

MEDIA RELEASE

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2014 AMERICAN CRAFT WEEK TOPS MANY RECORDS

The fifth annual American Craft Week produced by CRAFT shattered many of its previous records as the country's largest celebration of handmade American craft. For the first time, events were held in all fifty states, as well as three foreign countries and the District of Columbia.

"We have been trying to accomplish this for five years, so for the National Steering Committee there was universal joy," says Diane Sulg, co-chair of American Craft Week. "As each of the last few states joined, it made us even more determined to secure 100% participation. The Hawaii Craftsmen registered their prestigious Annual Statewide Juried Exhibit to make this a true national event."

The 2014 event also witnessed the largest number of participants with more than 1,000 events. "The diversity of events was remarkable," says Sulg. There were craft-centered events in large festivals and museums as well as small groups of local craftspeople joining together to demonstrate and exhibit and of course, many, many independent galleries scheduling special craft events."

The 2014 ACW also witnessed the largest amount of public support in its history. Three states, Vermont, Maine and Virginia, became major sponsors using tourism and economic development dollars to foster celebrations in their respective areas. Organizers attribute this to the Cultural Tourism Kit they made available to organizations wanting to spotlight artists and craftsmen as part of their tourism strategy.

The 2014 event saw the number of very large coordinated celebrations grow, including the countywide celebration in Mendocino, Ca, the western North Carolina area around Asheville, the region of Pennsylvania centered in Carlisle and the Fargo-Moorehead area of North Dakota and Minnesota. Local committees were formed, they scheduled events, printed brochures and posters, and created large celebrations featuring their craftspeople and communities.

Five years ago, the American craft industry decided it was time to do something to bring more visibility to an industry facing challenges as the global market and advanced technology brought more competition for the consumer's dollar. CRAFT took the lead by organizing American Craft Week, as a grassroots marketing effort. It premiered in 2010 with about three hundred events with the vision of including everyone in the country who makes, sells, exhibits, or just plain loves, American craft.

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