



ART OF THE RURAL

MEDIA ADVISORY

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The Rural Policy Research Institute and Art of the Rural launch Rural Creative Placemaking Digital Learning Commons

Today, Art of the Rural (AOTR) and the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI) announced the launch of a new Digital Learning Commons (ruralgeneration.org). A platform for storytelling, research, and best practices, the Commons fosters an inclusive space for deeper collaboration and learning exchange, to assert the essential role of arts and cultural organizations in rural economic and community development. In doing so, the Learning Commons addresses two of the major challenges facing rural arts practitioners – geographic distance and access to information and networks – and establishes a digital intermediary through which these partnerships can develop.

Next Generation: The Future of Arts & Culture Placemaking in Rural America engages artists, organizations, and communities across the public, philanthropic and private sector to advance collaboration, share innovative strategies and research, and elevate emerging leaders in the field. This initiative is designed and facilitated in concert with a wide range of regional and national partners and supported by The University of Iowa and The National Endowment for the Arts.

“Next Generation emerged from conversations between The Rural Policy Research Institute and Art of the Rural,” stated Matthew Fluharty, Executive Director of Art of the Rural, “as we recognized that the missions, collaborative partnerships, and credibility with which each operated in their respective spaces were critical to those of the other, if both were to fully achieve their mission. This initiative is designed to catalyze transformational change in public, private, and philanthropic commitments to rural America.”

“From a rural context, we have much to learn from the evolving creative placemaking conversation,” Chuck Fluharty, President of the Rural Policy Research Institute, indicated. “However, the critical interchange between arts and culture, and rural development and public policy beyond the arts has yet to be fully articulated. Furthermore, the cross-sectoral synapses this enterprise is connecting in urban locales must become expressed beyond our cities. The future of our rural places, and the next generation of its citizens, depend on the kinds of innovation and collective impact fostered through such collaborations.”



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ABOUT NEXT GENERATION:

Next Generation operates through three interlinked activities: Regional Networks that spark exchange, collaboration, and dissemination of best practices; a Digital Learning Commons that shares this knowledge and contributes further perspectives from across the rural arts and culture field; and Next Generation Conferences, including a national Rural Creative Placemaking Summit, to be held at the University of Iowa, October 12-14, 2016, that will merge the activities of the Networks and Commons and expand the rural placemaking network.

To learn more, visit <http://www.ruralgeneration.org>.

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