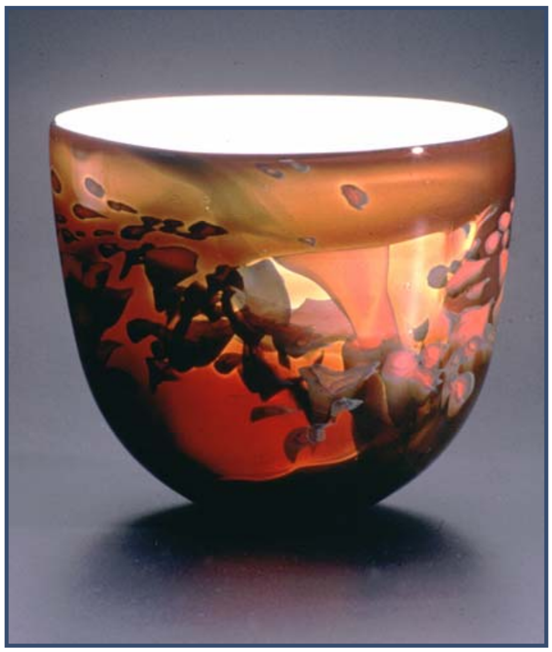
Craftspersons and Artists in Northwest Wisconsin

Putting a Face on a Creative Industry



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All photos in the report, including the cover photo, are courtesy of Jerry Boucher, Schoolhouse Productions.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Executive Summary

The impetus for this research project was provided by Wisconsin's Northwest Heritage Passage. The target population of the research project was expanded beyond its membership to include all craftspersons and artists in an eleven-county study area—Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, Sawyer, St. Croix, and Washburn Counties.

The primary objectives of the project were to:

- determine the relative size, composition, and characteristics of craftspersons and artists—as a creative industry—in the study area,
- estimate the economic contributions of craftspersons and artists in the study area, and
- assess the educational needs of respondents.

The picture that emerged from the study is fairly clear. The "typical" person in this creative industry is a female Caucasian, works at her craft or art part-time, is over 50 years old, has been engaged in her business for over 10 years, has no paid employees, receives less than $10,000 personal income per year from her business but is in a household with total income from all sources well above that, works on her craft or art on personal residential property that is owned by her household, is not necessarily involved in any arts groups or organizations, is satisfied with her vocation, and has attended at least some college.

Respondents are self-employed and, for the most part, work at their art and craft on a part-time basis. Almost half of the respondents have additional employment outside of their craft/art business, with over half of this group employed on a full-time basis. Education and training is the largest occupational category for additional employment. One in five of the respondents was retired and using their craft/art business as an additional income source. The results show, overall, that art and craft income was often a small portion of total household income.

Craftspersons and artists directly contribute over $20 million annually to the regional economy in direct revenue. An additional $4.7 million is contributed indirectly by craftspersons and artists purchasing the goods and services necessary to run their businesses. Finally, over $6 million is contributed to the regional economy as a result of the household spending induced by these direct and indirect economic contributions. The total economic contribution of craftspersons and artists is therefore estimated to be over $31 million per year. Total earnings are estimated to be over $12 million annually.

The educational attainment of respondents merits special attention. Almost one-half of the respondents, or 46.7 percent of the total, have an educational attainment level of bachelor's degree or higher. This is twice as high as the rate for the entire population of the state of Wisconsin aged 25 or above, which is 22.4 percent. Considering that much of the study area is rural and experiencing an associated "brain drain," this figure is significant. Craftspersons and artists represent a highly-educated component of each county's population.

Craftspersons and artists in northwest Wisconsin stay put, in terms of both years in business and years in residence, at their present locations. Another notable characteristic is the relative age of this group. This study identified a group of craftspersons and artists with an average age of 54 years. Given the size and economic importance of the "baby boom" generation and the region's growing reputation as a retirement destination, this represents a situation where the consideration of related retention and attraction strategies could be warranted.

Craftspersons and artists often go largely unnoticed in rural regions. They "slip through the cracks" in broader analyses that rely on secondary data. They do not figure prominently in economic development strategies, nor are they seen as key economic players or contributors. The recent interest in the creative economy, however, and attempts to understand the implications of the creative economy model of development for rural areas, may be leading to changes in this perspective.

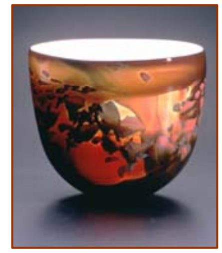
The creative economy model of economic development posits that the more successful a region is in attracting and retaining creative workers, the better that region's economy will perform. However, a majority of the research on the creative economy has focused on urban—not rural—areas. This study attempts to shed light on the characteristics, economic contributions, and educational needs of craftspersons and artists as core members of the rural creative economy of northwest Wisconsin.

Cities and regions across the country—and world—are engaged in an intense competition for creative talent. Why? Because in a global economy, creativity is seen as the competitive edge that will continue to add value in the marketplace. This research finds that northwest Wisconsin has a vibrant creative industry in its craftspersons and artists. They are engaged in a broad range of creative activities. They are well-educated, experienced, and grounded in their communities. But where do they fit as the region defines its competitive advantages?

Craftspersons and artists enhance the region's attractiveness as a tourist destination. They help "brand" the region as creative and innovative. Yet the findings show that they are not fully involved with local development organizations, especially chambers of commerce. They are often overlooked when it comes to business assistance, yet they may constitute a prime investment area for community economic development. The study highlights priority areas where such assistance is needed.

Craftspersons and artists are at the heart of a vital creative economy in northwest Wisconsin. Although this specific creative "industry" is comparatively small, the associated potential for broader regional growth may not be. This study points toward an emerging rural twist on the creative economy model. One that accounts for the fact that northwest Wisconsin is not necessarily a magnet for footloose creative types. And, one that accounts for the fact that the area already has an abundance of natural, cultural, and other amenities said to attract and retain members of the creative class. Could craftspersons and artists be an undervalued element of a rural creative economy? Do they represent a creative asset that could support the attraction of other creative individuals? Is there a creative economy niche that well-placed rural areas would be advised to identify, understand, and build upon? Finding ways to support the work of existing craftspersons and artists may be a strategy that plays to rural strengths and advantages.

Background



The impetus for this research project was provided by Wisconsin's Northwest Heritage Passage. This group of artisans and producers began organizing in 1999 with the stated purpose "to celebrate our heritage and showcase regional products that are handmade and homegrown." As they sought support from local governments and other organizations, they became interested in being able to document their contributions to regional community and economic development efforts. A modest research budget was made available by the University of Wisconsin-Extension, in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Superior, to fund such a study.

The Northern Center for Community and Economic Development was enlisted to provide leadership for the study. This center, which is jointly supported by the University of Wisconsin-Extension and the University of Wisconsin-Superior, focuses on applied research and education in northern Wisconsin. Arts Wisconsin, then known as the Wisconsin Assembly for Local Arts, was invited to join the study team of University of Wisconsin-Extension faculty that guided this research project.

Figure 1
Eleven-County Study Area

The target population of the research project was expanded beyond the membership of Wisconsin's Northwest Heritage Passage to include all craftspersons and artists in the study area.[1] The research was framed within a creative economy context to reflect the growing interest in this topic at local, state, national, and international levels. The scope of the survey was expanded to reflect a related range of economic, demographic, livelihood, and educational considerations. Two additional (and contiguous) counties were added to the original nine counties in the study area, bringing the total number of counties to eleven. Figure 1 shows the study area comprised of Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, Sawyer, St. Croix, and Washburn Counties.

The primary objectives of the project are to:

- determine the relative size, composition, and characteristics of craftspersons and artists—as a creative industry—in the study area,
- estimate the economic contributions of craftspersons and artists in the study area, and
- assess the educational needs of respondents.

The study sheds light on the role that one component of the creative economy, craftspersons and artists, plays in the regional economy of northwest Wisconsin. The creative economy model of development, originally popularized by Richard Florida's *Rise of the Creative Class* (2002) and John Howkin's *The Creative Economy* (2001), emphasizes competition for human talent and creativity rather than competition for businesses and industries. Florida's conclusion – that the more value a region places on attracting creative workers, the better that region's economy will perform – bolsters the view that future economic viability hinges on the ability to attract and retain large numbers of members of the "creative class."

[1] Expanding the scope of the study beyond handmade crafts to include visual artists created some terminological issues. There is no clear dividing line between crafters and artists. The original proposal to refer to respondents as "craft artists" drew concerns from both ends of the spectrum. Ultimately, the phrase "craftspersons and artists" was adopted. The description "self-employed craftspeople working in their studios, with or without employees" was used in the respondent identification process described in the methodology section. It is similar to the one used in the 1999 national study of the handmade crafts industry (Dave and Evans, 2001).

The resulting body of research, strategies, and debate on the creative economy over the past five years has changed the way communities think about economic development.[2] Many no longer view their artistic and cultural offerings as a by-product of development, but rather as a driving force for economic development. Many rural areas offer residents a high quality of life, which is said to be vital to attracting members of the creative class. Most creative economy research, however, has focused on larger cities and entire states. Therefore, the importance and relevance of the creative economy to rural areas in the United States is not well understood.

There have been numerous studies to measure the artistic component of the creative economy.[3] But efforts focused on craftspersons and artists in a regional economy are relatively new. A nationwide survey in 1999 estimated that the direct impact from sales of handmade crafts in America totaled $14 billion, with over 100,000 craftspeople working in the country (Dave and Evans, 2001). Related state-level studies have been completed for West Virginia (West Virginia Development Office, 2003) and Kentucky (Thompson and Ghossoub, 2003).

The economic contributions of craft and artist industries to a local or regional economy often go unnoticed. Craftspersons and artists work in small studios or out of their own homes and are likely to sell their products at temporary events like craft shows and art fairs. Compared with larger manufacturers, craftspersons and artists are barely visible. Compared with larger tourist destinations like water parks and casinos, it is easy to overlook the hundreds of smaller, isolated crafts and art destinations that dot the landscape. For these reasons and others, craftspersons and artists are not typically considered part of the economic base of a region, nor have their actual and potential contributions to local and regional development strategies received much attention.

[2] See Hartley (2005) for an overview of many of the key authors and views shaping interest in creative industries and their relative importance to a creative or "new" economy. Another review and evaluation of recent work looking at the importance of the cultural sector and creativity to the new or postindustrial economy, focusing in particular on the work of Florida and Howkins, is provided by Healy (2002).

[3] Americans for the Arts has been conducting economic impact studies since 1994, and the most recent study estimated that the nonprofit arts industry, specifically arts organizations and their audiences, generated $134 billion in total annual economic activity (Americans for the Arts, 2003).

Methodology

Respondent Mailing List

Individuals in an industry of this type are difficult to identify. They tend to be self-employed, operate at a small scale, and, in many cases, go unrecorded. Often they are not connected to or associated with any membership groups or organizations.

Initial county-specific lists for each of the eleven counties were compiled by combining the mailing lists of Wisconsin's Northwest Heritage Passage and the Wisconsin Assembly for Local Arts.[4] These lists were then shared with the University of Wisconsin-Extension community development educators in ten of the counties and a project collaborator in the remaining county. They reported that the lists were outdated, included many individuals not or no longer engaged in crafts production or the visual arts, and excluded significant numbers of the intended survey audience.

These same county-based contacts, as partners in this regional research project, developed improved mailing lists for each of their respective counties.[5] They visited galleries, attended craft and art fairs, and worked with local arts organizations. Press releases were sent out via local newspapers that publicized the effort and encouraged craftspersons and artists to participate in the study. The final mailing list that resulted from this process included 1,188 names and addresses for the eleven-county area.

Survey Instrument Design

A single survey instrument was used for this study. However, survey content came from multiple sources. The following list describes those sources and the types of questions they provided.

1. A 1999 survey developed for the Craft Organization Directors Association (the CODA Survey) asked basic demographic, sales/revenue, and employment questions. Its findings are reported in Dave and Evans (2001). The CODA Survey was chosen because it is one of the few economic impact analyses undertaken for the crafts industry. Therefore, it allows for results to be compared with a broader national study.[6]
2. The Pew Internet and American Life Project (Madden, 2004) provided a second set of questions related to computer and internet usage. Using these questions also allows for results to be compared with a national study.
3. The Small Business Development Center at the University of Wisconsin-Superior and University of Wisconsin-Extension retail development specialists provided a third set of questions focusing on small business characteristics. These were chosen to guide future programming efforts and to better understand the industry.

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[4] The Heritage Passage is relatively selective in terms of membership, and the decision to expand the scope of the research to all craftspersons and artists in the study area created the challenge of identifying these additional individuals.

[5] These partners were: Jane Silberstein, Ashland County; Andrew Dane, Barron County; Tim Kane, Bayfield County; Mike Kornmann, Burnett County; Fariba Pendleton, Douglas County; Terry Mesch, Pepin County; Ed Hass, Pierce County; Bob Kazmierski, Polk County; Dave Berard, Sawyer County; Jim Janke, St. Croix County; and Beverly Stencel, Washburn County. With the exception of Terry Mesch in Pepin County, they were all county-based University of Wisconsin-Extension Community Resource Development Educators.

[6] The CODA Survey distributed its surveys to members of craft organizations in the U.S. and readers of a publication called *The Crafts Report.* They recorded 183 responses from Wisconsin, which made up 2.5 percent of the total 7,263 respondents. As will be noted later in the paper, many respondents to the northwest Wisconsin survey were not actively involved in any craft or art organization. Thus, comparisons of the results should be viewed accordingly.

4. University of Wisconsin-Extension county-based educators and specialists developed a fourth set of questions to guide future educational programming efforts.
5. Littrell, Stout, and Reilly (1991) provided a fifth set of self-rating questions covering business success and level of satisfaction as a craftsperson or artist.
6. The project team developed the last set of questions to better understand the in-migration of retirees, artisans' participation in supporting organizations, seasonal variations in retail activity, sales trends over time, and health insurance coverage. Finally, two open-ended questions allowed respondents to share additional information.

Over twenty different types of products made by craftspersons and artists were identified using an existing product-type database developed by Wisconsin's Northwest Heritage Passage.[7] Respondents were asked to identify which product(s) they produced and to provide related sales information.

The Tailored Design Method (Dillman, 2000) guided the design of the questionnaire. This included the size and physical layout of the survey instrument, the wording and structure of each question, the ordering of the questions, the construction of questionnaire pages, and the use of a booklet format.

Survey Implementation

The Tailored Design Method also guided survey implementation.

- Pre-notice letters alerting respondents to the study and asking for their participation were sent out in early June 2005 by the University of Wisconsin-Extension county educators in each of the study counties, with these letters going out under their signatures.
- Within a week the Northern Center for Community and Economic Development sent out the first mailing of the questionnaire. It included a cover letter, the questionnaire, and a stamped return envelope.
- A follow-up reminder postcard was sent within ten days of the first questionnaire mailing.
- Two weeks after the postcard a second mailing of the complete survey package was sent to all respondents that had not yet replied.

Using a first class mailing on the original survey yielded 129 undeliverable surveys out of the 1,188 that were sent, leaving an initial mailing count of 1,059. After both mailings were completed, a total of 574 surveys (440 from the first and 134 from the second mailing) were returned for a 54.2 percent response rate. Respondents were given the option of returning the survey without filling it out if they did not want to participate, and 195 chose to follow this route. Of this group, 85 indicated the survey did not apply to them because they were not craftspersons or artists. This reduced the final survey population count to 974. Out of the 574 surveys returned, a total of 379 respondents had completed the survey (318 from the first mailing and 61 from the second). This represents 38.9 percent of the total population of 974 identified craftspersons and artists in the region.

[7] They included: apparel making, book making, candles, carpet and other textiles, doll/toy/game, fabric making, fiber, furniture and related products, glass making, jewelry, leather, metal work, musical instruments, painting, paper making, photography, pottery and ceramics, sculpture, small arms, soap making, and wood working.

Table 1
Response Rate by County

County	Number of Surveys Mailed	Percent of Surveys Mailed	Number of Total Respondents	Percent of Total Respondents
Ashland	62	6.4	21	5.5
Barron	120	12.3	44	11.6
Bayfield	120	12.3	64	16.9
Burnett	36	3.7	12	3.2
Douglas	173	17.8	55	14.5
Pepin	22	2.3	12	3.2
Pierce	86	8.8	29	7.7
Polk	70	7.2	37	9.8
Sawyer	72	7.4	20	5.3
St Croix	146	15.0	59	15.6
Washburn	67	6.9	26	6.9
Totals	974	100.0	379	100.0

Results – General Characteristics and Demographics

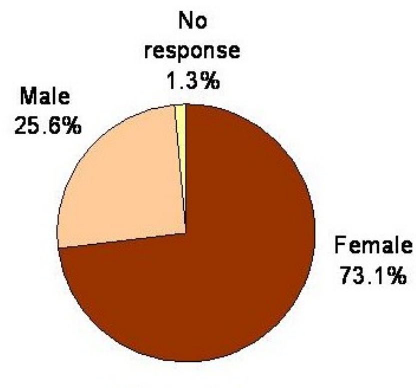
The picture that emerged from the study is fairly clear. At the risk of taking away from the underlying diversity that characterizes craftspersons and artists in northwest Wisconsin, here is a thumbnail sketch. The "typical" person in this creative industry is a female Caucasian, works at her craft or art part-time, is over 50 years old, has been engaged in her business for over 10 years, has no paid employees, receives less than $10,000 personal income per year from her business but is in a household with total income from all sources well above that, works on her craft or art on personal residential property that is owned by her household, is not necessarily involved in any arts groups or organizations, is satisfied with her vocation, and has attended at least some college.

Gender. Almost three-fourths of the respondents (73.1 percent) were female. In no county were there more male than female respondents.

Race*.* Caucasians accounted for 91.0 percent of the respondents. Native Americans were the next largest group at 2.1 percent. For the study area as a whole, Native Americans make up 2.7 percent of the population.

Employment Status*.* Roughly two out of three respondents, or 63.9 percent of the total, viewed their art/craft business as a part-time vocation. In only two counties, Pierce and Pepin, were there more full-time than part-time respondents, while Bayfield County respondents were split almost evenly between the two categories. At the other end of the spectrum, 83.3 percent of the respondents in Burnett County viewed their art/craft business as part-time.

Figure 2
Gender
(Percent of total respondents)



In terms of average hours per week spent on the business, 12.1 percent of craftspersons and artists spent fewer than 7 hours, 36.2 percent spent 7 to 20 hours, 30.0 percent spent 20 to 40 hours, and 21.1 percent spent more than 40 hours.

Figure 3
Employment Status in Craft/Art Business
(Percent of total respondents)

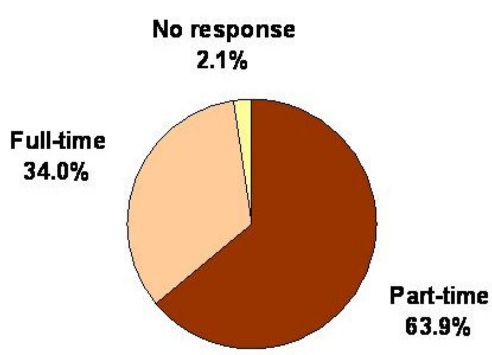
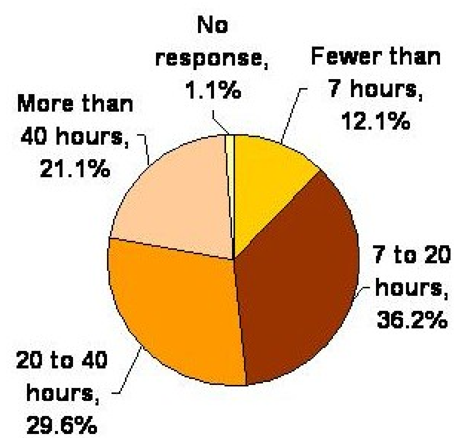


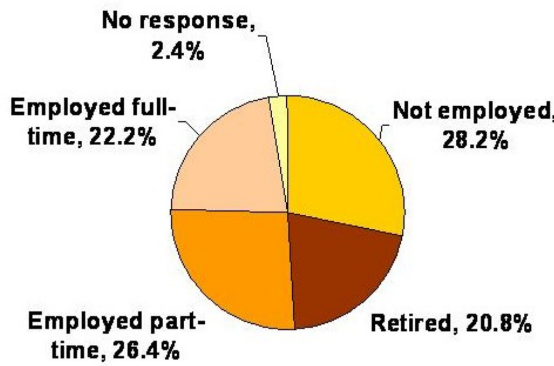
Figure 4
Hours Per Week Spent on Craft/Art Business
(Percent of total respondents)



Compared to the previous year, over one-half of the respondents spent about the same amount of time on their craft/art business and the remainder were evenly divided between those who spent more and those who spent less time. However, when the reference period was "during the years you have been involved in your business," the responses showed more of a generalized increase in time spent on the business. The responses (as a percent of total respondents) were as follows: increasing significantly, 8.5 percent; increasing somewhat, 30.4; staying about the same, 26.3 percent; decreasing somewhat, 14.3 percent; decreasing significantly, 4.1 percent; both increasing and decreasing with no steady pattern, 12.6 percent, and no response to question, 3.8 percent.

When respondents were asked about their employment status excluding their craft/art business, there was a roughly comparable distribution across the four possible categories: not employed for pay (28.2 percent), retired (20.8 percent), employed part-time (26.4 percent), and employed full-time (22.2 percent).

Figure 5
Employment Status
Outside of Craft/Art Business
(Percent of total respondents)



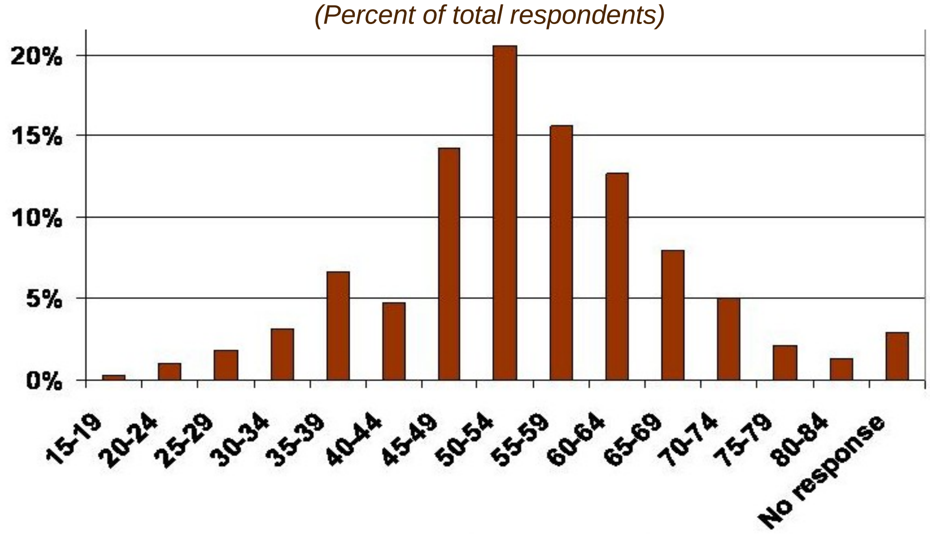
Among the respondents that were employed outside of their craft/art business, which accounted for 48.6 percent of the total, 67.7 percent worked for someone else and 29.6 percent were self-employed, with the remaining 2.7 percent not responding.

When asked to indicate which standard occupational group best described the work they did outside of their craft/art business, the associated groups (and share of the total respondents with outside employment) were as follows:

- Education, training, and library (21.0 percent)
- Sales and related (11.3 percent)
- Office/administrative support (11.3 percent)
- Healthcare practitioners, technicians, and support (10.8 percent)
- Management, business, and financial operations (9.7 percent)
- Life and social sciences, legal, art, and entertaining (6.5 percent)
- Installation, maintenance, repair, and production (5.4 percent)
- Food preparation and serving (4.3 percent)
- Natural resources, mining, and construction (3.2 percent)
- Protective, maintenance, and personal care service (2.7 percent)
- Computer, math, architecture, and engineering (2.7 percent)
- Transportation/material moving (2.2 percent)

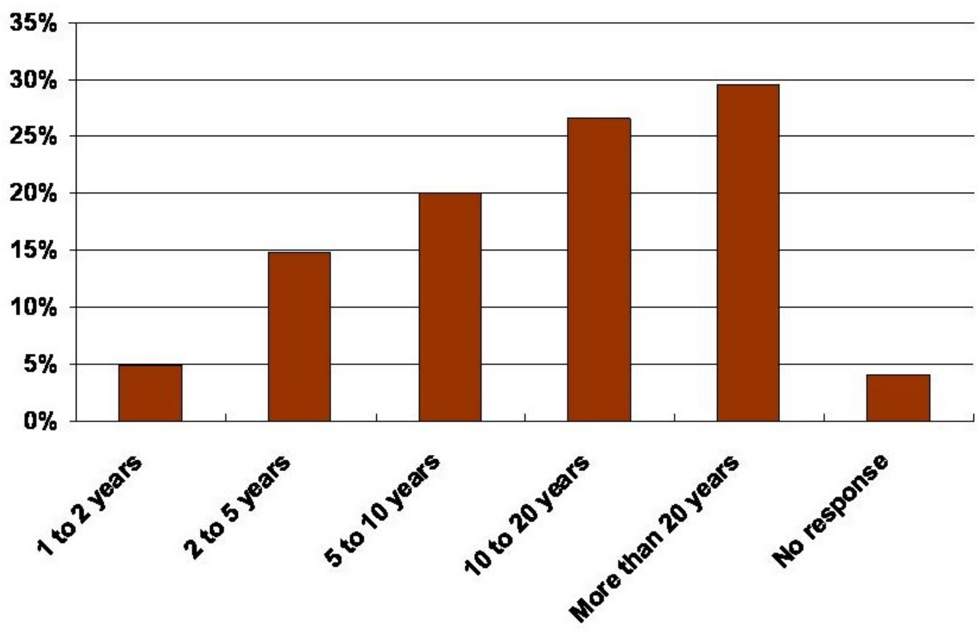
Age. The average age of the respondents was 53.6 years. They ranged from 15 to 84 years old. Only 13.2 percent of the respondents were 40 years of age or younger, and 36.7 percent were 50 years of age or younger; i.e., almost two-thirds of the respondents were over the age of 50. Almost one-half of the respondents, or 48.8 percent of the total, were in the 50-to-64-years age range.

Figure 6
Age Distribution of Respondents
(Percent of total respondents)



Years in Business. Of the 365 respondents (96.3 percent of the total) who indicated they had been involved in their present business for more than a year, most indicated a longer-term involvement. The number of years respondents had been engaged in their craft/art business (shown as a percent of total respondents for each category), were as follows: 1 to 2 years, 4.9 percent; 2 to 5 years, 14.8 percent; 5 to 10 years, 20.0 percent; 10 to 20 years, 26.6 percent; more than 20 years, 29.6 percent; and no response to question, 4.1 percent.

Figure 7
Length of Time Involved
in Present Craft/Art Business
(*Percent of total respondents)*



Employees. Only 34 respondents, or 9.0 percent of the total, indicated that they had paid employees other than themselves working on the production or sale of items produced by their business. Thirteen of the respondents had full-time employees, with a cumulative total of 53 such employees. Twenty-five of the respondents had part-time employees, with a cumulative total of 78 such employees. In addition, 60 of the respondents, or 15.8 percent of the total, indicated that they had unpaid employees or volunteers during the previous year.

Location and Ownership of Business. Most respondents are producing items for sale on their own property. Businesses or studios located within the personal residences of the respondents accounted for 63.9 percent of the total and those located in a separate building or structure on the respondents' residential property accounted for another 19.3 percent. Locations separate from the personal residence but within ten miles accounted for 10.0 percent of the total while separate locations more than ten miles from the personal residence represented 3.4 percent of the total.

Respondents were asked to describe their business space or studio in ownership or rental terms. Almost one-half, or 44.1 percent of the total, indicated that it was owned by them or someone in their household with a mortgage or loan and another 34. 6 percent responded that it was owned by them or someone else in their household free and clear (without a mortgage or loan). Only 8.7 percent were renting for cash rent and another 3.4 percent were using their business space or studio without any payment of cash rent. Over one-half of the respondents, or 53.3 percent, said they were "very satisfied" with their present location, and another 22.2 percent were "somewhat satisfied." At the other end of the spectrum, 4.8 percent said they were "very unsatisfied" and 7.4 percent were "somewhat unsatisfied."

Figure 8
Location of Business or Studio
(Percent of total respondents)

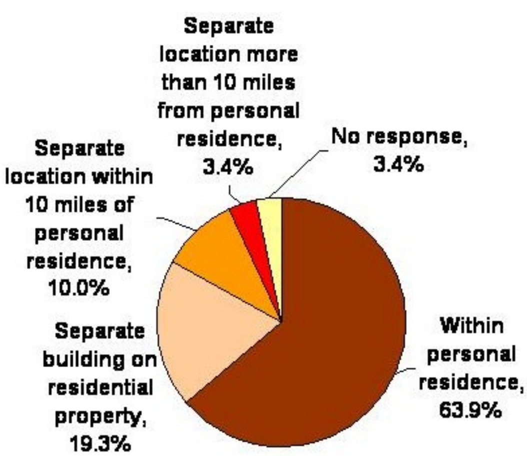
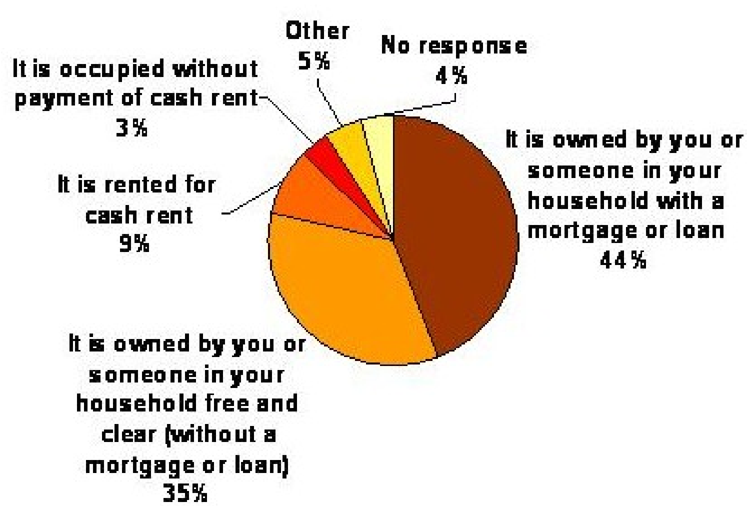
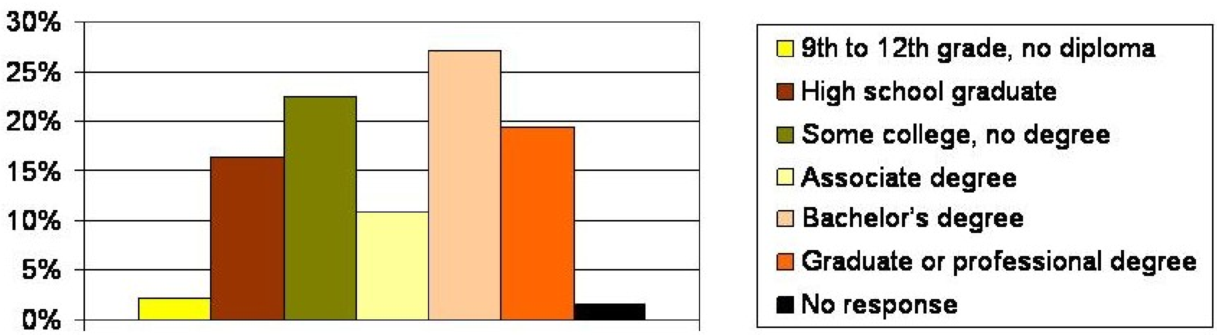


Figure 9
Description of Business Space or Studio
(Percent of total respondents)



Educational Attainment. Respondents are highly educated. Only 2.1 percent had less than a high school education, while one in five had some type of graduate or professional degree. The levels of educational attainment, and percent of the total respondents indicating each of these levels as their highest level of attainment, are as follows: high school graduate (including equivalency), 16.4 percent; some college, no degree, 22.4 percent; associate degree, 10.8 percent; bachelor's degree, 27.2 percent; and graduate or professional degree, 19.5 percent.

Figure 10
Highest Level of Educational Attainment
(Percent of total respondents)



Organizational Affiliation. Respondents were asked about their levels of involvement in art or craft organizations (local, regional, and statewide), related professional organizations, and chambers of commerce. The results are shown in Table 2. Levels of involvement diminish in art or craft organizations as you move from local to regional to statewide levels. Local art or craft organizations receive the most attention from respondents, with over half, or 55.9 percent, involved at least occasionally. Not all counties in the study area have active local art or craft organizations. Some of the respondents indicating involvement in regional organizations may have sought out groups in neighboring counties or regions. Involvement in statewide organizations is limited, as is involvement in chambers of commerce.

Table 2
Involvement in Associated Groups and Associations
(Percent of total respondents)

	Local art or craft organization	Regional art or craft organization	Statewide art or craft organization	Professional organization related to art or craft	Chamber of Commerce
Highly involved	17.2	6.9	1.3	5.8	3.4
Somewhat involved	19.3	14.0	6.6	14.8	7.9
Occasionally involved	19.5	15.3	12.1	11.4	6.3
Rarely involved	9.5	15.3	15.0	10.0	9.0
Not involved	23.8	34.0	47.2	41.2	54.4
Not applicable	7.9	9.2	12.1	11.4	13.5
No response	2.9	5.3	5.5	5.5	5.5

Satisfaction and Success. Respondents were given the opportunity to rate their level of satisfaction as a craftsperson or artist. The selected levels of satisfaction, as percentage shares of total respondents, were as follows: extremely satisfied, 18.2 percent; very satisfied, 40.1 percent; somewhat satisfied, 22.7 percent; average, 9.8 percent; somewhat unsatisfied, 5.3 percent; very unsatisfied, 1.6 percent; extremely unsatisfied, 0.5 percent; and no response to question, 1.9 percent.

The self-rated levels of satisfaction, which were quite high, were not matched by self-rated levels of success as a business person. Nonetheless, over three-fourths of the respondents rated themselves as having at least average or greater business success; this compared with 90.8 percent rating themselves as being average or above in terms of satisfaction. The selected levels of business success were as follows: extremely successful, 3.2 percent; very successful, 16.6 percent; somewhat successful, 32.2 percent; average, 25.3 percent; somewhat unsuccessful, 11.6 percent; very unsuccessful, 5.0 percent; extremely unsuccessful, 3.2 percent; and no response to question, 2.9 percent.

Figure 11
Level of Satisfaction with Craft/Art Business
(Percent of total respondents)

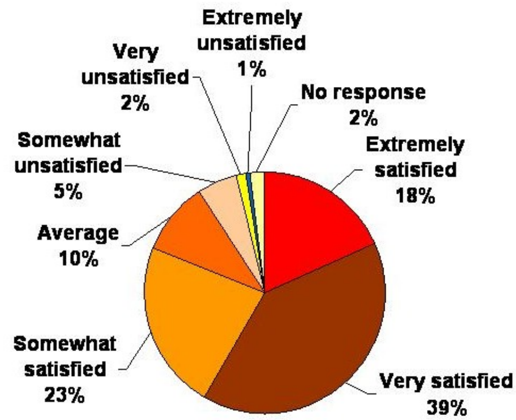
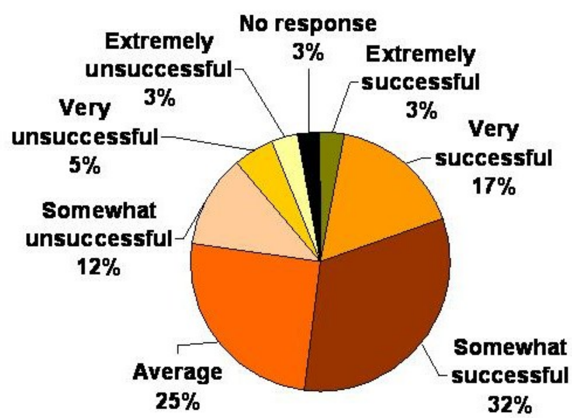
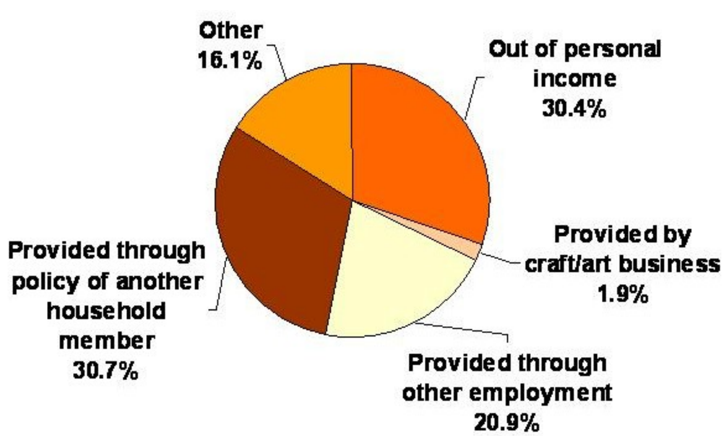


Figure 12
Level of Success with Craft/Art Business
(Percent of total respondents)



Computer and Internet Use. Computer use is relatively widespread among respondents, with 62.0 percent indicating they use it in some way to help support or manage their business. Of this group, the following uses, by percentage share of total computer users, were registered: keep in touch with customers, 67.2 percent; maintain a website for art/craft business, 40.4 percent; promote, advertise, or display your products, 43.4 percent; internet-based sales of product, 26.0 percent; order supplies or equipment, 76.6 percent; keep track of what others in your field are doing, 63.8 percent; market research, 33.6 percent; inventory management, 34.0 percent; and financial management, 42.1 percent.

Figure 13
Health Insurance Coverage
(Percent of total respondents)



Health Insurance. One out of every six respondents (16.9 percent) indicated they did not have any health insurance/coverage in 2004. Of the remaining respondents that did have health care coverage, the sources of this coverage and related percentage shares were as follows: out of personal income, 30.4 percent; provided by craft/art business, 1.9 percent; provided through other employment, 20.9 percent; provided through policy of another household member, 30.7 percent; and other sources, 16.1 percent.

Interest in Training Workshops. Respondents were asked to indicate their relative levels of interest in ten types of training workshops. The qualifiers in the question were that the workshop would be within fifty miles of their location and that it would be offered at an affordable cost. As indicated in Table 3, the two trainings of highest interest to the respondents were internet and e-commerce workshop and advertising/marketing workshop. In both cases, over 40 percent of the respondents were either “highly likely” or “somewhat likely” to attend such workshops. Around 30 percent of the respondents expressed similar levels of interest in business planning and visual merchandising workshops, followed fairly closely by interest in financial planning and market analysis workshops. There was relatively little interest in inventory management, customer service, and employee training workshops.

Table 3
Interest in Training Workshops
(Percent of total respondents)

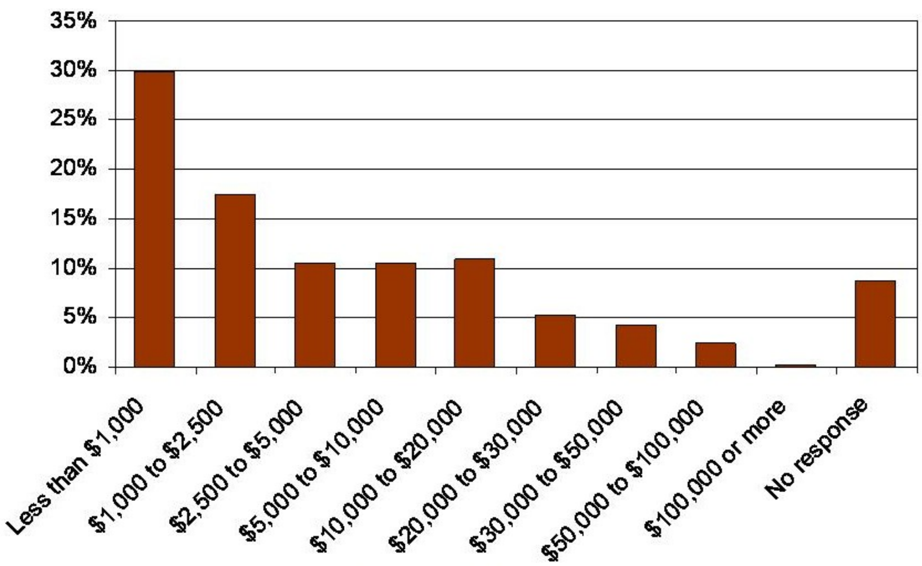
	Highly likely to attend	Somewhat likely to attend	Unsure	Somewhat unlikely to attend	Highly unlikely to attend	No response
Internet and e-commerce workshop	19.0	23.5	11.9	5.0	33.2	7.4
Advertising/marketing workshop	14.0	30.6	11.3	4.7	32.7	6.6
Business planning workshop	10.8	19.0	12.9	8.2	38.5	10.6
Visual merchandising workshop	10.3	20.3	12.4	7.9	38.5	10.6
Financial management workshop	8.7	16.9	14.5	10.6	39.1	10.3
Point of purchase displays workshop	7.4	17.2	13.7	8.4	41.7	11.6
Market analysis workshop	7.1	20.1	13.5	7.4	40.6	11.3
Inventory management workshop	5.8	9.0	13.7	9.5	49.1	12.9
Customer service workshop	3.2	7.7	12.1	10.3	53.0	13.7
Employee training workshop	1.6	3.7	11.3	7.1	62.0	14.2

Results –
Income, Sales/Revenue, and Economic Contribution Estimates

Income. The income-related questions provided ranges of income for respondents to choose from rather than asking for specific amounts.[8] Respondents were asked three income-related questions focusing on (1) personal income from their craft/art business, (2) total personal income from all sources, and (3) total household or family income from all sources. Less than 10 percent of the respondents declined to answer these questions.

Over two-thirds of the respondents, or 68.3 percent of the total, had personal income from their craft/art business of less than $10,000 for the year. Almost half, or 47.3 percent, had income for the year from their craft/art business of $5,000 and less. This is not surprising given the part-time nature of this vocation for many respondents. The breakdown of annual income categories less than $10,000 by ranges of income (as a percent of total respondents for each category), is as follows: less than $1,000, 29.8 percent; $1,000 to $2,500, 17.4 percent; $2,500 to $5,000, 10.6 percent; and $5,000 to $10,000, 10.6 percent. Only ten of the respondents were realizing an annual income from their craft/art business of $50,000 or more, while twenty-six were realizing an annual income greater than $30,000.

Figure 14
Personal Income from
Craft/Art Business in 2004
(Percent of total respondents)



When the focus shifts to personal income from all sources, the picture changes. Only 25.9 percent of the total fall into the less than $10,000 annual income category when all sources of income are considered. Almost half, or 49.1 percent of the total, realize personal income from all sources that is $20,000 or less for the year. On the other hand, one out of four respondents is earning $30,000 or more per year.

Finally, figures for total household income from all sources indicate the importance of multiple sources of income for respondent households. Nonetheless, one out of three respondent households, or 32.7 percent of the total, had total income from all sources for the year of $30,000 or less. The next 26.7 percent of the total were in the $30,000 to $50,000 range, followed by another 27.7 percent of the total in the $50,000 to $100,000 range. Fourteen of the respondent households, or 3.7 percent of the total, saw total income from all sources greater than $100,000 for the year.

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[8] As Dillman (2000) notes, the request for income is “the one question most likely to elicit negative reactions from respondents” and the open-ended format “is the format most likely to be left unanswered (p. 74).”

Table 4
Income Levels by Source
(Percent of total respondents)

	Craft/art income	All personal income	Total household income
Less than $10,000	68.3	25.9	6.6
$10,000 to $20,000	10.8	23.2	14.3
$20,000 to $30,000	5.3	14.8	11.9
$30,000 to $50,000	4.2	17.4	26.7
$50,000 to $100,000	2.4	7.9	27.7
$100,000 or more	0.3	1.1	3.7
No response	8.7	9.8	9.2

General Characteristics of Sales and Revenue. Almost one-third of the respondents, or 30.6 percent of the total, reported revenue for products or items due to sales at the wholesale level, while 70.5 percent reported revenue from sales at the retail level. The offering of craft/art classes was an income source for 21.4 percent of the respondents, and 15.3 percent derived income from the sale of products or items produced by others. For 50.8 percent of those reporting wholesale revenue, it was less than 25 percent of their total revenue for the year, while 26.7 percent reported that it accounted for 50 percent or more of their total.

Table 5 shows the relative importance of the various types of retail sales for respondents with this type of revenue source. There is an implied diversity of sources of income revealed by these data. The least-noted sources were sales at their own off-site retail outlets, consignments to retail outlets other than galleries, and internet sales. The sources accounting for larger shares of total retail sales at the individual level were sales at the location of production, craft or art fairs, and consignments to galleries.

Table 5
Retail Sales Share by Type
(Percent of total respondents)

	None	1 – 10 percent	10 – 25 percent	25 – 50 percent	50 – 75 percent	75 – 90 percent	More than 90 percent	No response
Sales at location of production	19.1	31.1	8.6	7.5	1.5	5.6	11.2	15.4
Sales at own off-site retail outlet	50.9	4.1	3.0	1.9	1.1	2.3	4.5	32.2
Crafts or arts fair	22.9	9.4	6.7	7.1	8.2	10.1	15.0	20.6
Consignments to galleries	27.3	16.5	7.9	9.4	3.4	6.4	7.1	22.1
Consignments to other retail outlets	39.7	13.5	8.2	2.3	1.1	1.9	0.8	32.6
Internet sales	47.2	12.4	2.3	1.1	--	0.8	--	36.3
Other	30.0	3.4	2.3	3.8	2.3	0.8	1.5	56.2

Product/Industry Classification. Respondents were provided with a list of twenty-three different product or industry classifications that were identified using an existing product-type database developed by Wisconsin's Northwest Heritage Passage. Table 6 summarizes the "industrial" breakdown for the study area. There were a total of 710 responses to this question, which shows that many of the respondents were engaged in more than one type of craft or art production. Fabric making and painting were the two largest categories in terms of number of respondents. Notably, the "other" category was also large and accounted for 16.5 percent of the responses. There was a range of unique products and activities listed for this response that did not readily fit into the categories that were provided.

Table 6
Industry Classification by Type
(Number of respondents by industry)

- **Apparel making - 24**
- **Book making - 8**
- **Candles - 10**
- **Carpet/textiles - 9**
- **Doll, toy, game - 11**
- **Fabric making - 118**
- **Fiber - 30**
- **Flowers - 19**
- **Furniture and related products - 22**
- **Glass making - 14**
- **Jewelry - 46**
- **Leather - 6**
- **Metal work - 16**
- **Musical instruments - 2**
- **Painting - 97**
- **Paper making - 4**
- **Photography - 30**
- **Pottery/ceramics - 49**
- **Sculpture - 26**
- **Small arms - 1**
- **Soap making - 14**
- **Wood working – 37**
- **Other – 117**

Note: There were 710 industry responses

Gross Sales Figures. Actual revenue numbers were provided by 260 respondents (or 68.6 percent of total), representing 26.7 percent of the 974 craftspersons and artists identified in the region for this study. A total of 408 separate responses were provided for gross sales by survey respondents.

Table 7 provides figures for each industry looked at in this study. Average industry sales per craftsperson are listed along with the total estimated annual sales for each industry. Average sales figures were derived by taking total actual sales reported and dividing that number by the number of craftspersons and artists reporting sales figures. Total estimated annual sales for each industry were calculated under the following two assumptions:

1) Sales figures from the respondents reporting such data are representative of the entire population of craftspersons and artists in the region. Evidence suggests that these figures may in fact be under-representative, i.e., respondents with higher sales and income were less likely to provide such data, so any error would be on the conservative side.

2) The total population of craftspersons and artists in the region is estimated to be at least 25 percent higher than the number identified during the outreach phase of the study. Feedback from arts organizations and craft and art producer audiences indicate that, despite good intentions and efforts, the survey reached, at best, three-fourths of the craftspersons and artists in the region. This would be especially true for woodworkers, furniture makers, and sheet metal craftspersons, as well as a range of visual artists.

Average sales by industry range from a high of $34,100 for metal work craftspersons to a low of $964 for candle-producing craftspersons. These are gross sales figures and do not reflect either relative costs of production or sales margins, which vary significantly from one type of activity to the next. Total estimated sales by industry, for the eleven-county study area, range from $4,742,092 for “other” craftspersons and artists to a low of $33,715 for candle-producing craftspersons. Seven of the industries have over $1 million in annual sales and each of the twelve largest industries have over $500,000 in total sales annually.

Table 7
Gross Sales Data by Industry

Industry (1)	Average gross sales per craftsperson/artist	Total estimated gross sales (annual)
Other	$10,433	$4,742,092
Pottery and ceramics	$19,613	$3,624,654
Painting	$5,767	$1,785,792
Sculpture	$18,445	$1,750,453
Metal work	$34,100	$1,703,252
Glass making	$22,316	$1,337,502
Wood working	$10,064	$1,055,586
Jewelry	$4,605	$713,090
Furniture and related products	$9,729	$680,302
Leather	$30,975	$618,865
Fiber	$6,027	$602,107
Photography	$6,478	$582,448
Book making	$10,680	$266,726
Apparel making	$1,516	$113,588
Fabric making	$2,596	$103,719
Soap making	$2,877	$100,597
Flowers	$1,945	$97,143
Carpet and other textiles	$3,780	$94,403
Doll, toy, game	$2,206	$88,135
Candles	$964	$33,715
ELEVEN-COUNTY AREA	**$10,093**	**$20,569,081**
(1) Sales figures suppressed for the following industries: paper making, cutlery and knives, small arms, and musical instruments		

Table 8 shows the sales data by county. Average gross sales for the entire study area were $15,837 per reporting respondent. At the county level, the averages ranged from below $5,000 in Burnett County, where most art and craft producers were part-time, to over $20,000 in Pepin, Sawyer, and St. Croix Counties. Total estimated sales by county ranged from a high of $4,597,491 for St. Croix County to a low of $178,502 for Burnett County. While these figures represent good estimates, it should be stressed that county-level estimates are less reliable than overall estimates across the entire study region. Eight of the eleven counties annual sales exceeding $1 million while over one-third or four of the counties in the region had annual craftsperson and artist sales of over $2 million.

Table 8
Gross Sales by County

County	Number reporting gross sales data	Share of total gross sales (%)	Average gross sales per respondent	Total gross sales estimates by county
Ashland	17	2.5	$6,102	$518,168
Barron	28	10.2	$15,067	$2,107,195
Bayfield	42	19.3	$18,960	$3,977,355
Burnett	8	0.9	$4,467	$178,502
Douglas	30	5.8	$7,997	$1,198,275
Pepin	11	6.2	$23,293	$1,279,791
Pierce	20	8.8	$18,011	$1,799,278
Polk	29	12.3	$17,485	$2,532,750
Sawyer	12	7.1	$24,277	$1,455,101
St Croix	42	22.4	$21,915	$4,597,491
Washburn	21	4.5	$8,820	$925,175
TOTALS	260	100.0	$15,839	$20,569,081

Economic Contribution Estimates. The figures highlighted above represent the direct economic contribution (sales) of craftspersons and artists in the region. Average sales per respondent are based on actual survey data while total estimated sales, as previously noted, are based on assumptions regarding the study and region. As with every industry, however, there are additional economic contributions that go beyond direct sales.

So-called multiplier effects refer to both the indirect and induced spending that is a result of the demand created by the sale of crafts and art in the region. Indirect economic effects are often referred to as "second-round" spending effects and can be thought of as the local economic activity generated by business-to-business spending triggered by the sale of crafts and art in the region. Induced economic effects are often referred to as "third-round" spending effects and can be thought of as the local economic activity generated by the household spending triggered by both direct and indirect economic activity.

A regional economic model of the eleven-county study area was built using 2003 MicroIMPLAN datasets, the most recent available at the time of the study.[9] IMPLAN is a widely-used input-output model that allows for detailed analyses of inter-industry linkages and the construction of economic impact multipliers. Sales figures for 2004 were taken from the survey, deflated to 2003 dollars, and used as the basis for the input-output analysis. Only sales derived from locally-made crafts and art were used; sales from other items sold by respondents were not included in the analysis.

[9] The model was constructed using Type SAM multipliers and version 2.01.025 of the software.

Table 9 provides an estimate of the economic contributions of craftspersons and artists to the study region in two areas: output (or total sales generated) and earnings (or total proprietor and employee income). Craftspersons and artists directly contributed over $20 million to the regional economy in 2004. An additional $4.7 million were contributed indirectly by craftspersons and artists purchasing the goods and services necessary to run their businesses. Finally, over $6 million were contributed to the regional economy as a result of the household spending *induced* by those direct and indirect economic contributions. The total economic contribution of craftspersons and artists is therefore estimated to be over $31 million per year. A similar breakdown is provided for earnings in the same table. Total earnings are estimated to be over $12 million annually.

Table 9
Annual Economic Contribution of Craftspersons and Artists to Regional Economy (in 2003 dollars)

Economic Effect	Output (or Sales)	Earnings
Direct	$20,239,071	$8,690,747
Indirect	$4,713,064	$1,527,065
Induced	$6,376,366	$1,944,099
Total	$31,328,501	$12,161,911

Table 10 provides a breakdown of how the economic contribution of craftspersons and artists is distributed throughout the economy. The inter-industry nature of the IMPLAN model makes it possible to provide this type of detail. Industries listed in the table have been aggregated to their “two-digit level” according to the North American Industrial Classification System Code (NAICS code).

Directly, craftspersons and artists contribute $12.8 million as manufacturing industries and $7.4 million as arts, entertainment, and recreation industries. These are the estimated annual sales derived from actual sales data collected from the survey. The zero amounts for the other industries in the “direct” column indicate there were no sales recorded in those types of industries by craftspersons and artists.

The figures listed in the “indirect” and “induced” columns in Table 10 show how the additional $11 million in economic activity supported by craftspersons and artists in the region is distributed. In terms of indirect economic effects, those industries supplying the most inputs for craftspersons and artists include manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, professional services, and information industries. In terms of induced effects, those industries most impacted by household spending include government, health and social services, retail trade, manufacturing, and accommodation and food services.

Table 10
Annual Economic Contributions of Craftspersons and Artists in Northwest Wisconsin by Industry
(2003 dollars aggregated at the 2-digit NAICS cod level)

NAICS Code	Industry	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
11	Ag, forestry, fish & hunting	0	$45,001	$88,358	$133,360
21	Mining	0	$5,878	$32	$5,909
22	Utilities	0	$195,672	$152,070	$347,743
23	Construction	0	$91,766	$49,817	$141,583
31-33	Manufacturing	$12,818,765	$887,219	$591,568	$14,297,552
42	Wholesale trade	0	$296,667	$213,942	$510,609
48-49	Transportation & warehousing	0	$744,642	$174,134	$918,776
44-45	Retail trade	0	$40,308	$889,891	$930,199
51	Information	0	$360,369	$188,669	$549,038
52	Finance & insurance	0	$187,937	$287,263	$475,200
53	Real estate & rental	0	$215,206	$221,910	$437,116
54	Professional-scientific & tech svcs	0	$437,004	$168,057	$605,061
55	Management of companies	0	$223,229	$26,838	$250,067
56	Administrative & waste services	0	$273,380	$107,297	$380,676
51	Educational services	0	$1,314	$78,507	$79,821
52	Health & social services	0	$337	$996,087	$996,424
71	Arts, entertainment & recreation	$ 7,420,306	$336,002	$104,296	$7,860,604
72	Accommodation & food services	0	$94,123	$532,756	$626,879
81	Other services	0	$149,589	$344,396	$493,986
92	Government & non NAICs	0	$127,422	$1,160,478	$1,287,899
	TOTAL	**$20,239,071**	**$4,713,064**	**$6,376,366**	**$31,328,501**

Discussion

The demographic characteristics of craftspersons and artists in northwest Wisconsin stand out clearly. Three-fourths are women, compared to the national survey figure of 64.0 percent (Dave and Evans, 2001). The median and mean age for respondents is almost 54 years—four years older than in the national survey.

A number of other comparisons can be made to the national figures from the CODA Survey (Dave and Evans, 2001):

- As was the case nationally, most respondents—83 percent compared to 79 percent—work on their art or craft in a studio or production location on their own residential property
- Less than 10 percent of the respondents had paid employees, while nationally the figure was closer to 20 percent
- There was a notably lower level of affiliation with art or craft organizations than was the case nationally, where the figure was 78.1 percent for membership[10]
- Sources of sales and revenue, in terms of wholesale versus retail and types of retail, were relatively comparable

Respondents are self-employed and, for the most part, work at their art and craft on a part-time basis. One in five of the respondents was retired and using their craft/art business as an additional income source. The survey results show that art and craft income was often a small portion of total household income.

In terms of their economic contribution to the regional economy, it is estimated that craftspersons and artists generate over $20 million in annual sales. An additional $11 million in economic activity is supported through indirect (business-to-business spending) and induced effects (household spending). These figures would be even higher if the study included the impact of goods purchased by craftspersons and artists for re-sale. The study focused only on those goods made by craftspersons and artists themselves.

Craftspersons and artists play multiple, complex roles in the regional economy. They produce and directly sell to their customers, many of whom are from outside the region. They also sell to retailers, both within and outside the region. While beyond the scope of this research project, craftspersons and artists play significant roles in tourism. Several of those surveyed draw visitors from around the world. A better understanding of how craftspersons and artists fit into the overall tourism mix would help guide regional tourism development efforts as well as individual business development.

The educational attainment of respondents merits special attention. Almost one-half of the respondents, or 46.7 percent of the total, had an educational attainment level of bachelor's degree or higher. The bachelor's degree educational attainment rate for the entire population of the state of Wisconsin aged 25 or above, at 22.4 percent, is less than half the rate of those surveyed. On a county-

Table 11
Educational Attainment by County

County	Percent of population 25 years and older with bachelor's degree or higher	Percent of study respondents with bachelor's degree or higher
Ashland	16.5	33.3
Barron	14.9	34.1
Bayfield	21.6	54.0
Burnett	14.0	58.3
Douglas	18.3	33.3
Pepin	13.3	41.6
Pierce	24.6	82.8
Polk	15.6	48.7
St Croix	26.3	44.8
Sawyer	16.5	50.0
Washburn	21.9	42.3

[10] This is undoubtedly a reflection of the methodology for the national survey that, as noted earlier, used a mailing to the memberships of craft organizations in the U.S.

by-county basis, the measures ranged from a low of 33.3 percent to a notable high of 82.8 percent. Considering that much of the study area is rural and experiencing an associated “brain drain,” this figure is significant. Table 11 shows county-level survey results related to educational attainment and compares them to figures for each county’s population as a whole. Craftspersons and artists represent a highly-educated component of each county’s population.

Craftspersons and artists in northwest Wisconsin stay put, in terms of both years in business and years in residence, at their present locations. Urban artists are often seen as comprising a “relatively footloose occupation that can serve as a target of regional and local economic development policy” (Markusen, 2006). These rural results, by contrast, indicate locational stability for the region’s craftspersons and artists.

Another notable characteristic is the relative age of the group under discussion. In the same way that most creative economy analyses tend to have an urban geographical focus, they tend to focus demographically on younger creative individuals and professionals. This study has identified a group of craftspersons and artists with an average age of 54 years. Given the size and economic importance of the “baby boom” generation, this may represent a situation where the consideration of related retention and attraction strategies could be warranted.

Creative economy strategies appropriate for rural communities and regions have been identified by several authors. Arts-based community development approaches include arts business incubators, artists’ cooperatives, and tourism venues (Phillips 2004). Identifying a community’s niche is often cited as a key first step (Markusen and Schrock, 2006; Drabenstott, 2003).

Additional recommendations cited elsewhere include:

- engage artists and craftspersons in planning and local decision making;
- integrate the arts into community (economic) development efforts;
- build coalitions, networks, and exchanges;
- conserve rural cultural traditions;
- stimulate cultural heritage tourism;
- assemble financial resources; adaptively reuse buildings; and
- provide artistic spaces such as clubhouses, live/work and studio buildings, and smaller performing arts spaces.

Educational institutions stand to play a key role in efforts such as these. Rosenfeld (2004), in a list of recommended public policies and private practices related to what he sees as rural creative enterprise “clusters,” suggests:

- add art and design services to the Manufacturing Extension Program and Cooperative Extension,
- designate a lead Small Business Development Center for creative industries,
- support networks and networking,
- bundle arts and design with entertainment and cultural tourism,
- embed arts and design in education, and
- make greater use of community (or technical) colleges.

Conclusion

Craftspersons and artists often go largely unnoticed in rural regions. They "slip through the cracks" in broader analyses that rely on secondary data. They do not figure prominently in economic development strategies, nor are they seen as key economic players or contributors. The recent interest in the creative economy, however, and attempts to understand the implications of the creative economy model of development for rural areas, may be leading to changes in this perspective.

The creative economy model of economic development posits that the more successful a region is in attracting and retaining creative workers, the better that region's economy will perform. However, a majority of the research on the creative economy has focused on urban—not rural—areas. This research study attempts to shed light on the following three questions:

1) What are the general characteristics of those core members of the rural creative economy—craftspersons and artists—living and working in northwest Wisconsin?
2) How much do they contribute to the regional economy and what role(s) do they play in it?
3) What are the educational needs of this group of rural entrepreneurs? How can the resources of the University of Wisconsin be tailored to support the rural creative economy of northwest Wisconsin?

The picture that emerges is both different from and similar to the one that typically comes to mind when you think of the young and geographically mobile creative class of professionals that Richard Florida describes in *The Flight of the Creative Class*. They are different in that they are not young; they are part of the "baby boom" generation. Nor are they footloose; they tend to stay put. On the other hand, like the younger members of the creative class, these craftspersons and artists are very well educated.

Unlike their younger counterparts, those surveyed possess an enormous reservoir of experiential knowledge. With industries throughout the country recognizing the importance of "knowledge retention" strategies as the baby boom generation begins to retire, the ability to retain and attract such individuals is an important component in creating a healthy, diverse, and thriving local economy.[11]

The economic contribution analysis underscores two aspects of craft and art production. First, these types of production are directly contributing an estimated $20 million in annual sales. When crafts and art are sold to buyers from outside the area, this is comparable to selling any manufactured good to an external market and makes these producers part of the region's economic base. Second, these sales lead to additional contributions to the regional economy via linkages with other economic sectors. The total economic contribution of craftspersons and artists is estimated to be over $30 million per year to the regional economy.

Cities and regions across the country—and world—are engaged in an intense competition for creative talent. Why? Because in a global economy, creativity is seen as the competitive edge that will continue to add value in the marketplace. This research finds that northwest Wisconsin has a vibrant creative industry in its craftspersons and artists. They are engaged in a broad range of creative activities. They are well-educated, experienced, and grounded in their communities. But where do or should they fit as the region defines its competitive advantages?

Craftspersons and artists enhance the region's attractiveness as a tourist destination. They help "brand" the region as creative and innovative. Yet the findings show that they are not fully involved with local development organizations, especially chambers of commerce. They are typically overlooked when it comes to business assistance, yet they may constitute a prime investment area for community economic development. The study highlights high priority areas where such assistance is needed.

[11] See DeLong (2004) for a treatment of evaluating and implementing knowledge retention strategies.

Craftspersons and artists are at the heart of a vital creative economy in northwest Wisconsin. Although this specific creative “industry” is comparatively small, the associated potential for broader regional growth may not be. This study points toward an emerging rural twist on the creative economy model. One that accounts for the fact that northwest Wisconsin is not necessarily a magnet for footloose creative types. And, one that accounts for the fact that the area already has an abundance of natural, cultural, and other amenities said to attract and retain members of the creative class. Could craftspersons and artists be an undervalued element of a rural creative economy? Do they represent a creative asset that could support the attraction of other creative individuals? Is there a creative economy niche that well-placed rural areas would be advised to identify, understand, and build upon? Finding ways to support the work of existing craftspersons and artists may be a strategy that plays to rural strengths and advantages.

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