From Ricky Skaggs and Loretta Lynn, to Robert Penn Warren and Bobbie Ann Mason, from Kentucky Crafted and the Kentucky Shakespeare Festival, to Appalshop and Paducah’s LowerTown Arts District, Kentucky is home to major cultural events, cutting-edge arts institutions, and accomplished writers, performers, and musicians. Arts and culture looms large in Kentucky, representing an important component of the state’s creative economy which is dominated by its sizable printing and publishing industry, supporting a large employment base and earning huge annual revenues. The state is also home to more than 3,500 independent writers. The significant scope and diversity of the creative industries in Kentucky contributes to the well-being of the state’s communities and the wealth of the state’s economy.

The creative industries of Kentucky are represented by 4,470 establishments, employing more than 71,000 people, who earn wages totaling more than $2 billion, and generate $7.2 billion in annual revenue. The creative industries represent a full 5% of the industry establishments in the state, 4.1% of the state’s employment, at least 3.4% of all wages, and at least 2% of all industry revenues.

At the core of the state’s creative industries, there are 1,291 non-profit arts, culture, and humanities organizations registered in Kentucky, 468 of which filed form 990 in 2007. These organizations reported almost $214 million in revenue and more than $813 million in assets. 

(cont. on back)
Many of the top creative industry sectors in Kentucky fall within the literary and publishing category – including commercial lithographic printing, newspaper publishers, book and greeting card publishers, book stores, and independent writers.

Within film and media, the state’s major industry sectors include cable and other program distribution, radio, television, and other electronics stores, television broadcasting, advertising agencies, audio and video equipment manufacturing, and video tape and disc rental.

Other major creative industry sectors in the state include jewelry stores, photography studios, florists, architectural services, blown glass and glassware, and ornamental and architectural metal work.

Based on the number of establishments, the creative industries cluster is the fourth largest industry cluster in Kentucky with 4,470 establishments. The number of creative industries establishments exceeds the number of establishments in the clusters of information technology and telecommunications, defense and security, transportation and logistics, forest and wood products, agribusiness, and manufacturing. This total number of establishments for the creative industries does not include the self-employed.

The creative industries cluster is the seventh largest employer in the state of Kentucky with 71,116 people employed or self-employed. Based on employment levels, the creative industries cluster is larger than defense and security, advanced materials, and information technology and telecommunications.