
LUMBEE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION



Project Title:	Development and Operation of Arts and Crafts Retail Store
Award Amount:	\$408,366
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period:	9/30/2005 – 9/29/2007
Grantee Type:	Native Nonprofit

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 3 jobs created
- 2 businesses created
- 1 Native American consultant hired
- 20 elders involved
- 50 youth involved
- \$87,552 in revenue generated
- \$35,886 in resources leveraged
- 6 people trained
- 20 partnerships formed
- 4 products developed

BACKGROUND

The Lumbee Tribe is located approximately 120 miles south of Raleigh, North Carolina. Current tribal enrollment is over 50,000. The area is completely rural, with the largest town hosting a population of fewer than 10,000. The population is dependent on a declining agricultural economy, causing additional strain to an area that has also lost over 8,000 manufacturing jobs in the past ten years.

The Lumbee Regional Development Association (LRDA), created in 1968 and

headquartered in Lumberton, studies the needs of, and provides services for, the Lumbee Tribe. The organization offers a wide range of services and economic development projects aimed at overcoming the high unemployment rate in southeastern North Carolina.

Many of the arts and crafts vendors in the area suffer from the lack of a market for their products, forcing them to rely on seasonal festivals and pow-wows for income. This also requires a great deal of travel, which many elderly artisans are unable to accomplish. A 2005 meeting between the LRDA and 50 local vendors and artisans determined that the creation of a Lumbee arts and crafts store would greatly benefit the community.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this Project was to open a Native American arts and crafts store to market a wide range of products from local native artists. The Project also sought to create three retail sales jobs for the store and 24 part-time jobs for local craftsmen.

The Project's first objective was to open the store and make it a profitable business venture. Other components of this objective

include providing job training for the staff, creating twelve part-time jobs for local artisans and implementing a marketing campaign. The Project Director selected the store site and signed the lease agreement after some initial setbacks involving the location of the store. Originally, the Project staff intended to establish the store adjacent to the Visitor's Bureau right off of I-95. However, the space was no longer available, forcing relocation to a local shopping center. Using a local jewelry store as their model for layout plans and furniture needs, Lumbee Creations opened on schedule in March 2006. The high-value items in the store, approximately 45% of the stock, are on consignment, alleviating the need for the store to front the money required to purchase them from the craftsmen. Project staff developed consignment forms to allow the artists to set the price of their products. If they do not sell within 90 days, they either take them back or renew their contract. The store receives 30% of each item's sale price. Lumbee Creations directly purchased the remaining merchandise in the store. In the Project's first year, the store displayed items from twelve artists.

Project staff hired three store clerks and provided them with job training in merchandising, customer service, maintenance of inventory and store security. Initial training took place before the grand opening, including sessions on Lumbee heritage and history to enable staff to explain store products to customers.

Finally, the Project staff implemented a marketing campaign to advertise the store. Project staff developed fliers, brochures, radio and television advertisements, and put up billboards on Interstate 95. They also advertised in tribal publications and during local merchant meetings.

The objective for the second year was expanded on the first-year activities to

increase the merchandise in the store, continue staff training, display work from a larger number of artists and create four micro-businesses. The store manager identified the most popular items in the store and adjusted the inventory accordingly, determining that over 70% of the store's first year sales were jewelry. The store also increased its inventory by 45%, currently displaying merchandise from over 40 different artists. Staff training continued as needed, due to the high turnover of store clerks. Finally, the Project succeeded in helping two local artists create microbusinesses to sell their products. Ronnie Brayboy, a local artisan, stated, "I have been able to start a full-time business based on the sales of my goods [at Lumbee Creations]."

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

Implementation of the Project successfully created a business that provides increased revenue for native artists. Over the course of the Project, Lumbee Creations generated \$87,552 in sales. The store manager reported that approximately 85% of customers who visit the store are native.

The artists are grateful for the store as they are no longer reliant upon selling their products on the pow-wow circuit. It is unnecessary for them to leave their homes to make sales, because the store manager comes to their houses to purchase merchandise. As a result, elderly artists who were no longer practicing their art are now picking it up again since there is a nearby venue for sales.

The store also provides the community with a native-owned business from which to purchase goods. The store director mentioned that community members enjoy buying items from the store while learning about their culture and history from sales clerks.

OCCANEECHI BAND OF THE SAPONI NATION



Project Title:	Occaneechi Homeland Preservation Project: Phase Two
Award Amount:	\$93,434
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period:	9/30/2006 – 9/29/2007
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 2 jobs created
- 6 Native American consultants hired
- 17 elders involved
- 12 youth involved
- \$435 in revenue generated
- \$6,697 in resources leveraged
- 38 people trained
- 14 partnerships formed
- 3 products developed

BACKGROUND

The Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation resides in the northern Piedmont section of North Carolina. The Occaneechi Band is the smallest of North Carolina's state recognized Indian tribes, with approximately 650 enrolled tribal members.

The Tribe began growing tobacco as a primary cash crop in the early 1800s, and textile manufacturing later became a major source of employment for those members not involved in farming. However, with the decline of both the tobacco and textile industries in the 1990s, unemployment steadily increased.

In response to this challenge, the Tribal Council initiated the Homeland Preservation Project in August 2002, seeking to stimulate economic growth for the Tribe and to establish a land base for economic development. In 2004, the Council purchased 25 acres of land to use as a location for a new tribal center. In Phase I of the Homeland Preservation Project, the tribe began a small-scale agricultural project, planting orchards of apple, chestnut and paw-paw trees and conducting workshops for tribal members on agricultural opportunities. Phase II of the Project planned to develop a 1700s-era native village to encourage tourism.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this Project was to increase the Tribe's economic self-sufficiency by implementing Phase II of the Homeland Preservation Project: the creation of the native village and development of a marketing and promotional campaign to attract visitors to the site.

The Project's first and second objectives were to provide income for the Tribe through the planning of the village and the development of community partnerships. The Tribe formed a Project Committee,

consisting of Tribal Council and community members. The Committee approached and collaborated with numerous organizations in order to plan the design and construction of the native village. Partners include: the County Convention and Visitor's Bureau, the County Historical Museum, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Research Laboratories and Archaeology Program and the North Carolina Indian Economic Development Initiative. These partners also aided in the preparation of a marketing and promotional campaign by developing brochures, fliers and roadside billboards for the village. The Project staff also sought to develop a marketing plan for the village, but was unable to do so.

Objective 3 was to preserve Occaneechi cultural heritage through the construction of the native village. Project staff visited similar sites in the area for guidance, such as the Schiele Museum in nearby Gastonia, NC. Community members worked together to gather natural materials for use in the village construction, which began in January 2007. The grand opening of the village took place on June 8, in conjunction with the Tribe's annual pow-wow, attracting over 130 people. Since then, over 700 students have visited the village with school groups. Implementation of the Project generated \$435 during its initial period, and the staff estimates that revenue from October/November of 2007 was near \$4,300.

The fourth objective was to increase intergenerational interaction through training tribal members to act as guides and activity instructors at the native village. Tribal elders trained 10-15 members on a variety of subjects such as Occaneechi history, pottery making, flint knapping and rope making. The trainees now work at the native village.

The Project staff encountered some minor challenges in completing some of their advertising materials, specifically the billboards. The Department of Transportation does not allow roadside signs unless the site receives more than 100,000 visitors a year. Project staff circumvented this problem by collaborating with Duke University to place signs on roadside land owned by the college. Unfortunately, at this time the village is only open for scheduled tours.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

Participation in the Project provided increased revenue for tribal members who are now working in the native village as tour guides and craftsmen. These artisans are proud they are able to practice and hone their skills, as well as pass the traditions onto younger generations.

Forest Hazel, the Director, emphasized that one goal of the Project is education, and "the village will be a tool for children in the future." Project staff mentioned the tribal community now has an increased understanding of their culture including heightened cultural awareness. Tribal elders expressed their contentment that pride in the culture is causing people to visit the village.

"To see the people working on the village is emotional for the Tribe, as it means people are reconnecting with their heritage."

John Jeffries, Tribal Elder