

**Creative Placemaking Initiative
Ouachita Parish, Louisiana
2013**



Ally the Alleys

The overarching goal of the Ouachita Parish Creative Placemaking Team is *to energize and connect Monroe and West Monroe through arts and culture*. Since Monroe has Art Alley and West Monroe has Antique Alley, streets where the arts are already concentrated, the team has adopted the slogan *“Ally the Alleys”* to encapsulate this goal.

Existing Assets

- The Ouachita River, a beautiful waterway just a few yards from both downtown areas
- Active arts organizations that already work across geographic and cultural lines
- Two downtown cultural districts that include nine art galleries, four museums, one performing arts center, and the RiverMarket—a nine-month, Saturday public market including food, arts, crafts, music, cultural events, etc.
- This team of dedicated community activists

Asset #1: the beautiful Ouachita River



City of Monroe
one city, one future



Ouachita Riverfront
Development Commission

MONROE RIVERWALK

Projects, planned and underway

Connectivity:

- Trolley connecting downtown areas during events (re-instituted during Downtown Gallery Crawl 10/3/2013); pedicabs also proposed for future
- Bridges between twin cities—make them symbolic, attractive and practical connectors (use artistic lights, sculptures, etc.)
- Gateway areas on both sides of Endom Bridge—perception of safety, attractiveness—landscape architect began working on West Monroe side in August 2013



More projects....

Visual & Performing Arts:

- Signage for easy locating of art galleries, museums, and performing arts venues
- Crosswalks designed and painted by local artists to designate cultural area
- Murals painted by local artists on downtown buildings
- Public sculpture initiative, utilizing area universities' art students
- Bus stops' redesign initiative
- Staging area to further incorporate performing arts in downtown cultural districts



And more projects....

Engagement:

- Downtown Christmas tree decoration contest for schools (already in place, sponsored by CVB)
- Juried window displays in cultural districts
- Food trucks incorporated into downtown cultural events
- Outdoor theater, dance, and musical performances in conjunction with other arts events
- Evaluation of scheduled programs, such as the upcoming 2014 Food and Wine Festival, to refine plans for the future



\$3,000 Grant Proposal—a beginning....

- *Employ local artists to propose and execute innovative designs for city street crosswalks – cool, fun, attractive*
- *Have small committee working with Masur Museum to jury process*
- *Design and produce signage with a cohesive look—work with CVB for clear wayfinding throughout the Cultural Districts*

Creative Placemaking, ongoing....

- *The Downtown Arts Alliance (DAA), a 501c3 organization of nine art galleries in downtown Monroe and West Monroe, will be central to creative placemaking collaborative endeavors.*
- *The DAA has agreed to take the lead in keeping this initiative alive and engaged should incentive funds be awarded—or even if they are not.*
- *The group leaders making up this team will continue to meet on a monthly basis to promote and facilitate coordination between the two cities and among all arts/culture groups.*