



History

The mission of 'Round the Mountain (RTM) is to promote the sustainable economic development of the region's 19 counties and 4 cities by assisting local artisans with marketing, educational, and entrepreneurial opportunities. RTM serves counties of Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Grayson, Lee, Montgomery, Patrick, Pulaski, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, Wythe, and the cities of Bristol, Galax, Norton and Radford.

Originally inspired by funding from Governor Mark Warner's Virginia Works initiative in 2004, RTM's mission has been steered by representatives from state and local governments, planning commissions, arts organizations, the local small-business community, and economic development and tourism enhancement organizations. In addition, the original steering committee of 57 talented individuals included wide representation from the region's artisans themselves.

Individuals from that group, for the most part, still populate RTM's eight working committees. The organization, however, has matured to have a board of directors, officers, bylaws, a wide-ranging membership, and 501-c-3 nonprofit status (granted in March 2006). The committees represent several of the organization's programs-in-progress. Still, one aspect of the region's economic development progress is critical to note here, to convey a fuller understanding of not only the organization's mission, but also its overall emphasis on and desire for enhancing and supporting artistic quality.