

Media Release



Maryland State Arts Council • 175 W. Ostend Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21230
Contact: Julie McKinney • 410.727.6855 • jmckinney@stantoncomm.com
Cliff Murphy • 410.767.6450 • cmurphy@msac.org

NEW PROGRAM RECOGNIZES CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF MARYLAND'S SMALL BUSINESSES

*-- Traditional Small Business Recognition Program Supports Ongoing Efforts to Preserve
Maryland's Living Heritage --*

BALTIMORE, MD (June 10, 2010) – Maryland Traditions, the folklife program of the Maryland State Arts Council, today announced a new program to spotlight small businesses that perpetuate traditional folklife in Maryland. The *Traditional Small Business Recognition Program* is a collaborative initiative of Maryland Traditions, the Maryland State Arts Council, the Maryland Division of Tourism, Film and the Arts and the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development created to recognize the cultural contributions of small businesses that serve as a conduit for many of Maryland's traditional cultural forms and experiences.

Businesses are considered “traditional” when their operation fosters the passage of cultural knowledge through generations via word of mouth or example. Non-publicly traded companies employing fewer than 25 employees are classified as “small businesses.”

“Traditional small businesses – such as those operated in communities for multiple generations – often serve as the public place that residents and visitors to Maryland seek out to experience living traditional culture in context,” said Maryland State Arts Council Executive Director Theresa Colvin. “These businesses and the living traditions they strengthen are worthy of recognition and celebration.”

Maryland Traditions will solicit nominations from its regional partners, county tourism and arts councils, heritage areas, A&E Districts, and from the general public. Businesses also are welcome to self-nominate. Categories for nomination include family businesses, artisan, entertainment, creative design, food, service, merchandise, agricultural, maritime, recreation and textiles.

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Submissions will be reviewed by a panel of members from the business community and cultural experts such as folklorists and cultural anthropologists. The process also will include peer review by individuals who are actively engaged in significant traditional small businesses. More information about the program can be found at www.msac.org/tsb.

Now in its ninth year, *Maryland Traditions* is the folklife program of MSAC and develops statewide infrastructure for folk arts and folklife with support from the National Endowment for the Arts. The program identifies, documents and celebrates communities, genres and practitioners that constitute the state's folk and traditional arts and folklife; supports the dissemination of information to wider audiences through publication, presentation and other educational activities; and works directly with individuals and cultural institutions in order to preserve and conserve living traditions and folk arts. For information contact Cliff Murphy, 410-767-6450 or cmurphy@msac.org or Elaine Eff, 410-767-6570 or eeff@msac.org.

The Maryland State Arts Council, an agency of the Maryland Department of Business & Economic Development, Division of Tourism, Film and the Arts, is dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive. The mission of the council is to encourage and invest in the advancement of the arts for the people of Maryland. For more information about the Maryland State Arts Council visit the MSAC web site at www.msac.org or call (410) 767-6555 or TTY 1-800-735-2258.

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