmith, WI

Randy Tatur – Rusk Co. Board Chairman – Rice Lake, WI

John Terrill – Ladysmith Newspaper – Ladysmith, WI

Dorothy Volkman – Community Member – Ladysmith, WI

Dana Woebeking – Artist – Ladysmith, WI

Nancy Wheeler – Rusk Area Arts Alliance – Ladysmith, WI

Karen Wilttrout – FVAA, Writer – Ladysmith, WI

Bob Wilttrout – FVAA, Community Member – Ladysmith, WI

Appendix 2: Participant Responses

Community Development through the Arts in Rusk County Community Arts and Culture Assessment Meeting – Monday, Aug. 18, 2008 (separated by group responses)

STRENGTHS

- Artists in area
- strong school programs – visual performance
- FVAA/RAAA/Chalice Stream
- Diversity in area artists
- Accessibility to arts, all can participate
- Historical Museum- library gallery
- Newspaper/radio, County Development/Tourism support and publicity
- Natural environment

- Community/Business Support, media support to inform public of events
- Strong support in the community, farmers market available
- Strong/Established Arts community
 - o Groups evolved and improve
 - o Groups are working together to increase awareness and interest
- Rusk Area Arts Alliance supports local artists
- Locations Available to meet and share
 - o Local public library
 - o Schools and churches
- Schools have strong music and arts programs
- Many opportunity for direct involvement of simply enjoyment of Arts
- Lots and lots of talent in many forms of art
- Network extends beyond Rusk County
- Presence of Professional artists is a draw of others
- Visitor/Information Center

- Long history of arts : FVAA, Community Singers, Lynn Dance, school org. etc
- Local interest (Artrain attendance)
- Local artists – variety of media and forms
- Arts supporters
- Visual artists drawn by Mt. Senario and Artisans
- History of local arts support (Max's Bar)
- Retiree artists
- Renewal of Mt. Senario campus with possible arts component
- Movie theater
- H.S. Auditorium
- Commitment of artists & patrons
- Pretty landscape
- Umbrella organization – RAAA

- Access to outside help, State - Humanities Council, WI Arts Board
- Talent pool – variety of artists
- Community support – consumers, participants
- Good supportive organizations
 - o RAAA, FVAA, Public Schools, FAFA
- History of artistic efforts, organization support
- Good leadership in organizations
- Various groups make space available
 - o County, city, schools, churches, library
- Newspaper reporting of events, features
- Park system
- Beautiful area that inspires, draws people here
 - o Natural areas and public spaces
- Active community singers – opportunity for public participation
- Museum
- Synergy between nature & arts

- long history
- Providing classes – photography, etc
- Schools – visual arts, etc.
- Advocacy of individuals and groups
- Art galleries throughout the county
- Northwest Heritage Booklet
- Community Ed.
- Web Sites – Link to each other
- Newspaper & Radio
- Concerts in the Park
- New gallery at the library
- Available space at Mt. Senario
- Organizations that promote the Arts
- Available donors to support the Arts
- Diversity and Advocacy
- Visitors Center
- Writers Exchange, organization and publication

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of money
- Limited time
- “Life Sentences” for volunteers on boards
- Lack of willingness to lead
- PR is often not timely
- Accessibility (long drives) especially theater
- Limited signage due to state regulations
- Only private galleries have art for sale

- Need for brief brochure listing local artists and galleries
- Very limited “film fest (1 yr.) Alternative theater
 - o Play and poetry readings
- Need to draw noted visual artists
- Need for a “hang-out”
- Need more ways to draw children, meet the artists

- Inferior self image
 - o Community
 - o Individuals as “artists”
- Place to go through
- Accommodations
 - o Access to arts
 - o Diverse opportunities
 - o Cost effective
 - o Places to eat
- Reluctance to change
- Downtown Ladysmith
- Culture of big bang activities
 - o Demo derby
- Low income area
- Visitors get sense of the natural gifts of the area, but less of the people
- Learn to color outside the box

- Limited population – low income, % of \$ on the arts
- Need for more artistic outlets, tourist attractions
- Need to broaden publicity beyond Rusk Co. I - isolation
- Funding issues – promotion
- Look for broader support – inclusivity
- Skepticism - need self confidence lack of risk takers
- Sense that “fine art” is alien to them
- Distance from urban areas – patronage
- Money goes out, so well as audience
- Boring architecture
- Winter issues

- Some businesses/individuals are responsible for donations/support
- Economic conditions
- Remote area
 - o Smaller market/audience
 - o Less tourism “drive through”
- Not much exposure for individual artists
- Lack of connection/communication between different segments of the arts community
- No local dramatic/theatre opportunities
- No community center for the arts

- Very few galleries
- No database/registry of local artists

- More community value/awareness
- Poverty
- Lack of vibrant downtown
- Youth involvement outside of school
- Availability of supplies for local artists
- Small town attitude towards change
- Fear of unknown
- Outreach to wider variety of community members and people outside of community (tourism)
- Investment in the K-12 arts programs
- Local performing arts opportunities
- Community definition of the arts

OPPORTUNITIES

- Current enthusiasm for the arts – economic and personal
- At a cross-roads, downtown revitalization, Mt. Senario
- Possibility of relocalization due to gas prices (expansion of local business, an unknown)
- Internet/technology to enhance the arts – medium for promoting arts
- Rural setting offers opportunities for multiple/varied art activities
- Connecting w/other arts-related groups, perceived to be non-traditional arts groups (i.e. Amish community)
- Under-utilized recreational tourism spaces
- Housing is still affordable in this area

- Awareness of Rusk County Arts website
- Continue summer concerts in the Park
- Make use of available venues
 - o Library
 - o Schools
 - o Churches
- Have regular performances during winter
 - o Library
 - o Restaurants
- Display artwork in nontraditional venues
 - o Restaurants
 - o Clinics
 - o Schools
- Do art studio tours
- Art mentoring – encouragement
 - o Students
 - o Adults

- Art Harvest –Leaf it to Rusk
- Sustainable art program for community
- Art Celebrations
- Public Art to stop tourists
- Growing community
- Population growth
- Room to expansion
- Community building opportunity
- Take advantage of passion
- Proximity to large populations
- Changing population
- Natural environment
- Passion is present, wouldn't take much effort
- Advertising media – radio and print
- Ladysmith Story is coming
- Identify success stories, learn from their mistakes
- Build business support
- Increase tourism
 - Art Crawl
 - Special arts events, i.e. Ladysmith History Musical,
 - Publish artist maps like “orchard maps”
- Internet links of arts community
- Need for a facility so that there is a place to gather and present or exhibit
- Need a place for artists to sell
- Place to bring in National/State/Regional, and local artists to perform
- Grant writer identified
- Column in the newspaper on a regular basis
- Improve the gathering and dissemination of material
- Partner with the schools
- RAAA-Umbrella org.
- Mt. Senario buildings & library
- FVA and Farmers Market
- Bring arts to the children
 - Organizations to help get supplies/instruments where need is
- Advocacy of arts groups
 - For arts in schools (local & state)
- Help strengthen local arts groups, e.g promote participation
- Artists cooperative
- Arts Center
- Weather/four seasons
- Participation events, esp. for families
- Community education, mommies and me, grandpa and me
- Children's museum

- Chalice Stream Studio – music concerts as well
- Artists involved in city/county planning
- Public arts program e.g. cows in Madison
- City/County image
- Visitors Center – too modest a profile
- Four Corners – publicists, empty space-better use

THREATS

- Doing nothing
- Defeatist attitude, fear of unknown
- Educations (lack of) concerning the arts and need for supporting financially
- Young people leaving
- Population decline
- Focus on survival
- Fear of alternative lifestyles, esp. among mentors – youth
- \$ lack of private/public funding
- Enthusiasm that goes nowhere
- Lack of wide-spread leadership participation
- Deer (perception of danger), “wild area” guns, drunk driving

- The Economy
- Population decline?
 - o Declining school enrollment
- Budget cuts in schools
- Inability to work together
 - o Communities within the County
- Resistance toward investment in the future
- Sustainability of programs
- Unwillingness to take risks

- Money, Money, Money
- Gas prices/economy in general
- Low priority to the arts
- Talk, no action
- Same people do everything-burn out
- Reliance on city/county gov’t to take leadership
- Mis-perception of the arts
- Not incorporating economic feasibility and sustainability into ideas/projects
- Negative attitude of public “woe is me”
 - o Low self esteem
- Interstate – keeping people away
- Young people moving away
- Not getting buy-in from total population
- Cuts in funding to K-12 arts programs
- Dissention within the arts community- different wants

- Apathy
- Continuing of economic downturn/hardship
- Cutback of schools, their funding and programs
- Population aging
- Volunteer exhaustion
- Sense that technology is sufficient entertainment, little experience with do it yourself art/music etc.
- Sense among some that artists are unacceptable/odd
- Drying up of corporate funding (and other funding)
- Location (incl. community jealousy and city vs. county issues)

- People are afraid to move forward to try (may fail)
- What's in it for me
- Lack of interest
- Don't believe it's possible here in Rusk Co.
- Potential loss of funding
- Perception of arts events being expensive
- Feeling of isolation
- Narrowed interests (ex. Only sports, only bluegrass music ---- some coaches strongly discourage participation in arts)
- Government Policies, re: signage
- People move on, leave, die – Project may not continue
- Graying population and declining school population (fewer art/music teachers)
- Burn out of volunteers - since few volunteers

VISIONS (& DREAMS)

- Wider acceptance and support and participation of the arts in the community
- Enhanced opportunities for arts participation

- We need a clearinghouse for all scheduled events and a central location to support and coordinate this
- We need a marketing venue

- Rusk County as a place that encourages and supports diverse artistic expression through individual and community participation enriching the lives of people.
- Town square and community gathering space: Meeting of arts and minds and hearts. Place of connection/community spirit, farmers market, band shell, community center, arts center/cooperative, performance space, places to sit/talk play space

- Newspaper arts & entertainment column (or page!) using information from community reporters to give event info
- Café with great food, live music, relaxed atmosphere, decorated with local art, occasional readings and theater possible (could be fairly small)

- Building on people's passion and enthusiasm to create an environment that is supportive of the arts
- Make the arts an important part of the community character
 - Attainable list-immediate
 - Long term/future goals
- Top 10 list of things to work on
 - Support arts programs in schools
 - Encourage public art
 - # of live performances
 - Build on them each year
 - Look at them each year and evaluate how we are doing