

# Artisan Co-op

By: Ashlee Johnson, VisionPerry

Local artists and artisans have expressed an interest in starting an Artisan Co-op here in Perry County. What is an Artisan Co-op you ask? An Artisan Co-op is a place where artists and artisans in an area gather together to show and sell their work, and demonstrate their talents. The downtown Linden Arts and Historic District is the perfect setting for this. The co-op is made up of artists and artisans who pay a small fee or commission for a membership to help with building overhead. Artists and Artisans are typically required to work at the building for a set number of days a month to sell the goods produced by all the artists in the co-op. It is also recommended that a small percentage of the commission from products sold be added to the co-op to host festivals and events sponsored through the co-op. Websites are also set up for the co-op where the artists and artisans can show off and sell their goods, and also keep a calendar of what activities sponsored by the co-op. This e-commerce presence would bring outside revenue to the county and the participating members of the co-op. There are many advantages to developing an Artisan Co-op in Perry Count, including the creation of jobs. These jobs could include new artisans and artists, a website administrator, among other things. The co-op would also be bringing in revenue to the county because similar co-ops become tourism destination draws.

Tivoli Artist Co-op is an example of how this can work for your community. It was founded in 1993 and now has over 25 artists working there. This co-op had brought new business and tourism to their community. There is also Laurens Artist Co-op they have a unique

kind of membership for different ages and skill level of artist. Another great example of a thriving artist co-op can be found slightly north in Clarksville, TN. Their Downtown Artist Co-op started back in 2001 with a small group and has grown to include 27 full member artist, 16 consignment artist, and over 50 loyal patrons. These are some of the ideas that our talented local artists, artisans and craftsmen can implement in our own Artist Co-op in Perry County. This is something that has worked in TN and surrounding areas and this type of workplace and attraction would not only be a great showplace for our local talent as well as an asset to our community.

VisionPerry will be scheduling a presentation on E-commerce and Artisan Co-ops in mid January. If you are interested in becoming part of this movement toward an Artisan Co-op or would like to help organize the 2<sup>nd</sup> Blooming Arts Festival, held this year on March 20, 2010, please contact Ashlee Johnson at VisionPerry by phone at 589-3031 or by email at [info@visionperry.com](mailto:info@visionperry.com)