



THE ARTS PART OF THE SOLUTION

OHIO'S QUILT BARN TRAIL *From Local Roots to National Routes*

A patchwork of color is popping up on historic barns throughout the nation, and the trend is a boon for rural tourism. Begun in 2001 in Adams County by Donna Sue Groves to honor her mother (noted quilter Nina Maxine Groves) and to celebrate their Appalachian



heritage, Quilt Barns are preserving an important piece of American heritage. Like the process of quilting itself, the creation of a Quilt Barn Trail stitches together art, agriculture, architecture and local culture in an enterprise that provides economic, social and cultural value for rural communities that have often felt left behind.

As of 2008, the Ohio Quilt Barn Trail consisted of more than 300 quilt barns scattered across the landscape of 19 Ohio counties,

almost all of which were Appalachian counties. Quilt barns have also expanded to at least 22 other states across the nation, and Ohio's Quilt Barn Trails were featured in the April 2008 issue of *National Geographic Traveler* magazine.

Increased tourism and new micro-enterprises have sprung up around Quilt Barn Trails. As Gallia County Visitor's Bureau Executive Director Bob Hood states, "I've been [to visit other Quilt Barn Trails] and I have seen the impact that it can have on bringing tourists and people spending money." Other benefits have included the leveraging of additional local, state and national resources, and the development of partnerships and networks.

Perhaps most importantly, Quilt Barn Trails enhance community pride through the preservation and celebration of important elements of Appalachian and rural culture. The National Trust for Historic Preservation notes that America has been losing its historic agricultural buildings for decades: "Literally millions of barns and other agricultural structures have lost their original reason for existing." The Trails give historic barns new life and showcase local history and culture.

All this has led, as Appalachian Ohio community developer Michael Maloney notes, to "a renaissance in the celebration of Appalachian culture in Ohio" and to a powerful connection to the rest of the world. Thus, a small Appalachian Ohio art project, with funding from the Ohio Arts Council, has planted the seeds for what is becoming a national movement.

Cultural
Participation
and Building
Audiences

MULTIPLE COUNTIES
Quilt Barn Trail
Appalachia, Ohio



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Bob Hood, Executive Director, Gallia County Visitor's Bureau