

Ohio Arts Council Quilt Barn Impact Study: Understanding the Value of the Ohio Quilt Barn Trail





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This study was conducted by Ohio Univeristy's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs through funding provided by the Ohio Arts Council.



This study is dedicated to

Donna Sue Groves (R), the creative visionary

and to

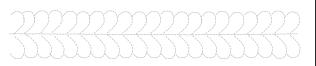
Nina Maxine Green Groves (L), the noted quilter and muse behind the Quilt Barn Trails

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photo by: Kim Walker





Executive Director's Message

FROM THEIR HUMBLE BEGINNINGS IN ADAMS COUNTY IN 2001, QUILT BARNS HAVE expanded beyond Ohio to communities across the entire nation. Appalachian Ohio can proudly lay claim to this groundbreaking community art project and cultural phenomenon that is now sweeping across the nation.

Quilt barn projects are homegrown and created through a grass roots process that is shared by the entire community. Perhaps what is most appealing about quilt barns is how the project uniquely blends the rural agricultural landscape and art form of quilting with a universal medium - paint.

This report provides an overview of the Ohio Quilt Barn Trail and looks beyond the purely artistic importance of quilt barns, highlighting their great value for the Appalachian region and their true potential in terms of the economic, social, and cultural strengthening of the region.

Moving forward, communities have the ability to leverage additional resources to promote the growth of their quilt barn projects. The benefits of this expansion are visible and widespread:

- Quilt barns open up new entrepreneurial opportunities for small business owners and attract tourists to Ohio communities.
- Community members of all ages participate in and learn through the project while, at the same time, businesses and communities cultivate and sustain strategic partnerships that serve to strengthen and revitalize the region.
- By showcasing local heritage and pride, the quilt barns share the richness of Appalachian rural culture.

Through the expansion of the Quilt Barn Trail, communities unearth their cultural heritage as a resource. With growth and investment, this valuable project could easily expand to represent a significant source of economic growth for the Ohio Appalachian region and the root of a unique cultural and communal pride acknowledged across the nation.

Thank you for your interest.

Julie S. Henahan

Julie S. Henahan Executive Director, Ohio Arts Council July 2008

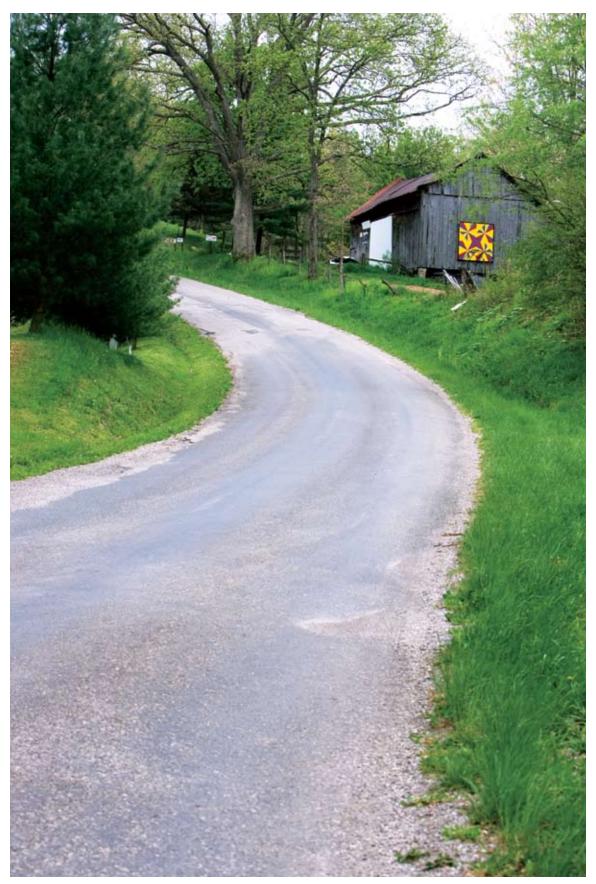


photo by: Kim Walker





Introduction

THIS REPORT DETAILS THE VALUE OF AN EXPANDING COMMUNITY ART PROJECT THAT can be seen displayed on barns in many Ohio counties. These quilt barn projects, collectively referred to as the Ohio Quilt Barn Trail, incorporate art, communities, and local culture with an effort to promote tourism on the local, state, and national level.

A *quilt barn*¹ is a barn with a large quilt square painted or hung on the side so that the pattern can be viewed as people drive past. The designs for these colorful, geometric paintings are taken from the patterns traditionally used by quilters. Quilt barns were first created in 2001 in Adams County, Ohio by Donna Sue Groves, who wanted to honor her mother, noted quilter Nina Maxine Green Groves, and celebrate their Appalachian heritage. With the help of passionate Adams County artists and volunteers, what began as an idea for one barn became a driving trail with 20 squares, each featuring a design chosen by a planning committee guided by Nina Maxine.

Since 2001, these collections of quilt barn squares organized at the county level, or quilt barn projects, have spread from Adams County across Ohio and the nation. Today in 2008, the Ohio Quilt Barn Trail comprises 300 quilt barns scattered across the landscape of 19 Ohio counties, almost all of which are Appalachian counties. These counties include, Adams, Athens, Belmont, Brown, Carroll, Champaign, Coshocton, Fayette, Gallia, Harrison, Highland, Miami, Monroe, Morgan, Pike, Ross, Summit, Vinton, and Washington. Quilt barns have also expanded to at least 22 other states across the nation, and Ohio's quilt barn trails were featured in the April 2008 issue of National Geographic Traveler magazine. Donna Sue has followed the growth of the quilt barns and now envisions a national quilt barn trail winding across the country. Thus, a small Appalachian Ohio art project has planted the seeds for what is becoming a national movement.

As quilt barns spread, their impact on communities and individuals in Ohio grows. Throughout this study, value narratives have been collected from people involved in quilt barn projects, from barn owners to volunteers to artists. Responding to research on public value, the Ohio Arts Council (OAC) introduced the idea of public value as a core concept for the OAC and its constituents in early 2004. In the arts, public value refers to the positive individual and community benefits that occur in response to arts programming, policy, or activity. Artists and organizations create public value when their programs and activities provide their communities with important and meaningful experiences. The OAC does not define public value for the state or for any region but wants people to "seek out and define the public value.²⁷ Quilt barn trails bring tourism and tourist dollars into the region, engage people in their communities, and promote local culture and history. Several value narratives are placed throughout this report to illustrate the effect of quilt barn projects on individuals and in communities.

¹ Quilt barns are also called "barn quilts" in some counties. The terms are synonymous.

² Ohio Arts Council. What is Public Value? www.oac.state.oh.us/aboutOAC/publicvalue.asp

An Historical Perspective

As a CHILD GROWING UP IN WEST VIRGINIA, DONNA SUE GROVES' family would make a traveling game out of looking for barns, especially those painted with Chew Mail Pouch Tobacco, See Rock City, Drink RC Cola and other advertisements. When she purchased an Adams County, Ohio farm in 1989 that included a tobacco barn, Donna Sue promised her mother that she would one day paint a quilt square on it in the style of the barns Donna Sue looked for as a child to honor her and their Appalachian heritage. Seeing the blank sides of the many barns in Adams County, Donna Sue suggested that instead of painting a quilt square only on her barn, a set of quilt barns could be painted and developed into a driving trail. What resulted from that initial effort in 2001 was the nation's first quilt barn trail: a collection of 20 squares leading visitors through scenic Adams County³. Today in 2008, the Ohio Quilt Barn Trail is scattered across the landscape of 19 Ohio counties.

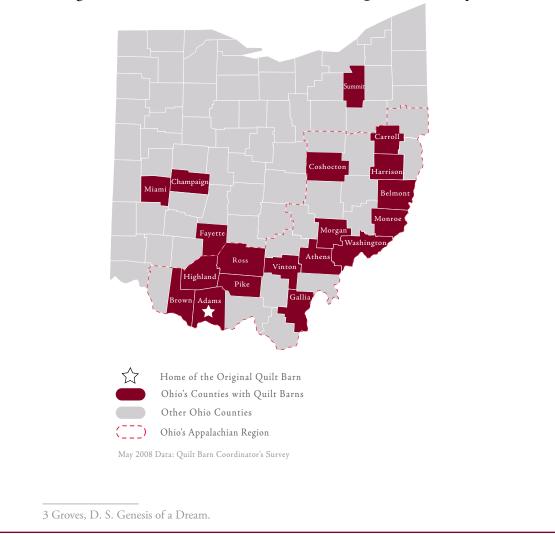


Figure 1: Nineteen Ohio Counties with Quilt Barn Projects





Executive Summary

Methodology Overview

To LEARN ABOUT THE IMPACT OF QUILT BARNS IN THE 19 OHIO COUNTIES examined in this study, four methods were employed:

Survey: An online survey was sent to quilt barn project coordinators to gather basic information about quilt barn project development in each county.

Inventory: Data collected from various sources was compiled as a comprehensive inventory of quilt barn information from each county.

Interviews: Ten structured phone interviews were conducted with selected individuals who participated in the quilt barn project of one of the 19 Ohio counties examined.

Focus Group: Focus groups were held with individuals involved in the quilt barn project in three selected counties.

More information on the methodology employed during this study can be found in the Methodology section.

Organization of Findings

The findings in this study are presented by section. The first section explores the current organization of the quilt barn project and its growth. The middle three sections examine the contributions of the quilt barn project in terms of Economic, Social, and Cultural value. The final section of the report is a titled Looking Forward and outlines ideas for the expansion and improvement of the project.

Economic Contributions: This section examines the economic value of quilt barn projects. It is divided into three subsections: Increasing Tourism, Building Local Entrepreneurship, and Leveraging Resources for the Community.

Social Contributions: This section examines the social value of quilt barn projects. It is divided into two subsections: Strengthening Networks and Partnerships, and Increasing Community Pride.

Cultural Contributions: This section examines the cultural value of quilt barn projects. It is divided into two subsections: Celebrating Appalachian Heritage, and Accenting Local History and Flavor.

Key Findings

Economic Contributions

Increasing Tourism

Quilt barns generate tourism activity for local communities, attracting visitors from across the state and nation. The increased tourism brought about by quilt barn projects is in large part a result of creative, persistent promotion employed by many counties. Not only have quilt barn owners observed the growing number of visitors to the quilt barns themselves, but many business owners also report tourists frequenting their stores and restaurants as they drive the quilt barn trail.

Building Local Entrepreneurship

The quilt barn project provides commercial and entrepreneurial opportunities, ranging from quilt barn square product merchandising to increased quilt sales. Many local businesspeople have innovatively adapted elements of the project to entrepreneurial pursuits. Some examples include: the sale of tea packaged in tins featuring quilt barn squares, the creation of miniature quilt square replicas, and the use of the quilt barn project to promote local quilters.

Leveraging Resources for the Community

Funding for quilt barn projects comes from many local, state, federal, and private sources. While counties and barn owners do generally contribute to the cost of the quilt barn project, a large portion is often covered by local businesses, corporate sponsors, and grants. Through strategic business partnerships, many counties are able to leverage a broad base of financial support to pay for their project. In attracting outside resources, counties expand the Ohio Quilt Barn Project and keep money spent by barns owners and the county to a minimum.

Social Contributions

6

Strengthening Networks and Partnerships

Through developing the quilt barn project, community leaders and organizations enhance existing relationships and build new partnerships within the county. Quilt barn project committees work with local businesses, artists, quilting circles, schools, and volunteer groups to get the supplies and helping hands they need. The quilt barn project has facilitated the creation of networks between local artists and quilters, visitors' bureaus and businesses, and community members of all ages and backgrounds.

Increasing Community Pride

The community driven and participatory process of the quilt barn project gives residents renewed energy and enthusiasm for the place in which they live. Counties have found that quilt barn-related events bring community members from all walks of life together to share in the community pride and feeling of accomplishment brought about by the quilt barn project.

Cultural Contributions

Celebrating Appalachian Heritage

The quilt barn project honors the traditional Appalachian art form of quilting. Yet, despite this tie to rural and Appalachian culture, the quilt barn project is adaptable to the unique cultural elements found within any community.

Accenting Local History and Flavor

The quilt barn project preserves barns and other unique assets that have historical significance to the county. Frequently, the barn, its location, and the barn owner's family history all influence the quilt square design which is chosen for a particular barn. Often the pattern featured on a barn comes from a family heirloom quilt. Other times, quilt blocks are specially designed to highlight local culture.



photo by: Benjamin Pollock



Methodology

THIS STUDY ON THE OHIO QUILT BARN TRAIL EXAMINES THE CULTURAL, SOCIAL, and economic contributions that quilt barns have made in Ohio's communities. In conducting this study, an online survey was distributed and subsequent individual interviews and focus groups were held. In addition to this qualitative data collection, an inventory of quantitative information from the 19 quilt barn trails featured in this study was collected.

Survey

From November 2007 through April 2008, each of the 19 counties examined in this study completed an online survey designed to collect general information about each county's quilt barn project. The survey was completed by the quilt barn coordinator or a quilt barn project committee member in each county. The survey gathered information from seven broad categories:

- * Organizational information
- * Project development
- Social value
- Cultural value
- * Economic value
- Quilt barn promotion
- ✤ GIS mapping information

Inventory

From January through March of 2008, a comprehensive inventory was compiled using information collected from internet sources and from the survey administered to county quilt barn project coordinators.

- * The inventory includes quilt barn addresses and/or coordinates.
- The inventory lists the names of quilt barn owners, quilt square painters, quilt square designers, and quilt square sponsors.
- The database also includes driving directions to the quilt barns and descriptions of the quilt squares.

Interviews

From late February through early March of 2008, phone interviews were conducted with 10 individuals who took part in or in some way helped with the quilt barn project in their respective counties.

- The interviews were conducted with individuals identified in the online survey and/or by their county coordinator as having had a significant role in their county's quilt barn project.
- Interview participants each had a unique involvement with the quilt barn project in their county. The participants' involvement in and contributions to the project varied to include:
 - Individuals with direct involvement (quilt barn coordinators, artists, and property owners)
 - Audience/consumers (tourists and community members)
 - Arts/community organizations
 - Local businesses and business owners
- The phone interviews captured qualitative stories regarding the social, cultural, and economic value of the Quilt Barn Trail and selected best practices for implementing the quilt barn project.

Focus Groups

Based on information gathered from the online survey and the phone interviews, it was determined that three focus groups would be held in counties whose quilt barn projects were identified as having a particularly unique or successful social, cultural, or economic impact in the region. Each focus group provided an in-depth examination of the quilt barn project's economic, social, or cultural impact.

* Economic Value: On May 23, 2008, a focus group was held in Miami County to explore the economic value of the quilt barn project.

- * Social Value: On April 1, 2008, a focus group was held in Gallia County to explore the social value of the quilt barn project.
- * Cultural Value: On May 14, 2008, a focus group was held in Athens County to explore the cultural value of the quilt barn project.



photo by: Jane Bowen, The Athens Photographic Project

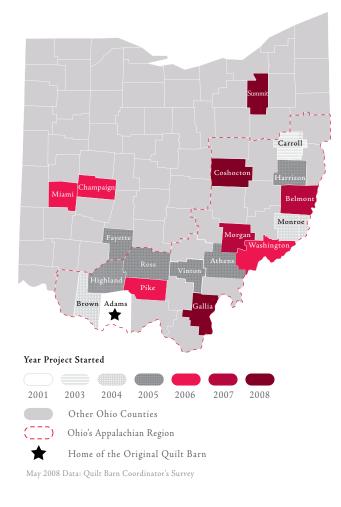


Findings

Organization and Growth over Time

SINCE IT BEGAN IN 2001 WITH THE PLACEMENT OF THE FIRST QUILT SQUARE ON a barn in Adams County, the Ohio Quilt Barn Trail has expanded to 19 counties in Ohio and includes 300 quilt barns.





It is important to note when looking at the information compiled in this report that, as of now, quilt barn projects in the state of Ohio are coordinated and implemented at the county level. The majority of quilt barn projects in Ohio counties are initiated and overseen by a quilt barn committee that is coordinated by the County Convention and Visitor's Bureau/Tourism Office. Some counties have named their quilt barn project while others have not. In this report each county's project is either referred to specifically by its name or generally as a certain county's quilt barn project.

Other, including: community organizations, committees, and individuals, 5 Historical Society (HS), 3 Convention and Visitors Bureau, 11

Figure 3: Who Organizes Ohio's Quilt Barn Projects?

Economic Contributions

Quilt barn projects have made a significant economic impact on Ohio counties in three key areas. First, quilt barns attract a large number of tourists and tourist dollars. Counties boost the effects of tourists through creative promotion and the incorporation of quilt barns into local events. Second, businesspeople expand local entrepreneurial pursuits by adapting innovative business ideas to utilize the quilt barn project. Finally, in expanding the quilt barn project, counties leverage a wide array of resources for their communities.

Increasing Tourism

Ohio quilt barn projects generate tourism activity for Ohio counties by attracting visitors from all across the state and nation who are interested in seeing this unique community art project. The increased tourism attracted by quilt barn projects is in large part a result of creative promotion employed by many counties and the innovative incorporation of quilt barns into local events and features.

Expanding Marketing and Promotion

Most of the counties in this study have identified tourism as a central objective of their Quilt Barn Trail. In many instances, the county's Convention and Visitor's Bureau or County Tourism Office initiated the county's quilt barn project. Generally, each county's Visitors' Bureau took the lead in promoting quilt barn related tourism. Counties often rely on the local media to spread the word about their quilt barn project through featured stories. Additionally, many counties have found websites and printed brochures located at quilt barn sites to be effective promotional tools.

Miami County designed its quilt barn trail to bring tourists into the county for multiple days. Featuring more than 60 quilt barns spread out around the many small towns in the county, visitors who would like to see most or all of the quilt barns could easily spend several days exploring the county. Rather than day trip visitors, Miami County believes that their quilt barn project brings in tourists who stay at local hotels, eat at local restaurants, and shop at local stores.

Featuring Quilt Barns at Local Events

Counties have found that the quilt barn project adapts well to local events. By integrating quilt barns into local events and attractions, counties not only expose more visitors to the quilt barn project but also attract more tourists to local features.

- * In Adams County, the non-profit organization PACT (Planning Adams County's Tomorrow) created a 20-year strategic plan for the development of Adams County. One of the main objectives of their strategic plan was to improve the economic development of the county. In order to achieve this objective, they created the Adams County Birding Trail and subsequently the Adams County "Clothesline of Quilts" Quilt Barn Trail. By creating the "Clothesline of Quilts," PACT has attracted tourists from far and wide to Adams County.
- In Brown County, those involved with the quilt barn project note the growing number of visitors to their county. Brown County does a particularly impressive job of advertising their quilt barn project, featuring their barns in newspapers, travel magazines, the local County Fair Book, and several maps and brochures available at each Quilt Barn location. In addition to these advertising techniques, on October 6, 2007, Brown County held a well attended Ohio Quilt Barns & Covered Bridges Tour, further attracting tourists to the county and spreading the word about their quilt barn trail.
- * On July 5, 2008, the Athens AM Rotary Club held the 3rd Annual Quilt Barn Bike Ride. Featuring three trails and optional riding loops that wind past quilt barns throughout Athens County, the Quilt Barn Bike Ride is a day long event that attracts families and bicyclists from across the Appalachian region.

Future Opportunities: Increasing Tourism

As many quilt barn owners attest, one can observe a regular flow of tourists stopping, getting out of their vehicles, and taking pictures of quilt barns. It is difficult to assess how many visitors a quilt barn project attracts. However, counties are currently exploring ways to more accurately evaluate the number of quilt barn related tourists visiting their county. Tourists already travel considerable distances to see quilt barns in Ohio. With more funding for advertisements and brochures, counties with quilt barn projects could reach more potential tourists from across the state and the country.

* Donna Sue Groves, the quilt barn project creator, would like to see a Quilt Barn Convention organized at the state and national level. A Quilt Barn Convention at the state or national level would be a great economic opportunity for the community holding the convention. Participants in the convention would most likely find food and lodging in that community and bring business to local stores. Quilts and quilt barn related products could be sold, and entrepreneurs could share business ideas at the convention. Further evidence that Quilt Barn Conventions would benefit the economies of hosting communities is the success quilting conventions have had in producing positive economic results. Quilting conventions in other states have transformed local economies, drawing in up to 35,000 individuals and millions of dollars.

Building Local Entrepreneurship

The quilt barn project opens up a wide variety of commercial and entrepreneurial opportunities ranging from quilt barn square product merchandising to increased quilt sales. Many local businesspeople have innovatively adapted elements of the project to entrepreneurial pursuits. In addition to the commercial aspect, the quilt barn project has given counties an opportunity to leverage significant levels of money for their community in the form of business sponsorships and state and federal grants.

Traditional Business Ventures

The traditional business opportunities created by the quilt barn project tend to include small product sales, selling items at craft shows, and quilting. In several counties, local businesses have been quick to create viable products with direct connections to the quilt barn project. Furthermore, the quilt barn project has brought about a renewed interest in quilting. Quilters have found that individuals are not only more interested in learning more about their quilt work, but both residents and tourists are buying more quilts as well.

- In Adams County, local entrepreneurs have developed several small merchandising items related to quilt barns. Several individuals have made small wooden boxes that feature quilt barn square designs. One local entrepreneur designed key fobs from the quilt barn square which he sells at the County Herb Fair.
- * A middle school art teacher from the tri-county Fayette, Highland, and Ross area came up with the idea of painting 2'x2' quilt squares as decorative pieces for the Greenfield Historical Society. The squares attracted such attention that members of the Historical Society began to produce 2'x2' quilt squares to sell at local craft shows and at the Historical Society building.
- Quilt barn projects attract consumers from outside of Appalachia. Susan Pollock of Monroe County recounts meeting a woman from Boston who, after seeing the painting of a quilt



Focus on... Miami County

THE QUILT BARNS OF MIAMI COUNTY, JUST NORTH OF DAYTON, OH, are drawing national attention and providing local entrepreneurs with new business opportunities. Miami County only began painting quilt barns in the spring of 2007, but since then, the county's 58 quilt barns have been featured in Quilter's Magazine, Home and Away (the AAA members' magazine), in newspapers in Chicago and northern Indiana, and in Ohio publications such as Ohio Traveler e-magazine, and Our Ohio (the Farm Bureau magazine). This flood of publicity led to hundreds of requests for brochures and hits on the Miami quilt barn website.

Miami County Convention and Visitors Bureau Executive Director, Diana Thompson offered several reasons for the quilt barns' popularity. First, Mexican folk artist Rafael Santoyo gave the Miami quilt squares a look all their own through his bright color choices and freehand painting style. Second, Thompson cited the design of the quilt barn brochure. Thanks to help from volunteer photographers and a local resident with design experience, Thompson explained, the Visitors Bureau was able to "showcase the tour in a well-designed, easy-to-understand format. We're hearing the directions are great and the photographs are incredible." Finally, the Visitors Bureau worked with ZoneFree Ohio Marketing and Public Relations to get press releases about the quilt barns out to 900 locations in the U.S., a move that led to attention from the national publications mentioned above.

Miami County businesses have taken great interest in the quilt barns. Sherwin Williams helped with the cost of paint for the barns and several local businesses sponsored individual squares. The Visitors Bureau has partnered with hotels to offer discounts to quilt barn tourists. Now, local shops and artists are creating products associated with the quilt barns. Ewetopia, a knitting shop in downtown Troy, is offering block patterns for the quilt squares; local photographers sell prints of their quilt barn photos; other artists paint the block designs on slate or glass to sell at local fairs and festivals; another shop owner is creating small replicas of the quilt barns; and one artist has created a calendar featuring the quilt barns.

square, fell immediately in love with the artwork of the project. This Bostonian returned to Monroe County and bought several quilts to adorn the waiting room of the car wash she owns and operates with her husband. She returned to the county at least three times to buy more quilts which she then sold to people waiting at her car wash.

* In Brown County, the quilt barn project has renewed interest in quilts and quilting. Residents have observed more business at quilt shops around the county and an increase in the number of quilts sold.

Non-Traditional Business Ventures

While many of the commercial enterprises that have stemmed from the quilt barn project have followed more traditional lines, businesses in several counties have utilized the quilt barn project to create especially innovative business ventures.

- The Athens County based Herbal Sage Tea Company features a line of Ohio grown tea packaged in tins featuring quilt barn squares. For quilt barn owners, this product has an added commercial value, as they are able to purchase and then sell tins of tea that feature the quilt design on their barns. In addition to sales to barn owners, the Herbal Sage and Tea product has sold well as a gift at a number of festivals, demonstrating the commercial potential of quilt barn art.
- * One can find quilt barn squares not only on the sides of barns, in some counties they have been placed on the exteriors of businesses as well. The Paint Creek Patterns Trail of the Greenfield Historical Society includes quilt barn squares at a golf course, a driving range, and a veterinary clinic. Miami County and Carroll County have taken a similar course by placing quilt barn squares on the side of local restaurants.

Future Opportunities: Building Local Entrepreneurship

As businesses in several counties have already discovered, the quilt barn project is a unique source of creative entrepreneurial pursuits. As quilt barns become more widely known across the state and nation, quilt barn related business ventures have the potential to expand beyond the local and regional level.

Most counties have expressed interest in expanding quilt barn product merchandising. The expansion of quilt barn merchandising to consumers across the nation through the internet and product catalogs would bring substantive economic advantages to local businesses selling these products.

* Adams County started their quilt barn project with 20 quilt barns with the idea that these quilt square patterns could be marketed as a 20 square quilt sampler bedspread. Selling a quilt sampler which includes the patterns found in a particular county's quilt barn trail is an idea that could be implemented in other counties with quilt barn projects. Herbal Sage Tea Company, which sells quilt barn related products, aspires to eventually sell their quilt barn teas wholesale to stores and vendors. They also see the possibility of expanding their sales nationally through the introduction of related products and a quilt barn product catalog.

Leveraging Resources for the Community

Many counties have reported that a large portion of the cost of their quilt barn project was covered by local businesses, corporate sponsors, and grants. By leveraging this broad base of local financial support, counties were able to keep expenses for barn owners and the county at a minimum while employing a relatively limited amount of grant money.

* To fund its quilt barn project, Adams County obtained grants from The Foundation for Appalachian Ohio, General Motors, the Ohio Arts Council, the National Rural Funders Collaborative, and the Adams County Chamber of Commerce. Furthermore, the Cincinnati design firm LPK designed the Adams County quilt barn trail brochure free of charge.

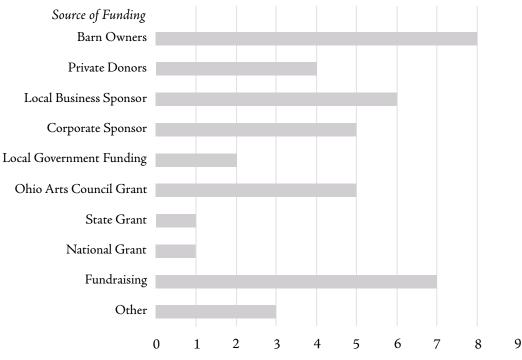
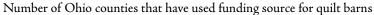


Figure 4: Funding Sources for Ohio Quilt Barn Projects





Focus on... Gallia County

WALKING INTO A BARN AT THE BOB EVANS FARM IN RIO GRANDE, OHIO for the unveiling of the first two Gallia County quilt barn squares, the room buzzed with the excitement of county barn owners, press, and local officials present to celebrate the start of the county's quilt barn project. In conjunction with the unveiling of the quilt barn squares, the Bob Evans Farm also opened an exhibit of the quilts of Nina Maxine Green Groves, the woman whose quilting inspired the first quilt barns. As those present toured the exhibit, marveling at the color and craftsmanship of Groves' quilts, they talked about the development of the quilt barn project. Leaving the exhibit, one woman described the farm that has been in her husband's family for a century and said she hoped their barn was chosen to display a quilt square.

Visitors Bureau Executive Director, Bob Hood, is optimistic about the success of the quilt barn project, an endeavor the county undertook after researching many existing quilt barn trails in Ohio. "I've been [to visit other quilt barn trails] and I have seen the impact that it can have on bringing tourists and people spending money," he explained. "We're all about bringing people to this community and it will work." In order to build support for the trail in Gallia, Hood invited quilters, artists, and barn owners to a presentation to explain the project and show a mock-up of what a barn would look like with a square on it. Hood also organized the reception at the Bob Evans Farm and plans to hold small receptions each time a new quilt square is hung. Finally, Hood has also reached out to the business community, getting support from Sherwin Williams, the University of Rio Grande, the French Art Colony, Buckeye Rural Electric Company, and, of course, Bob Evans.

At the Bob Evans Farm, where the first two quilt blocks are displayed, Gallia has found a prominent supporter. As farm manager Ray McKinniss explained, "This is our home. A lot of companies try to develop in their marketing, an image. We were born with this image. So consequently, we have worked hard over the years to ... stay with the Bob Evans rural theme and the rural setting ... So, when [the quilt barn project] came, when Gayle [A staff member at the Bob Evans Farm] brought this idea to me, I said, "Go, go, go," because it's right."

photo by: Kim Walker

Future Opportunities: Leveraging Resources for the Community

Counties report that thanks to partnerships with local businesses and individuals, donations, and federal and state grants, the cost of starting a quilt barn project is very economical. In general, the quilt barn project is described as providing a "big bang for the buck" in that it costs so little to implement yet brings in significant economic benefits to counties. With access to business partnerships, grant money, and a small amount of local funding, quilt barn projects could easily be established in more counties across Ohio.

Social Contributions

The beauty of the quilt barn project is that it appeals to diverse groups within communities. The quilt barn project draws in individuals of all ages with various backgrounds, skills, and interests. By establishing partnerships within the community and attracting local residents to community events, quilt barn projects have become county-wide sources of community pride.

Strengthening Networks and Partnerships

Counties find that they have been able to partner with a considerable number of organizations in completing their respective quilt barn projects. From local businesses to civic clubs and universities, counties have cultivated strategic partnerships with organizations and individuals within their communities. Additionally, the quilt barn project has facilitated the creation of networks between artists and quilters. Quilters assist the project by designing quilting square patterns, while artists take these traditional designs and add their own artistic touch, fusing traditional quilt patterns with modern art.

- While quilt barn project partners range from local businesses to civic clubs and universities, each county has built partnerships to varying degrees within its community. Gallia County has found that organizations willingly partner with its quilt barn project if asked. The county has partnered with Bob Evans Farms, Inc., Sherwin-Williams, Buckeye Rural Electric Cooperative, the Gallia County French Art Colony, The University of Rio Grande, and others in completing their project.
- * Through its quilt square project, Miami County has established a cross- cultural social connection. The man who paints Miami County's quilt squares is Mexican folk artist Rafael Santoyo, who works seasonally at a local restaurant. Miami County residents are proud of his work and the cross-cultural social connections which his work with the quilt square project has created.
- Monroe County hired barn artist Scott Hagan of Jerusalem, Ohio to paint their 20 quilt squares directly onto local barns. Belmont County has also chosen to draw on Hagan's talents.

Future Opportunities: Strengthening Networks and Partnerships

With the expansion and continued development of the quilt barn project, communities will be able to continue creating positive social impacts. As more individuals and organizations become involved with the quilt barn project, it will be possible to organize more community events to increase community pride and foster new networks and partnerships throughout counties in Ohio and Appalachia.

* The creator of the quilt barn project, Donna Sue Groves, desires to see county projects connected at a state and national level someday. A National Quilt Barn Convention would be an important step in the process of creating a more centralized project structure. A national convention would foster networking of individuals and organizations from across the country. By sharing stories and information about the progress and development of the quilt barn project, individuals and organizations could strengthen important partnerships and connections while gaining valuable insights on quilt barn projects from across the state or country.

Increasing Community Pride

Participating in Community Activities

The quilt barn project brings people together within communities and stimulates positive conversation about local heritage and history. Counties have found that quilt barn gatherings bring families and volunteers together to share their common experiences and the histories of their respective barns and/or quilt squares. People are drawn to quilt barn events in part because they are socially enjoyable. Quilt barn project committee members have expressed that even quilt barn committee meetings are often social events where members sit down, laugh, and enjoy themselves.

- * Upon completion of a quilt barn square, most counties hold a hanging (or dedication) ceremony where the public and those involved with the project gather for the placement of the quilt square on the barn. Quilt hanging ceremonies attract community members from all walks of life who gather to share in the community pride and the feeling of accomplishment created by the quilt barn project.
- * The quilt barn project appeals to people of all age groups. Monroe County created replicas of all of the quilt squares in their trail and decided to hang them on the grandstands at the county fairgrounds. From elementary and high school art students to middle aged barn owners and the elderly, people of all ages came to the ceremony to see 20 quilt square replicas hung on the grandstands.
- * A Miami County Quilt Barn Project Coordinator, Judy Rose moved to Ohio from Seattle. Her involvement with the quilt barn project drew her into the community and has introduced her to countless people from across the county. As Judy discovered, the quilt barn



Focus on... Athens County

WHEN THE ATHENS COUNTY QUILT BARN COMMITTEE FIRST MET, they intended to create a quilt barn trail using traditional quilt blocks. However, when, at their second meeting, artist and quilter John Lefelhocz presented his idea for a quilt block based on the design of Star Brick, clay brick manufactured in nearby Nelsonville during the late 1800s, the committee knew they were on to something. As Lefelhocz explained, it snowballed: "Then it was like 'If we do that, we should do one representative of Athens.' We went through all the various things Athens would represent ... I brought those to the next meeting. And Sally [Dunker, of the travel and tourism office,] was like, 'Wow, this is great.'" Even the traditional quilt blocks chosen for the Athens County quilt barn trail were carefully selected and adapted to highlight the culture of the county.

Following the Athens Quilt Barn brochure around one of the trail's three "loops," visitors learn about the county's historic clay brick and coal mining industries, the rich natural and agricultural resources of the area, the historic Native American presence in Athens County, the history of each barn on the trail, and more. One local cultural center that has been an important partner for the Athens quilt barn trail is the Dairy Barn Arts Center. The Dairy Barn, a non-profit arts center that promotes the arts, crafts, and cultural heritage of southeast Ohio, has a quilt square hanging on each end of the spacious converted dairy barn that serves as its offices and galleries. The Dairy Barn also donated space for painting and sponsored two squares, and Dairy Barn staff members took part in the painting. Furthermore, the Quilt National, a biennial quilt show held at the Dairy Barn, attracts thousands of quilt enthusiasts to Athens County every other summer, many of whom tour the quilt barn trail while in the region. Year round, the Dairy Barn houses art exhibits, frequently featuring regional artists, that quilt barn tourists may stop and view. project tends to bring out the best in people. She recalls that the Quilt Barn Committee worked closely with a certain older gentleman who was never shy to offer food and beverages to the committee members. Little did Judy know that this older gentleman whom Judy and the other committee members knew as a kind old man was considered by many to be the meanest man in the county!

Transferring Knowledge through Education

A number of counties have used the quilt barn project to educate both children and adults on the local heritage of quilting. School art teachers and community organizations engage students and local residents and encourage them to learn about quilting and the artwork behind quilt squares by becoming involved in quilt barn projects.

- In Brown County, a local artist named JoAnn May stimulated the interest of 3rd and 4th graders in quilt barn squares and artwork through an after school program. Under May's supervision, the children learned about the artwork involved with the creation of a quilt square. Using their new knowledge of geometric shapes, forms, and placement, the kids created their own 8"x 8"quilt square to hang in the window of a local art studio.
- * The Rotary Club of the Greenfield, Ohio region holds an annual summer festival at which, for the last two years, the Greenfield Historical Society and a local quilt club have held a quilt show. The Quilt Show is a social occasion which brings people together to converse and to share their knowledge and stories of quilts and quilt squares.

Future Opportunities: Increasing Community Pride

Upon completing a new quilt barn, most counties celebrate the occasion with an unveiling ceremony. Many counties have plans to expand these and other social events connected to the quilt barn project.

 Gallia County, in coordination with its organizational, business, and media partners, plans to have a small quilt square unveiling ceremony as each of its quilt squares are completed. Although smaller in size and magnitude than the first unveiling ceremony, these subsequent gatherings will further expand the community pride and social connections created in Gallia County by the quilt barn project.

Cultural Contributions

Quilting is a largely rural phenomenon, and the quilt barn project shares a deep connection with the rural character of Appalachian Ohio. Yet beyond this overarching tie with rural Appalachian culture, the quilt barn project is adaptable to the unique cultural elements found within any community. Counties have found that the quilt barn project showcases both local features and Appalachian heritage.

Celebrating Appalachian Heritage

The quilt barn project celebrates Appalachian culture and heritage. Molded around the traditional Appalachian art form of quilting, the quilt barn project extends this artwork to a larger audience by showcasing both traditional and non-traditional quilt patterns. The quilt barn project highlights other elements of traditional Appalachian culture, accentuating both Appalachian features and history.

- * Adams County's quilt barn project began as an annex to the Appalachian Discovery Birding and Heritage Trail which runs through the county. Although the Quilt Barn Trail has now expanded beyond the Birding Trail, five of the first barns are located along its route. The connection between the Appalachian Discovery Birding Trail and the quilt barn project links two important aspects of local Appalachian heritage.
- * Through its sale of tea in containers featuring local quilt squares, the Athens County based Herbal Sage and Tea gives its customers a personal taste of Appalachian culture. As the company's owner, Maureen Burns, says, "It [the product] ties people into the broader picture. They get a beautiful piece of art, and are able to take it home and drink it. Every time they open up the tin they will think of the barns and the county."
- * The creation of a new quilt square entails collaboration between barn owner and artist. As artist JoAnn May of Brown County has pointed out, each barn has a unique history and when one speaks with a quilt barn owner, one learns that there is a story that goes along with the artwork. In many instances, the barn, its location, and the barn owner's family history all influence the quilt square design. In many cases a relative or member of the barn owner's family created or recommended the design featured on the barn.
- * The Gallia County based Bob Evans Farms, Inc. has long prided its commitment to the rural lifestyle and its bucolic heritage. As such, the company has had a long involvement with quilts and quilters. For slightly more than ten years, the Bob Evans Craft Barn in Rio Grande, Ohio held a month-long quilt show each July which attracted tourists from miles away. Recently, the Gallia County Quilt Barn Trail Committee coordinated with Bob Evans Farms to initiate Gallia County's quilt barn trail with the placement of two quilt squares on the old dairy barn at the Bob Evans Farm.

Future Opportunities: Celebrating Appalachian Heritage

Since first initiating the quilt barn project in Adams County, Donna Sue Groves has spoken of creating a Clothesline of Quilts that would encompass the entire 13-state Appalachian region, from southern New York through northern Mississippi. As featured in the April 2008 issue of National Geographic Traveler, the Clothesline of Quilts driving tour which runs through Appalachian Ohio could be expanded to highlight more Ohio counties and their Appalachian heritage.

Accenting Local History and Flavor

Quilt barn projects in Ohio represent a distinctly rural and largely Appalachian heritage. While quilt barn projects highlight the broader rural culture of most counties, they also accentuate their specific local history and features. Many counties utilize the quilt barn project to accent local features by placing quilt squares on historic or significant buildings and by featuring them at local events and festivals.

A common practice among quilt barn projects across the nation is to bring together families and barn owners for the selection of quilt barn patterns. For many barn owning families in rural Ohio, their barns have a significant amount of family and local history behind them. The quilt barn project highlights this family heritage, as barn owners often choose patterns that accentuate the history of their barn.

- In many counties, barns and other buildings used in the quilt square project are chosen for their cultural and historical significance to the county. For instance, Adams County specifically chose a location close to the Counterfeit House as the location for its fifth quilt square due the building's position as one of the county's most historical locations. Adams County further highlighted local culture by unveiling its initial quilt square during its Olde Thyme Herb Fair at Lewis Mountain in Manchester, Ohio.
- In Brown County, collaboration between the county quilt barn project and the Travel and Tourism Bureau has created the Quilt Barns and Covered Bridges Festival. In conjunction with the festival, a local church held a quilt show which attracted numerous quilters from around the region.
- Miami County quilt barns painted in 2006 and 2007 complement the Miami County Bicentennial (1807-2007). These barns feature the line, "Miami County 1807-2007" in addition to a quilt square pattern.

Future Opportunities: Accenting Local History and Flavor

With the expansion and development of the quilt barn project, counties are constantly searching for additional opportunities to highlight local features and history.

- Miami County's Convention and Visitors Bureau is working to create mini-tours of the county that feature quilt barns in addition to other local highlights such as Bruckner Nature Center and Johnston Farm.
- * Brown County's Travel and Tourism Bureau plans to expand the Quilt Barns and Covered Bridges Festival in the coming years to attract more tourists and to call further attention to the unique cultural features of the county.

Looking Forward

In addition to the physical expansion of the quilt barn project to new counties across Ohio, counties with existing trails have focused on identifying new opportunities to increase the economic, social, and cultural value of their projects.

Sponsored by the Ohio Arts Council, the Governor's Office of Appalachia, and Hocking College, an Ohio Quilt Barn Trail Workshop was held at Hocking College from May 3-4, 2007. By participating in this workshop, Ohio communities gained the opportunity to help shape and develop a cooperative marketing strategy and shared vision for their communities and Ohio as the home of the first quilt barn trail while setting the stage for a sustainable future.

Also suggested during the workshop was the creation of a quilt barn project "Best Practices Database." This database would compile information on the best methods for initiating, developing, and sustaining a quilt barn project.

Following up on the ideas generated at this workshop, several individuals have realized the need to develop a centralized non-profit entity to help coordinate and organize the Ohio Quilt Barn Trail. This non-profit organization could help to coordinate marketing and to develop standardized tracking tools such as sign-in sheets at official quilt barn sites, information request sheets at quilt barn sites, and tracking of hits at a centralized quilt barn website.

The following three subsections provide a summary of the previously identified opportunities associated with the expansion of the quilt barn project.

Economic Opportunities

- Improving Methods of Tracking Improved methods of tracking quilt barn related tourism such as sign-in sheets, information request sheets, and web site hits could lead to more efficient advertising and promotion of quilt barn projects.
- * Establishing a State or National Quilt Barn Convention A state or national quilt barn convention would attract large numbers of tourists and tourist dollars to the community where it would be held.
- * *Expanding Quilt Barn Related Merchandising* Local entrepreneurs are looking into ways to expand their quilt barn related merchandising and business ventures to larger state and national audiences.
- * Accessing Further Funding for Expansion Greater availability of outside funding could allow the physical expansion of the project to new counties in Ohio.

Social Opportunities

- * Establishing a State or National Quilt Barn Convention A state or national quilt barn convention could provide individuals and organizations with an important networking tool that would help to expand and strengthen partnerships between individuals and groups involved in the quilt barn project.
- * Hosting Additional Local Events Additional local events structured around the quilt barn project could help to foster networks and partnerships as well as feelings of community pride.

Cultural Opportunities

- * Highlighting Additional Local Features Counties have plans to further highlight local features by expanding cultural events that feature the quilt barn project and by attracting interest to historical sites and landmarks through quilt barns.
- * Expanding the Region-Wide Driving Tour The April 2008 edition of National Geographic Traveler included the Ohio: Clothesline of Quilts trail as part of a feature on Appalachian Driving Tours. The driving tour encompasses selected quilt barns in five Ohio Appalachian counties. This concept of a region-wide driving tour could be expanded to highlight additional Ohio Appalachian counties.

Beyond their purely artistic importance, quilt barns hold great value for Ohio communities. Since 2001, quilt barns have made considerable economic, social, and cultural contributions to Ohio communities. The expansion of the Ohio Quilt Barn Trail promises to further extend these contributions throughout the Ohio Appalachian region and to other Ohio counties outside of Appalachia.

Begun as a small community-based art project, the Ohio Quilt Barn Trail has planted the seeds for what is becoming a national movement. As plans for the quilt barn trail continue to move forward, communities will have the opportunity to leverage additional resources to expand their quilt barn projects. Through establishing strategic partnerships, their creative procurement of funding sources, and their unique cultural connection to the project, Ohio communities have shown the ingenuity and the determination needed to fully realize the potential of quilt barns. The remarkable work of these communities and the current opportunity to foster regional collaboration will hopefully allow all Ohioans to benefit from the value of the Ohio Quilt Barn Trail.

Quilt Square Reference



Cover

- 1. Colorado Block, 42519 St. Rt. 26, Woodsfield, Ohio, Monroe County
- 2. Flying Geese Block, St. Rt. 556, Monroe County
- 3. Hour Glass Block, St. Rt 41, Peebles, Ohio, Adams County
- 4. Jack's Block, U.S. 68, Ripely, Ohio, Brown County
- 5. Circles Upon Circles Block, 5001 Wallace Rd. St. Paris, Ohio, Champaign County



Inside Cover

- 1. Monkey Wrench, 1748 Waggoner Riffle Rd., West Union, Ohio, Adams County
- 2. Double T Block, 871 Spurgeon Hill Road West Union, Ohio, Adams County
- 3. Windmill Block, 87905 Reed Rd. Urichsville, Ohio, Harrison County
- 4. Father's Choice Block, 8743 S.R. 29, Mechanicsburg, Ohio, Champaign County
- 5. Summer Winds, 31935 St. Rt. 93 North, McArthur Ohio, Vinton County



Page 1. Bob Evans Quilt Barn Block, *Bob Evans Farm*, Gallia County Page 3. State of Ohio Block, *10510 McDougal Rd.*, *Millfield*, *Ohio*, Athens County Page 5. Clay's Choice Block 869 Grace Run Rd Winchester, Ohio, Adams County Page 9. Dairy Barn Star Block, *8000 Dairy Lane*, *Athens, Ohio*, Athens County Page 13 Snail's Trail Block, *24 Germany Hill Rd.*, *Manchester, Ohio*, Adams County



Page 17, Focus on...Miami County

1.Card Trick Block, 4862 East St. Rt. 41, Troy, Ohio, Miami County

- 2. Josephs Coat Block, 3111 Rangeline Road. 41, Covington, Ohio, Miami County
- 3. Braced Star Block, 10566 N. County Rd. 25A, Piqua, Ohio, Miami County
- 4. Fight Block, 4611 North Worely Rd., Troy, Ohio, Miami County
- 5. God's Eye Block, 2675 W. Farrington Rd., Piqua, Ohio, Miami County



Page 23, Focus on...Athens County

1. State of Ohio Block, 10510 McDougal Rd., Millfield, Ohio, Athens County

- 2. Appalachian Sunburst Block, 8560 Elliotsville Rd. Athens, Ohio, Athens County
- 3. Star Brick Block, Robbins Crossing Nelsonville, Ohio, Athens County
- 4. "A" Block, 15225 S. Canaan Road, Athens, Ohio, Athens County
- 5. Athens Ridges Arrows Block, State Rte. 329, Kilvert, Ohio, Athens County

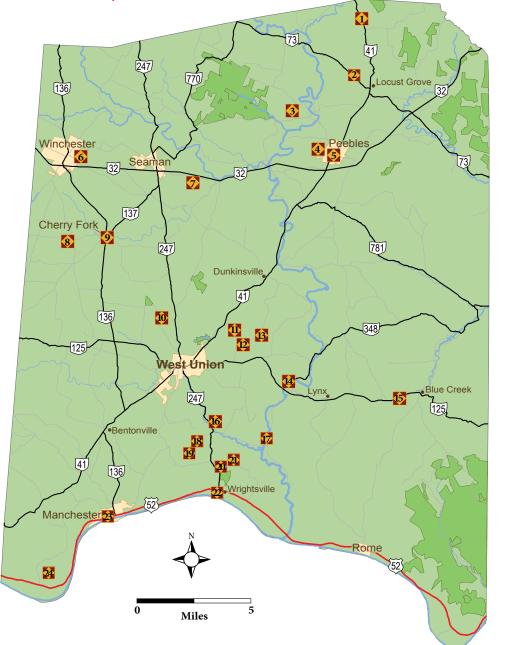
Appendix: Ohio Quilt Barn Maps and Ohio County Quilt Barn Maps







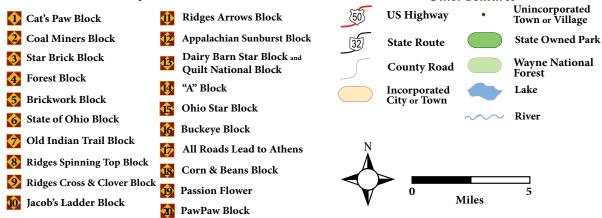
Adams County





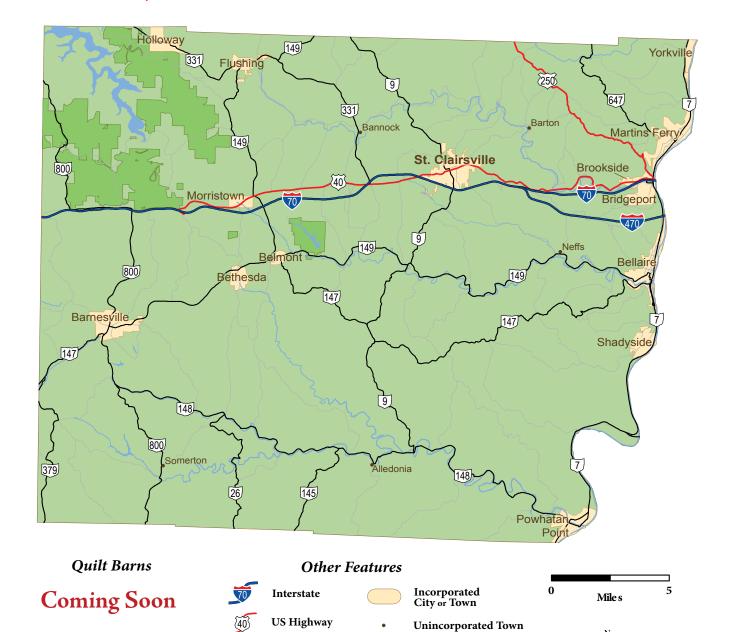






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State Owned Park

Lake

River

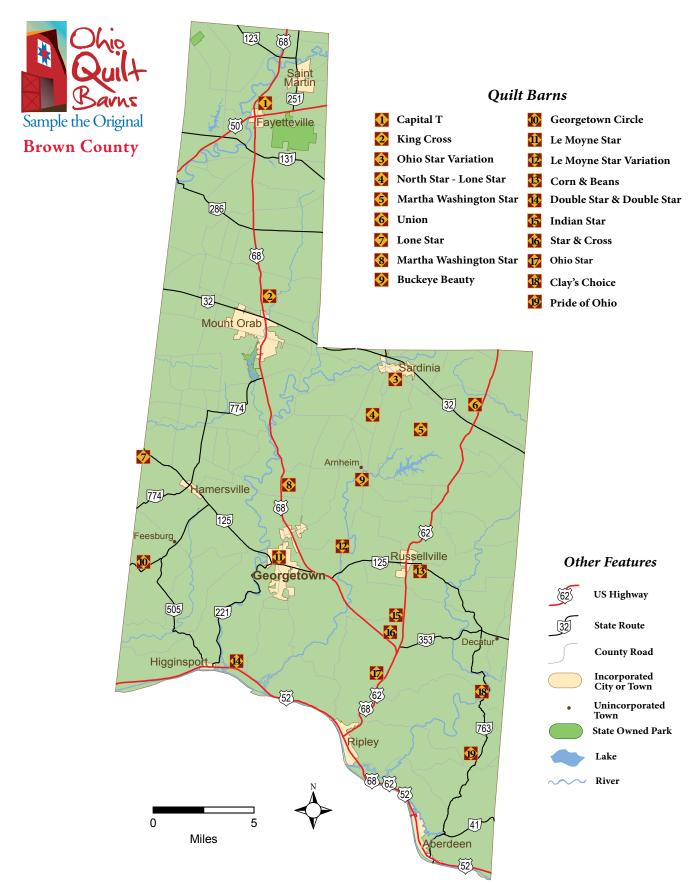
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Locations are an Approximation. Data: Quilt Barn Coordinator's Survey & Associated Websites. May 2008 by C. Rizzuto

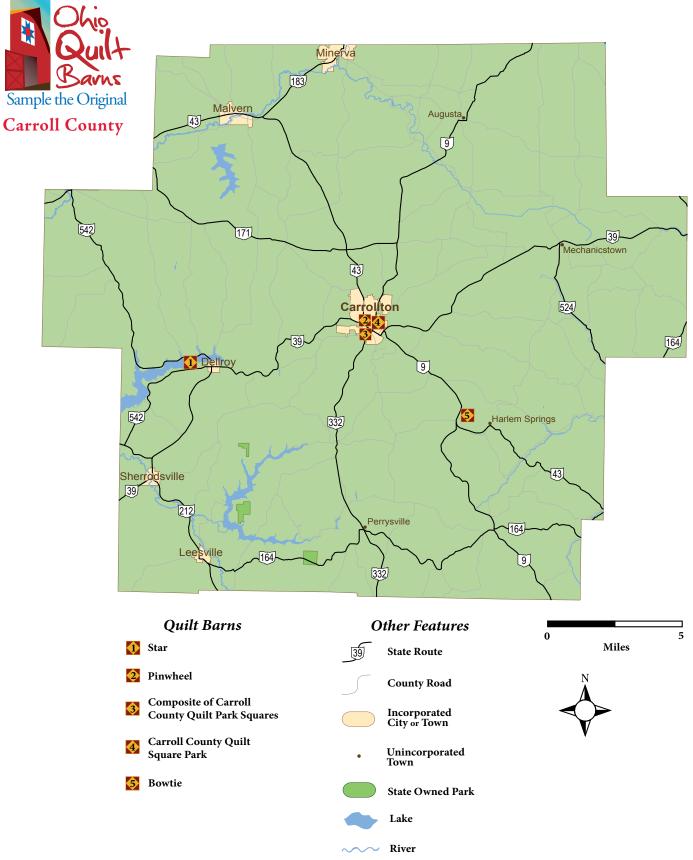
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State Route

County Road

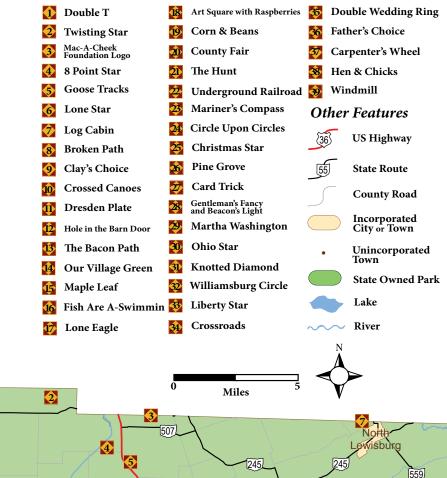


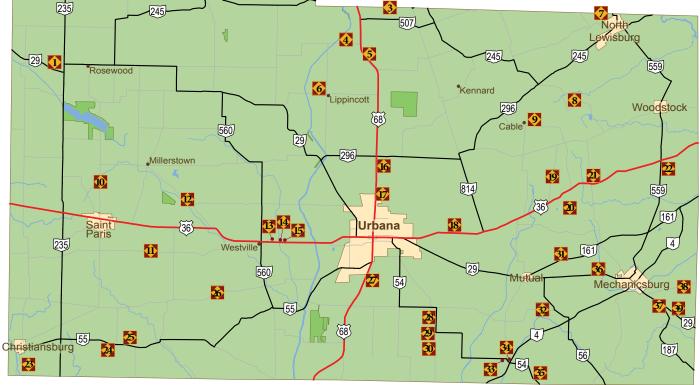
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Coshocton County

Quilt Barns

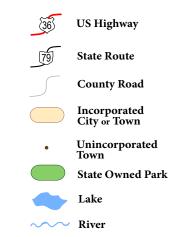
Coming Soon

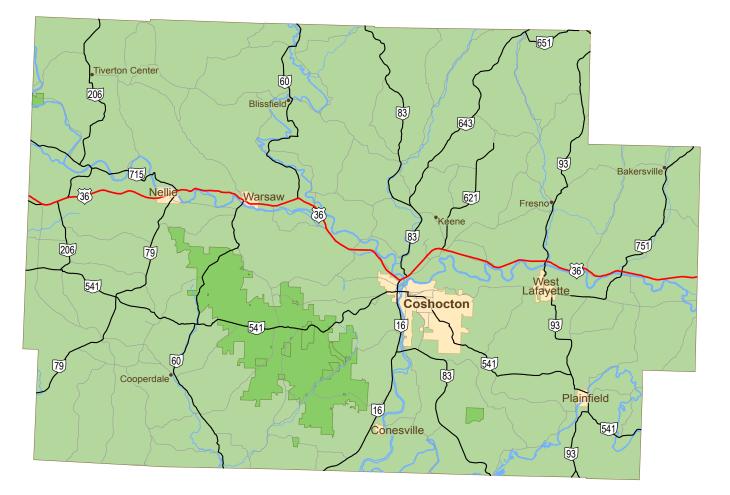
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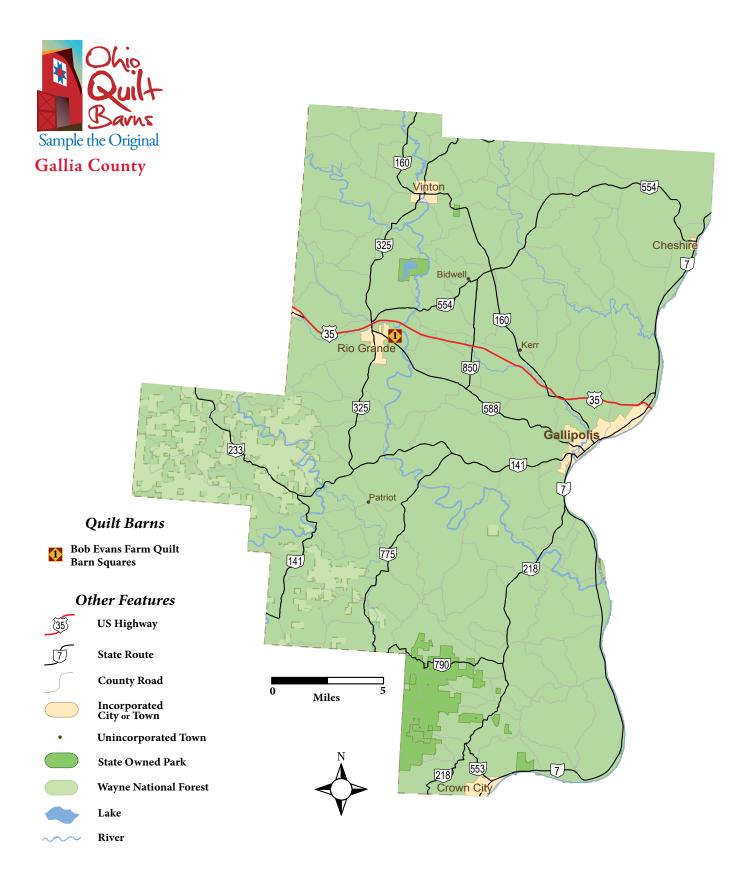
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Other Features

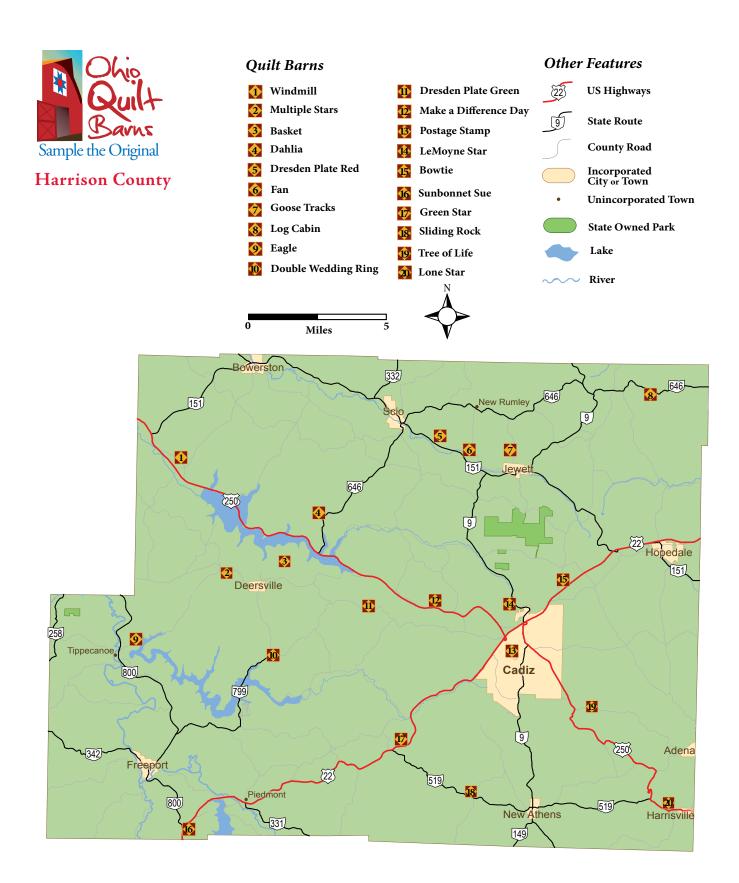


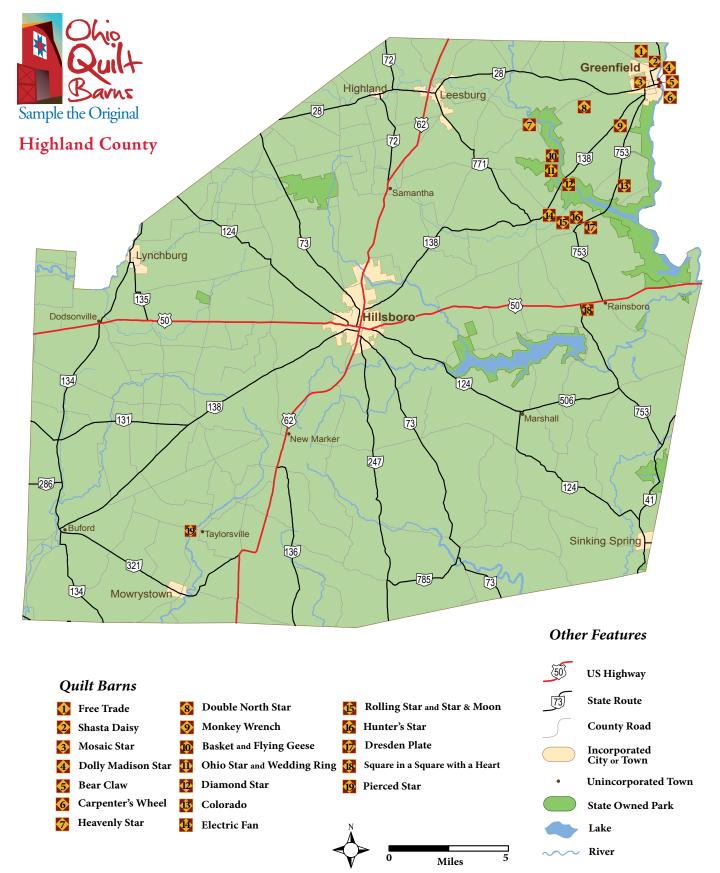






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Quilt Barns Double Hourglass

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God's Eye

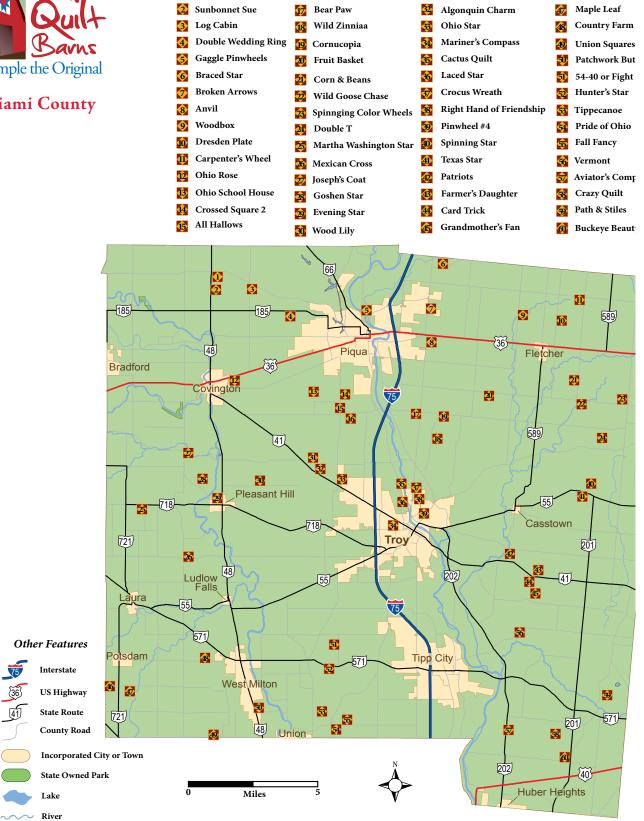
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Weathervane

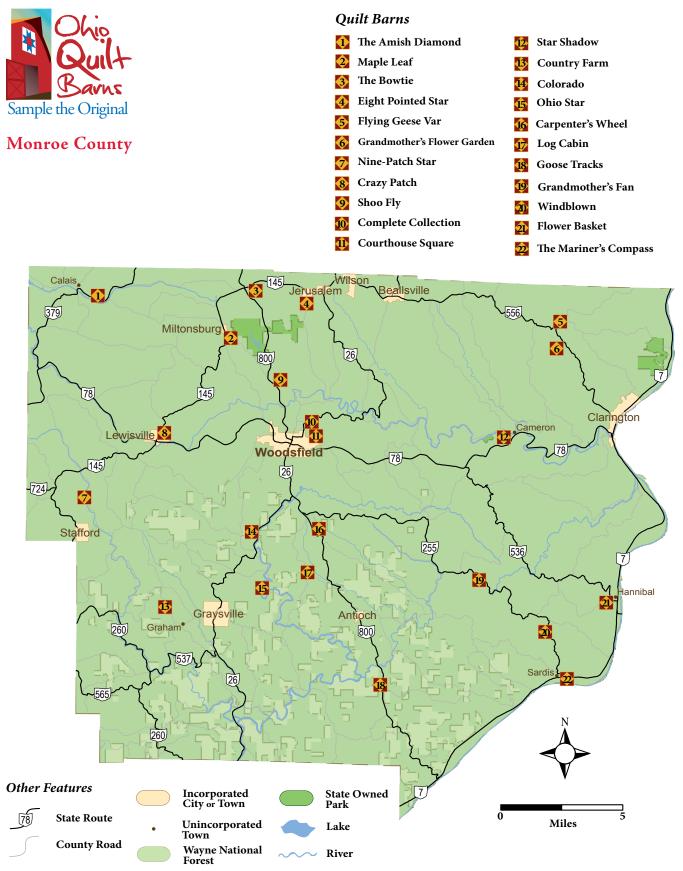
Heart Wreath

46

Miami County

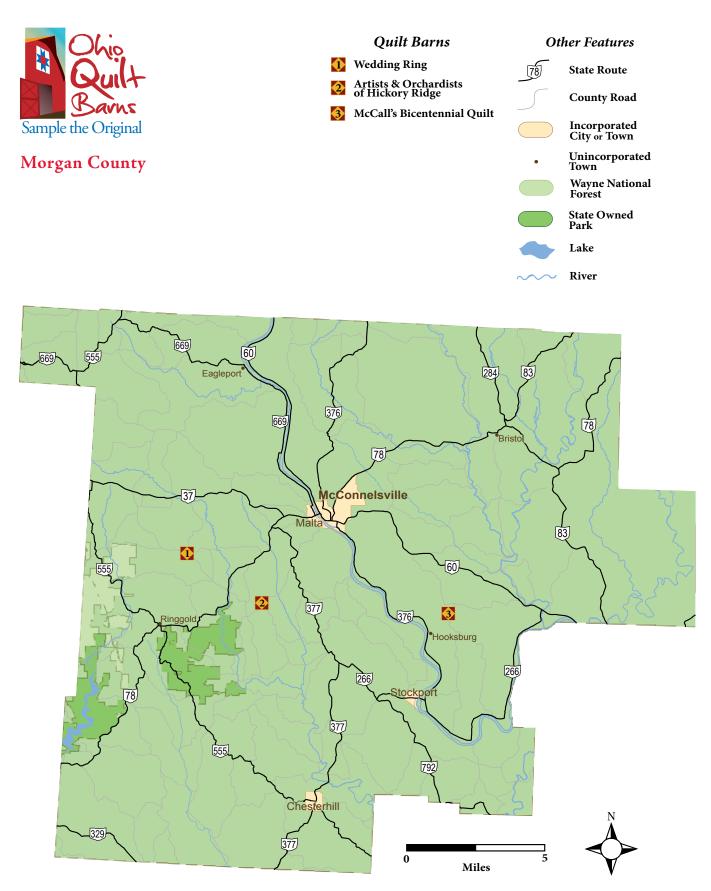


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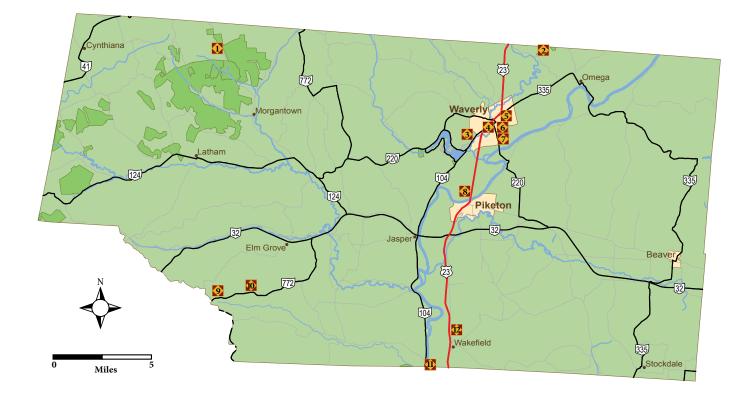
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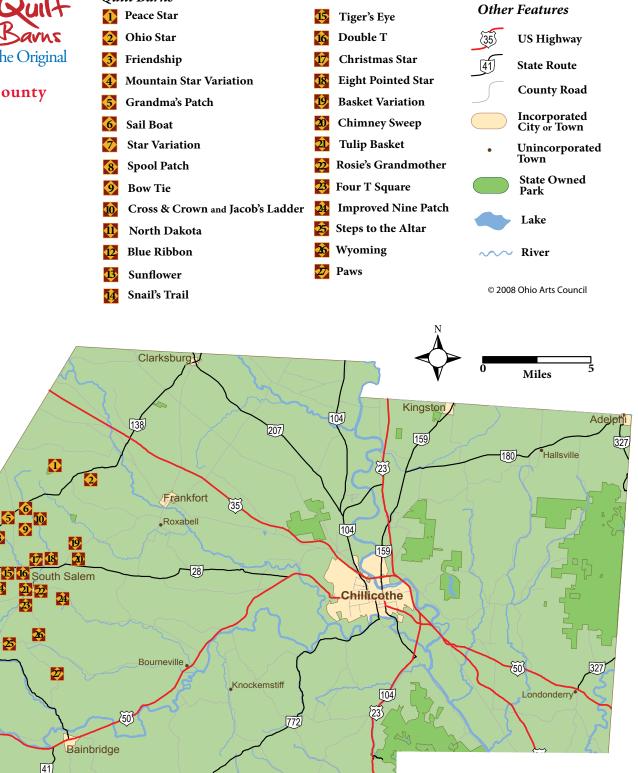






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Denver



Summit County

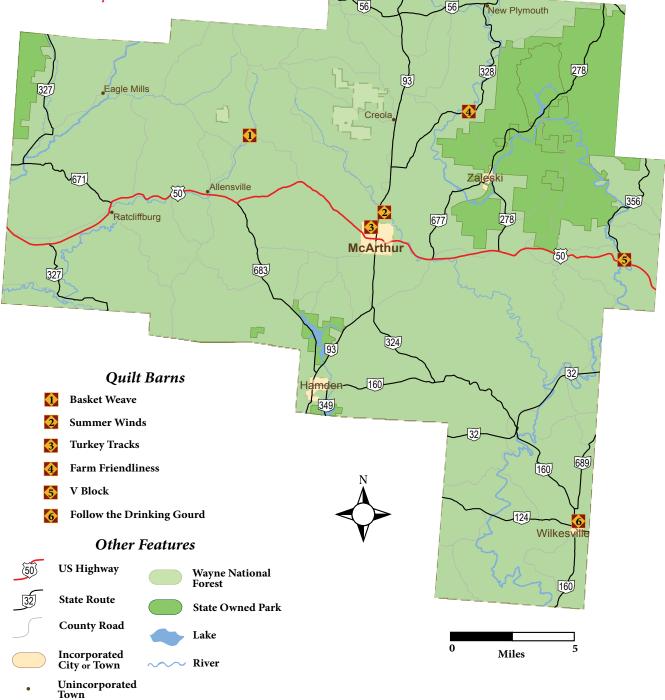
Quilt Barns Coming Soon





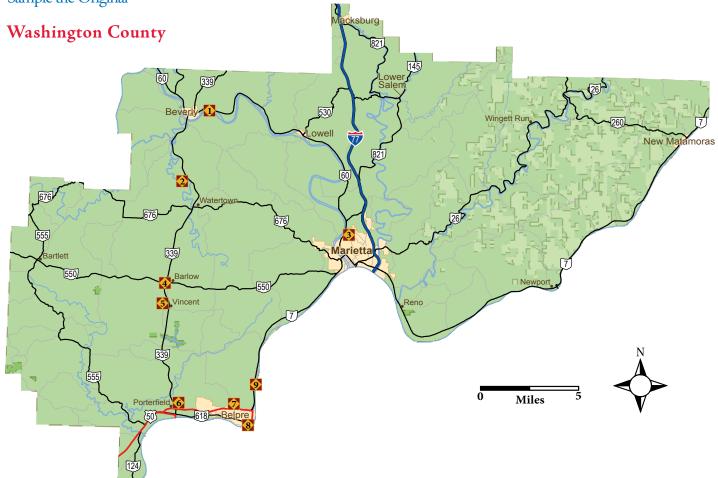


Vinton County



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