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Southern Virginia's New Tobacco-The Business of Art and Design

by Lee Sandstead

The other day I was standing in one of the newest educational computer labs in the region. The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (HEC) in South Boston has launched a new educational-model called "the Business of Art and Design," and their new graphics design lab is one of the core pieces to this model.

On the floor of the lab stood 18 of Apple's latest and greatest boxed-up state-of-the-art computers. Needless to say, we were all pretty excited to rip open those boxes and see what was inside.

When the first was opened, we were surprised at what we saw--in a tiny font that we had to lean over and squint to see, simply read: "Designed by Apple in California."

There wasn't a list of computer specs or promotional flyers or a letter from their president or throw-away computer manuals. There was simply: "Designed by Apple in California."

We live in an era of design in the United States. Apple is a great example. Their design philosophy has set them apart from almost every other technological brand.

More and more, companies are looking at art and design in order to remain competitive. For instance, GM, one of the world's largest car makers, is not in the car building business any more—they are in the "art business," says GM high-up Robert Lutz. He continues by referring to cars as: "art, entertainment and mobile sculpture, which, coincidentally, also happens to provide transportation."

Many leaders in Southern Virginia are seizing these great opportunities in the design world by advocating an educational model where students take the lead in arts-related fields. For instance, Dan H. Pink reports in his *NY Times* best-selling book *A Whole New Mind* that: "In the United States, the number of graphic designers has increased tenfold in a decade; graphic designers outnumber chemical engineers by four to one." He continues: "The wealth of nations and the well-being of individuals now depend on having artists in the room. In a world enriched by abundance but disrupted by the automation and outsourcing of white-collar work, everyone, regardless of profession, must cultivate an artistic sensibility. We may not all be Dali or Degas. But today we must all be designers."

If you are interested in arts and design and what they mean for our future—read that book. W. W. "Ted" Bennett, Jr. has read it. He is the HEC's Executive Director, and he asks everyone to read it. "We're developing a significant design and

arts four-year program for students across Southern Virginia starting with dual enrollment students," says Bennett. "The business of art and design will play a significant role in our economic and cultural future." With strong emphasis on K-12 outreach and strong relationships in higher education, Bennett is fighting to do just that.

When completed, the Business of Art and Design will be housed in the 40,000 square feet historic "bag" factory located next to the Prizery in South Boston. Space is allotted for computer-based design labs, the wood arts, performing arts, fine arts, fashion design, interior design, architecture, culinary arts, photography and animation.

It's a visionary and ambitious project, but maybe one day, Apple's next generation of bad-boy computers will be designed by regional students, and when we open these boxed-up computers, they could very possibly read: "Designed by Apple in Southern Virginia."

Author Lee Sandstead, host of *Travel Channel's "Art Attack,"* has recently joined the *Business of Art and Design*, an initiative of the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center. The HEC is transforming the region by seeking to provide broader educational connections and opportunities through partnering institutions. For more information, visit www.svhed.org or call 434-572-5488.

Scholarship Applications Now Being Accepted

by Debra Dodson

The Community Foundation of the Dan River Region is currently accepting applications for 22 different scholarships. Area college-bound high school students or potential graduate school students who are interested should contact their guidance offices for the application, or print it from the Foundation's web site at www.cfdr.org. The deadline for all applications to be received is March 20.

The Community Foundation of the Dan River Region is a public charity established in September, 1996, by a steering committee of civic leaders. The Foundation strives to meet a wide variety of social, educational, cultural, and other charitable needs in the region from Martinsville/Henry County through South Boston/Halifax County, as well as the neighboring North Carolina counties.

For more information, the Foundation can be contacted at 541 Loyal Street, P.O. Box 1039, Danville, VA 24543, call 434.793.0884, or visit www.cfdr.org.

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