

WCEDC Awards Grants to Multiple Projects, Including One That Could Transform Wood County as Tourist Destination

Wood County Walls/East Texas Muralist Festival was created to capture the artistic talent of East Texas by encouraging the creation of murals/other public art.

MINEOLA, TEXAS, UNITED STATES, October 25, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Wood County Economic Development Commission ([WCEDC](#)) has awarded grants associated with its Hotel/Motel Occupancy Tax fund project, with the largest award going to [Wood County Walls](#) and the East Texas Muralist Festival.

Wood County Walls/East Texas Muralist Festival (Walls) was created by Flint and Steel Coalition, a local non-profit, to capture the artistic talent of East Texas by encouraging the creation of murals and other public art.

Besides the Walls, the WCEDC also funded Bass Champs, and the City of Mineola's Sesquicentennial celebration, and several other projects. For a full list, visit [here](#).

The Walls is based on the highly successful Wynwood Walls and Wynwood Mural Fest initiative, which used a coordinated development of murals and other public art, coupled with a muralist festival, to provide an arts-based economic development engine that revitalized a distressed downtown area in Miami, Florida.

Through previous support from the WCEDC to develop the Unity Mural, the Flint & Steel Coalition has developed a strong working relationship with artists who participated in the development of the Wynwood effort.

"This grant will accelerate the concept of the Unity Mural to a county-wide footprint," said Dr.



L to R: Drew Deatherage, WCEDC Executive Assistant
Christophe Trahan, WCEDC Executive Director Allene
Doggett, WCEDC Board Member Lee Smith, WCEDC
Board Member Tom Keenan, WCEDC Board Chair Jim
Berry, WCEDC Board Member Jan Berry, No Board
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The county will benefit from this initiative for decades to come, furthering Wood County's reputation as both a place to do business and a place to live."

Christophe Trahan, Executive Director of WCEDC

Todd Witt, who led the effort for the grant. "We now have the ability to create a rural version of Wynwood Walls, which links together all the communities in Wood County."

Dr. Witt added that the plan is to continue working with muralists at Wynwood Walls as well as other established muralists around the country. "This will help nurture talent in Wood County," he said.

The WCEDC awarded the grant based on the Walls'

articulation of a county-wide public art tourism infrastructure, which will utilize the funding to:

- 1) coordinate efforts between communities in Wood County to support an integrated art trail experience for guests,
- 2) expand the inventory of murals and other public art across the county through the formation of an artist guild,
- 3) maintain a web-guide to facilitate visitor interaction and participation in each community as well as provide on-line interactivity between visitors and local artists to support sales,
- 4) establish a Walls visitor center to serve as welcoming gate, focused attraction, and coordination point for visitors to direct them across the county.
- 5) organize an annual East Texas Muralist Festival to attract visitors to the county while also increasing local artist capacity to mural and add new inventory to participating communities.

"We are very excited to provide financial support to Wood County Walls, and all [of] the other projects," said Christophe Trahan, Executive Director of WCEDC, "We believe the county will benefit from this initiative for decades to come, furthering Wood County's reputation as both a place to do business and a place to live."

About Wood County

Nestled in the Piney Woods of East Texas, Wood County is all of the Texas you expect in a county you'll love: Active downtown districts, engaging outdoor activities, and friendly neighbors! Wood County is the ideal location for a weekend getaway or extended vacation, starting or expanding your small business, or becoming a permanent part of any of our welcoming communities. Home to Lake Fork—named the #1 bass fishing destination in the nation by Bassmaster Magazine—Wood County also has a variety of attractions to appeal to just about everyone, such as the Mineola Nature Preserve and the Links at Land's End golf course to name just two. Come to Wood County: "The Texas You Expect in a County You'll Love!" For more information, visit <https://LoveWoodCounty.com>.

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