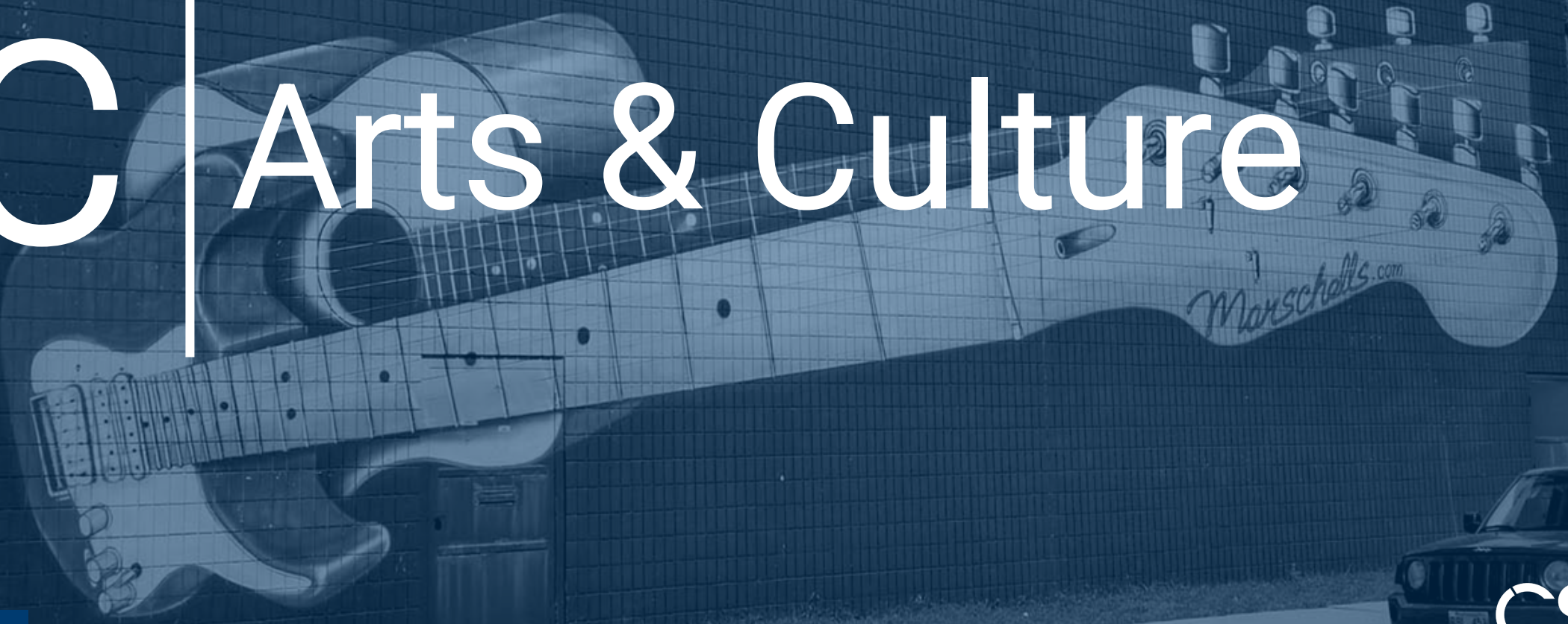


Excerpted Pages of the Clay County Tourism Master Plan

6C | Arts & Culture



6C. ARTS & CULTURE: Introduction

Culture, history and the arts help tell a destination's stories to visitors and residents. Programming such as arts festivals, concerts, and holiday celebrations showcase a destination's community and *present* state; attractions such as museums and historic landmarks highlight its *past*; and artistic talent and arts scene showcase its visions and hopes for the *future*.

Clay County currently offers a myriad of cultural assets including a robust inventory of events and festivals, the Thrasher-Horne Center, the Clay County Historic Triangle, and an assortment of historic museums throughout the County. During site visits and stakeholder interviews, these scattered attractions generate modest visitor traffic, but many stakeholders feel that opportunity exists to create more mainstream draws that have appeal to younger visitors.

Considering resident and stakeholder input, in addition to insights gathered from destination benchmarking research and non-local perspective interviews, we have identified four key focus areas for destination development related to arts, culture and history in Clay County. These are listed below.

1. Events and Festivals
2. Celebrating Southern Rock
3. Public Art Development
4. Historic Asset Strategies

Many of these initiatives could be spearheaded by Clay County Tourism, though other community stakeholders, such as artists and arts organizations, will be necessary in order to best implement them. The subsequent pages provide analysis and recommendations for each of these themes.

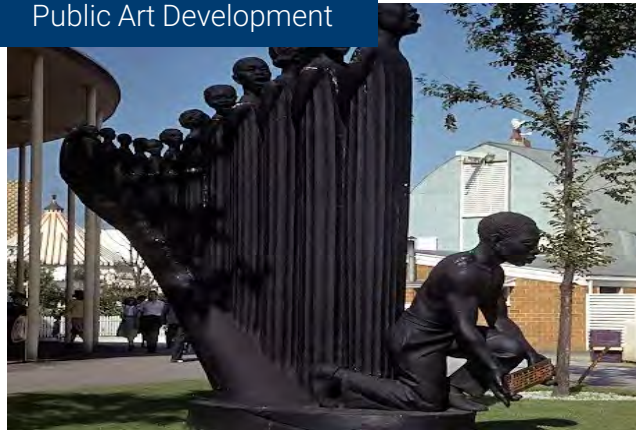
Events and Festivals



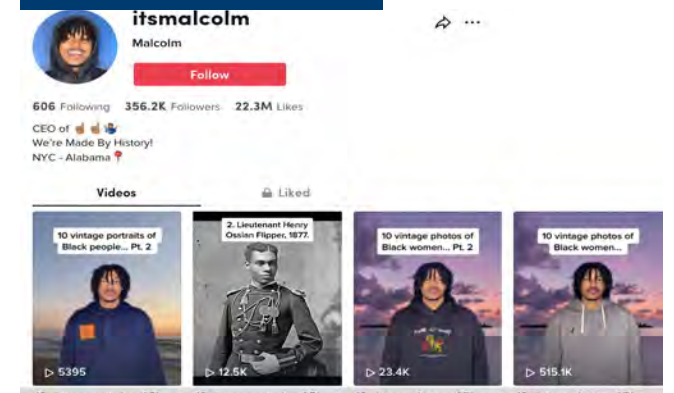
Celebrating Southern Rock



Public Art Development



Historic Asset Strategies



6C. ARTS & CULTURE: Major Existing Events

1. Events and Festivals

Events and festivals can generate significant visitation for a destination, strengthen its brand and benefit the local resident base. They also induce demand for any given area, and if developed with quality programming, can bring significant visitation to small-market and suburban destinations. Blue Ox Festival in Eau Claire, WI and Electric Forest in Rothbury, MI represent examples of small markets with destination festivals that attract tens of thousands of overnight visitors to their respective markets.

Just over 28 percent of surveyed residents scored events/festivals as a potential opportunity for tourism improvement in Clay County, making it the fifth most frequently mentioned concept. Further, many survey respondents younger than 35 showed a much higher interest in a southern rock festival relative to their older counterparts, suggesting the opportunity to draw younger visitors to Clay County through creation and/or investment in festivals.

The Clay County area hosts a number of events that draw 1,000 or more attendees throughout the year, though with a limited number drawing significant non-local attendance. A sampling of some of the area's largest festivals are shown to the right. Trends in the national event industry suggest that today's attendees are seeking authentic and immersive experiences, as well as multi-layered "destination events" that include a variety of activities and themes. Clay County currently offers a number of one- to two-day festivals, but opportunity may exist to grow one or a select number of these into longer, more multi-faceted festivals with stronger overnight visitor appeal. Alternatively, an entirely new countywide festival could be developed that celebrates themes unique and authentic to the Clay County region.

More specific direction regarding event and festival investment in Clay County is provided on the following page.

Clay County Fair
132,000 attendees



Fall Festival
45,000 attendees



Scottish Games and Festival
22,000 attendees



Other Notable Events

- CalaVida Arts Festival
- Strawberry Festival
- Fourth of July
- Memorial Day RiverFest
- Kids' Fest
- Food Truck Fridays
- Bella Notte



6C. ARTS & CULTURE: Events and Festivals Recommendations

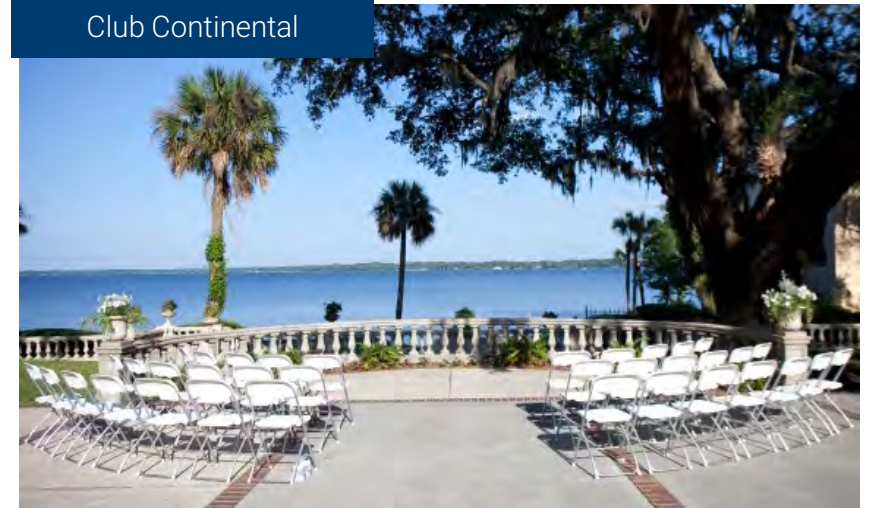
Detailed direction regarding event and festival development in Clay County over the next ten years is summarized below.

1. The County Fairgrounds is the most active event center in the destination. The facility's master plan includes a rearrangement of the campus's layout to better support livestock/ag events, as well as capital improvements to its indoor event spaces. We recommend these initiatives be prioritized for near-term completion, and that more resources and staffing be added to better market and sell these event spaces to local and non-local groups. Indoor spaces should be able to host more banquets and cultural events, while the entire complex could add one to three signature events per year such as a renaissance festival, haunted house villages, holiday light villages, music festivals and other programming.
2. Club Continental represents a "hidden gem" in the broader Jacksonville visitor economy, and a rare large-scale waterfront property open to visiting events. Clay County Tourism should continue to work with property owners to explore opportunities to increase marketing and event activity at the property.
3. Thresher-Horne Center has had recent success with hosting classic rock and emerging country acts, while also serving the community by hosting a wide array of local events. These efforts should be continued and supported by the tourism community through online promotion. Further, efforts should be made to work with St. Johns River State College to establish in-person esports events at the Center.
4. Clay County Tourism currently offers support to event planning offices within the individual municipalities such as Orange Park in the form of promotion and planning assistance. Consideration should be given to creating a full-time role within the County focused on growing events and festivals in the County. This role could potentially focus on activating the Fairgrounds while also collaborating with individual city offices to best develop their major events.
5. Stakeholder input highlighted Fall Festival, Kids Fest, Scottish Games and Festival, and Bella Notte as events with some material potential to grow long-term. An event committee and/or a new role within the County should evaluate ways to further grow these events in the future, using resident and visitor surveys to help guide programming developments.
6. Spring Park's Food Truck Friday has been a significant success in bringing visitation to Spring Park and the Walnut Street area. Efforts should be made to leverage this visitation and visibility, and periodic programming such as buskers, art pop-ups, and educational kiosks should be added to better engage visitors, boost repeat visitation and moderately enhance non-local visitation.

Clay County Fairgrounds



Club Continental



6C. ARTS & CULTURE: Events and Festivals Recommendations (cont'd.)

6. Strategic Plan research suggests opportunity for one major festival in Clay County to be developed within the next three to five years. This type of signature destination event must be able to attract a large diverse audience through a theme/concept tied to unique elements of the community, with a variety of unique and engaging components that are representative of the region and its history. This would give visitors a reason to spend multiple days engaging in programming throughout the area and would help attract a wide variety of visitors seeking different types of experiences. The planning process for such an event will require the following steps:

- a) **Forming a committee:** a “quarterbacking” organization should be developed that includes individuals from the hospitality, entertainment, government and corporate sectors that will work together to carry out planning tasks over a three- to five-year period.
- b) **Establishing a theme:** potential festival themes include southern rock, Clay’s history as a vacation destination in the late 1800’s, outdoor recreation and sports, and family fun, among others.
- c) **Programming:** the event could include large concerts, food truck and vendors zones, cooking competitions, races/obstacle courses, fireworks, and other such activity.
- d) **Locations:** potential locations could include Town Hall Park or Moosehaven in Orange Park, Spring Park/Walnut Street in Green Cove Springs, and/or Clay County Fairgrounds. As the event grows, multiple theaters of activity could be developed throughout the County.
- e) **Timing:** the event would take place over three days, and potentially grown to a two-weekend event after five to six years.
- f) **Partners:** a regional promoter such as Adams Entertainment could help secure talent to perform at such a festival, while local/regional businesses could serve as sponsors.



1. Prioritize implementation of Clay County Fairgrounds Master Plan and evaluate approach to marketing/selling building; create goals for retaining more indoor and outdoor events to campus.
2. Continue to work with ownership to market Club Continental to the group segment in North Florida.
3. Establish an event support committee or role to tighten the working relationships with municipalities.
4. Identify one or two existing festivals to further develop (Fall Festival, Scottish Games, Kids Fest or Bella Notte).
5. Further build out programming at Food Truck Friday.
6. Begin planning for one new major festival at highly visible location within County.

Tourism Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant
Resident Quality of Life Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to Significant
Implementors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clay County Tourism • Clay County Fairgrounds • Club Continental • Orange Park • Green Cove Springs • Entertainment Promoter • Other hospitality/business leaders
Total Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undetermined



Introduction

Existing Assets

Benchmarking

Community Survey

Non-Local Perspective

Recommendations

6C. ARTS & CULTURE: Community Music Investment

Several communities throughout the country define their brands and identities through the music history and heritage that took place in their communities. CSL identified three eastern US communities that focus on highlighting their past and current involvement in the music culture and history that provided, and continues to provide, meaning and pride to those communities. These three communities highlight their music culture in their tourism promotion and at public and community events with an aim towards providing notoriety to these communities and a point of pride for their residents.

Owensboro, KY



Owensboro is a small community in Kentucky that has found a level of pride and identity in its Bluegrass music history and heritage. The city is labeled the “Bluegrass Music Capital of the World.” On the city’s tourism website homepage, it highlights music with large links, photos highlighting music culture, and a list of live music events in the city. The city also hosts the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame, a large museum focused on Bluegrass music. The community hosts several large music events and festivals surrounding Bluegrass music.

Ashland, KY



The Country Music Highway is a 150-mile scenic highway along U.S. 23 that runs through seven counties in eastern Kentucky. Its purpose is to highlight the portion of the country that has produced more million-selling singers per capita than any other region in the world. Along the highway are music themed museums, gift shops, iconic music venues, art installations, signage, storytelling, and more. One stop on the highway, Ashland, KY, has the historic Paramount Art Center, a music venue that hosts local, regional and national acts.

Bibb County, GA



Bibb County is a community in Georgia that utilizes its music culture and history to build on its broader tourism package. Throughout Macon are several ‘instagrammable’ art installations highlighting its music culture including pieces such as sculptures and murals. Macon has several music venues including historic theaters, and is currently building an outdoor amphitheater. Additionally, Grant’s Lounge in Macon is known as a home of Southern Rock music in the US. The county also has several self-guided music tours.

Source: Google, CVBs, Museum Sites, 2022.



6C. ARTS & CULTURE: Halls of Fame

A direct method of highlighting the music culture and history of a location is the development of a music 'hall of fame.' These locations can attract visitors from long distances, provide music notoriety to a location, and become a point of pride for residents. Halls of Fame are aimed at preserving historical music artifacts, protecting music history and culture, and providing immersive experiences that educate visitors as to this musical heritage. These facilities can range from large, nationally marketed attractions to small, traveling organizations solely focused on education and preservation of music history.

Owensboro, KY



Bluegrass Hall of Fame & Museum

Built in 2018, this \$15 million facility is in downtown Owensboro. The Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame is a large museum filled with interactive exhibits, posters, costumes, instruments, and other music artifacts highlighting the history of Bluegrass. The museum hosts several Bluegrass events and festivals annually, and offers educational classes to learn about and how to play the music. Additionally, the museum has a performance venue in which it hosts performances year-round.

Tuscumbia, AL



Alabama Music Hall of Fame

This hall of fame opened in 1990 in Tuscumbia, AL. Its mission is to preserve and highlight the music heritage of Alabama. It has several interactive exhibits and numerous preserved music artifacts. Outside the facility is a paved, commemorative walk of fame filled with the names of prominent Alabamian artists. The museum hosts field trips with orientations for K-6th grade and 7th-12th grade. The museum can be rented out for private events and parties, and also has a rentable recording studio for creating new music.

Galax, VA



Blue Ridge Music Center

The Blue Ridge Music Center is a music museum and outdoor amphitheater located on the border of Virginia and North Carolina. The museum is called the "Roots of American Music Exhibition" and highlights the music heritage of the surrounding region through interactive displays, history writeups, musical recordings, instruments, and other artifacts. The outdoor amphitheater is an open grass space with a permanent stage and seats approximately 2,500 people. The venue hosts free and paid concerts throughout the year.

Source: Google, CVBs, HoF Sites, 2022.



6C. ARTS & CULTURE: Southern Rock Recommendations

The following initiatives are designed to elevate Clay County's music history within the heritage and pop history travel landscapes, while also providing product that will help extend the stay of other mainstream visitors.

1. Current Lynard Skynard and southern rock landmarks and attractions within Clay County are limited, therefore a "trail" or itinerary would be difficult to establish. Instead, Clay County Tourism and other local stakeholders should prioritize the development of public art installations and a roadway dedication to southern rock history featuring historical markers along the way. A special southern rock area at the art galleries of Thresher-Horne Center could be established as part of this initiative.
2. A planning committee should be established to identify sites and program elements of a future Southern Rock Hall of Fame in Clay County. This would likely be a southern rock historical society with 501(c)3 distinction. Similar hall of fame and/or museum attractions in Owensboro, KY and the Blue Ridge Music Center in Grayson County, VA should be used as models for this type of attraction. Potential sites suggested by local stakeholders include the Regional Park, County Fairgrounds and the soon-to-be-redeveloped bestbet casino site. A national architect and planning firm should eventually be retained to assist with designing the venue.
3. In addition to the Hall of Fame, a small amphitheater or performance space should be added to support live music performances on weekends, as well as private events on other days of the week. Similar to the Blue Ridge Music Center in Grayson County, VA, this could offer a capacity of 2,000 to 3,000 spectators, and feature high-quality sound and lighting systems.
4. Use hall of fame and performance space as central theater for potential future southern rock festival (previously described as part of Events and Festivals Recommendations).



1. Identify opportunities for southern rock trail connecting various landmarks and featuring southern rock public art installation.
2. Establishing southern rock historical group with 501(c)3 distinction to being planning Southern Rock Hall of Fame attraction at highly trafficked location within the County.
3. Develop hall of fame in conjunction with modest amphitheater space to support southern rock programming.
4. Use Southern Rock Hall of Fame as base for future Southern Rock Festival.

Tourism Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to Significant
Resident Quality of Life Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate to Significant
Implementors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clay County Tourism • Local musicians • Clay County Historical and Cultural Society • Future southern rock non-profit • Future arts council
Total Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$10.0 to \$20.0m for museum and amphitheater



6C. ARTS & CULTURE: Public Art

3. Public Art Development

With planning for a potential Clay County arts council taking place, there will be opportunities to develop connections between the arts and the visitor industry. Public art development represents an important opportunity to highlight a community's unique sense of identity and character, and continued investment in its development can help create a sense of vibrancy that is conducive to retaining and attracting residents, businesses and visitors. For Clay County, the photo opportunities, social media value, and enhanced placemaking provided by public art would advantageously position the destination within an evolving visitor industry. Examples of unique and lauded public art programs in three comparable destinations nationally are described below.



Sculpture Trails

SculptureWalk Sioux Falls, SD

The SculptureWalk is a year-round, outdoor art exhibit displayed throughout the city of Sioux Falls. The exhibit has quickly grown from 10 to nearly 70 sculptures over the last decade. All sculptures are also aggressively promoted to the public for sale. SculptureWalk receives a 25 percent commission on any sculpture sold and on any commissioned sculptures, except for the People's Choice and Best of Show sculptures. Historically, approximately 25 percent of all sculptures have been purchased.

The trail also serves as the centerpiece for Taste of Sioux Falls, the city's largest event, during which auctions are held on the trail's sculptures.



Mural Programs

NEON District Murals Norfolk, VA

To encourage more successful implementation of public art projects in NEON, Norfolk's primary arts district, the Downtown Norfolk Council has created a Public Art Program, led by the NEON District Committee. The Public Art Program is available to property owners, tenants or artists interested in undertaking professionally crafted artistic designs that enhance the street environment and bring life to the NEON District. The Public Art Program aims to reduce the material and design costs to working artists, and to provide additional and meaningful incentives to property owners and tenants. Grants of \$3,000 may be given to artists and partnering businesses based on their materials and design fees.



Interactive Installations

Curb'd Parklets Covington, KY

Renaissance Covington (the downtown development agency of Covington, Kentucky) partnered with People's Liberty (an arts-related philanthropic foundation from Cincinnati) to establish a temporary public art program that would transform several parking spaces in front of local downtown businesses into interactive art installations. Over the course of multiple months, several workshops and "meet and greets" were held to help connect local businesses interested in participating in the program with prospective artists. These pairings developed concepts ranging from a bike-powered cinema (pictured above), to 3D hopscotch, to a "make-a-wish" igloo.



6C. ARTS & CULTURE: Public Art Development Recommendations

Considering the public art programs showcased on the previous page, the following tasks have been outlined to help guide the development of a Clay County arts council and public art program.

1. Clay County Tourism should continue its involvement with leading the development of a County arts council. Developer impact fees have been proposed as the primary funding source, and various stakeholders in the arts have been closely involved with planning the structure, mission, vision and services for the group. St. Johns and Duval County arts councils can be consulted to provide helpful guidance for the group's formation.
2. Once the arts council has been established, the group should initiate a public art master plan. In addition to local artists and other arts-related stakeholders, Clay County Tourism should be a primary stakeholder in the formation of this plan to help guide public art installation and event development that aligns with the following key principles:
 - a) **Monumental:** one or several signature, multi-story installations (either sculptures or murals) that are eye-catching and highly photographable.
 - b) **Interactive and unique:** temporary or permanent installations that are kinetic or technologically enhanced and engage passersby, similar to the Curb'd Parklets program in Covington, KY.
 - c) **Highly visible:** installations should be developed within highly visited areas such as Spring Park and Walnut Street, Wells Road in Orange Park, the County Fairgrounds, Regional Park, and other areas.
 - d) **Authentic Themes:** Clay County public art installations should tie to themes that are unique and authentic to the area's heritage. Ideas cited by local and non-local stakeholders include Augusta Savage, the area's agricultural history, and southern rock.
3. In addition to the impact fees that may fund a future Clay County arts council, a one to two percent developer fund should be created to help fund the implementation of the public art master plan throughout the County, as managed by the arts council. With a variety of future development that will follow the completion of the First Coast Expressway, it is likely that this modest assessment could provide significant funding for murals, sculptures and temporary art in highly visited areas.



1. Continue with planning and formation of Clay County Arts Council, using Duval and St. Johns Counties as guiding examples.
2. Prepare public art master plan to develop a list of themes, styles, and locations for public art installations and events.
3. Evaluate potential to establish a percent for art fund to help implement public art master plan projects.

Tourism Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate
Resident Quality of Life Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate to Significant
Implementors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clay County Tourism Future Clay County arts council Local artists Local historians Developers Local business and property owners St. Johns and Duval County Arts Councils
Total Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$20,000 to \$50,000 for public art master plan \$10,000 to \$100,000 per year for public art installation projects



6C. ARTS & CULTURE: History Influencers

4. Historic Asset Strategies

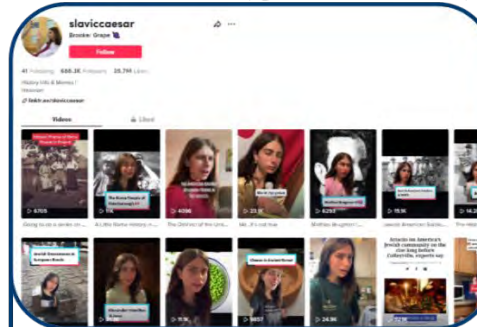
According to stakeholders and surveyed residents, Clay County's rich history as a late 19th-century vacation destination, leading dairy producer, and one of Florida's oldest municipalities is not well-known to either visitors nor the local population. Opportunity exists to better connect this rich cultural context with the visitor experience, and to instill Clay County's growing resident base with greater knowledge of and pride in the destination's heritage.

The graphics below demonstrate the "modern era" of historic tourism. Whereas destinations have traditionally relied on pamphlets, motorcoach tour buses or visitor centers to help tell their stories, influencers on platforms such as Tik Tok and Instagram have made a living by traveling and vlogging about unique, off-the-beaten path destinations with unique history and heritage. Each of the influencers summarized below could be useful partners for showcasing Clay's historic assets.

This era of digital and freelance marketing with significant reach and engagement potential will be beneficial to an emerging destination such as Clay County. Beyond investing in the improvement of various history assets, such as museums and landmarks, it will be more important to improve exposure through the use of Tik Tok, Google analytics and other tools.

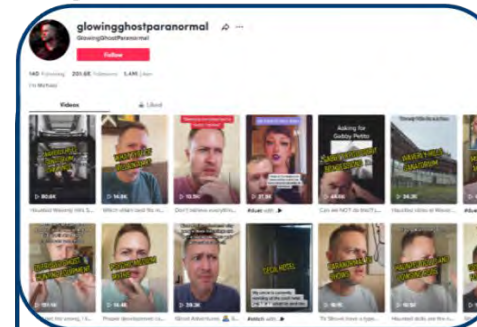
For reference, the influencers to the right generally work with DMO's for \$10 per 1,000 followers. Using these metrics, Brooke Pavek could likely work on a social media campaign with County Tourism for approximately \$7,000 per spot/content post, while Glowing Ghost Paranormal could work for closer to \$2,000 per spot/content post. Importantly, this new primary form of marketing is also more cost effective than the development of traditional marketing materials. These social media tactics and related strategies to enhance Clay County's historic assets and experiences are further detailed on the following page.

Brooke Pavek (@slaviccaesar)



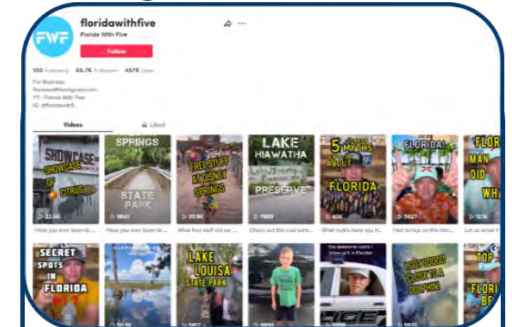
- Followers: 688.3k
- Total Likes: 35.7M
- Comedic, Theatrical History Lessons
- From Jacksonville, FL. Does not travel for videos

@GlowingGhostParanormal



- Followers: 201.6k
- Total Likes: 1.4M
- Haunted Destination Exploration
- Has traveled to Iowa, Texas, Kentucky, California, and other states

@FloridaWithFive



- Followers: 88.7k
- Total Likes: 457k
- Family with the knowledge of the "Best Things to do in Florida", "Secret Places", and day in the life attractions
- Focus primarily on Florida



6C. ARTS & CULTURE: Historic Asset Strategy Recommendations

We recommend the following initiatives for maximizing Clay County's historic assets for the visitor industry over the next ten years.

1. Tik Tok and Instagram influencers with history, paranormal and/or family themes like those presented previously should be retained to showcase some of Clay's historic assets. Potential content could focus on areas like the County Jail and the Historical Triangle, Penney Farms, Spring Park, Camp Blanding Museum, Military Museum of North Florida, and other landmarks and attractions. Clay County Tourism should consider allotting \$20,000 to \$30,000 for this effort.
2. Opportunity exists to convert tours of the County Jail from public to private sector management. The Old Jail Museum management in St. Augustine has expressed interest in including the jail as part of a motorcoach tour and would like to head the tour operations of the facility. In addition to increased motorcoach visitation, their expertise would likely provide greater marketing exposure online, more aggressive promotion regionally, more convenient access for the visitor due to longer operational hours, and possibly greater visitor experiences. Consideration should also be given to enabling the Old Jail Museum to include the outdoor space and other venues of the Historic Triangle (Courthouse, Railroad Museum and History Museum) as part of occasional campuswide history tour activations.
3. Many DMO's and economic development groups nationally have led online and social media marketing workshops for small businesses in their destinations to educate them on how to optimize their presence in the digital landscape and to increase visitation through effective marketing on platforms such as TripAdvisor, Yelp!, Google Analytics, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok, Placer AI and Arrivalist. Clay County Tourism recently worked with the Miles Partnership to establish the guidelines for this type of educational program. Local attractions and owners of key restaurants and retail stores should be invited to partake in the program in the near-term so that they can begin to manage their respective online storefronts and social media pages, maximize their online and in-person traffic levels, and also learn more about their customers' demographics and buyer behaviors.



1. Retain history-, paranormal- and family-focused influencers to showcase historic assets in Clay County.
2. Privatize management of County Jail and consider more aggressive programming of Historic Triangle campus one to several times per year, centered around County Jail experience.
3. Lead Miles Partnership program and other workshop sessions to educate local attractions and other relevant businesses on digital marketing.

Tourism Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate
Resident Quality of Life Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to Moderate
Implementors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clay County Tourism • Local attractions, museums and other relevant businesses • Old Jail Museum • Historic Triangle • History- and family-focused social media influencers
Total Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year for history- and family-focused influencer campaigns





THE BIG IDEA

Over the next one to three years, Clay County begins to tell the story of its past, present and future to the visitor through events, festivals history influencer campaigns, and public art. Within ten years, it will have several core cultural attractions that will drive visitation and lengthen stays in the destination with the Southern Rock Hall of Fame and Amphitheater.

6C. ARTS & CULTURE: Recommendations



We have summarized the primary Arts & Culture-related initiatives and milestones for the County, placing them generally in a time sequence from near-term to long-term.



1. Evaluate Duval, St. Johns and other county approaches to arts council development and work with local artists to establish an arts council committee
2. Leverage, promote and support Fairgrounds, Thresher-Horne Center and Club Continental.
3. Develop one- to two-percent public art fund to generate significant revenue from incoming developments
4. Initiate planning for Southern Rock HOF and identify opportunities for Southern Rock trail
5. Evaluate and develop existing events and festivals
6. Work with history, family and paranormal influencers, review management of Old Jail
7. Conduct digital marketing workshops for existing museums

8. Identify "target zones" for public art development throughout County
 - Walnut Street
 - Spring Park
 - Gateway to Clay
 - Trails
 - New developments
9. Initiate planning and identify partners for Southern Rock HOF and performance center
10. Consider marketing approaches to Southern Rock

11. Develop Southern Rock HOF
 - a. Exhibits
 - b. Indoor performance space
 - c. Small amphitheater
12. Grow southern rock festival, utilize Fairgrounds and Hall of Fame
13. Develop arts district in high foot traffic area (new development, Walnut Street, or Mall)

