

Bardstown named Cultural District

Label recently bestowed by Kentucky Arts Council

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Photo Credit: JENNIFER CORBETT GROTE

The Silver and Strings music ensemble performs at the FABS gallery while Kim Huston, president of the Nelson County Economic and Development Agency, and Kathryn Wilson, treasurer for the Fine Arts Bardstown Society, watch.

Bardstown is one of six cities in Kentucky that have been recently labeled as Cultural Districts by the Kentucky Arts Council.

Kim Huston, president of the Nelson County Economic Development Agency, said the distinction would bring more awareness to the cultural amenities in the area.

“Hopefully, it will draw more attention and make locals more aware,” Huston said of Bardstown being named a Cultural District.

A Cultural District is a well-recognized, labeled, mixed-use area of a community featuring a high concentration of cultural amenities that attract local residents and visitors alike, according to the Kentucky Arts Council website.

The other cities that were selected as Cultural Districts include Berea, Covington, Danville, Maysville and Paducah.

Recently named Most Beautiful Small Town in America, by Rand McNally, Bardstown continues to receive national accolades not only for its picturesque setting, but for its wide array of cultural and historic features and events, according to the arts council website.

To be considered as a Cultural District, cities must complete a letter of intent and an application and provide supporting materials.

To keep the title of Cultural District, a city must send a letter to legislators, acknowledge the Kentucky Arts Council when promoting its Cultural District and submit a report at the end of the year demonstrating the impact the certification had on the community.

According to Huston, Bardstown must keep up with those requirements or it will lose the title of Cultural District.

She said NCEDA would be working with the Fine Arts Bardstown Society, or FABS, the Stephen Foster Drama Association, My Old Kentucky Home, local Civil War museums and many other organizations to spread awareness.

The goal is to get the community more aware of the arts, culture and history of Bardstown, as well as mix different types of art with one another. For example, FABS had the Silver and Strings Music Ensemble perform in its gallery this month, mixing art with performance art.

Huston noted that the new distinction is not just about art, it's also about bourbon history and culture and Civil War history and museums.

“All of that together helped Bardstown become a cultural district,” Huston said. The title will help Bardstown “grow on what we have and making people aware of what we have.”

Kathryn Wilson, treasurer of FABS, said FABS is excited to help with NCEDA and other organizations.

“I think if we develop it and bring more people into the active part we'll get a synergy going that can draw more people into the arts,” she said.



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A couple reads about Carry Nation in the Oscar Getz Museum of Whiskey History during the 2013 Kentucky Bourbon Festival, a piece of Bardstown history that contributed to its recent designation as a Cultural District.