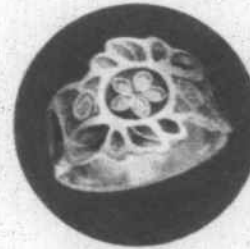


# FAIR PLAY

**PIEDMONT  
CRAFTSMEN IS  
BACK AT IT AGAIN  
WITH ANNUAL  
CRAFTS SHOW**

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**PIEDMONT CRAFTSMEN'S** Crafts Fair was downtown long before downtown was cool.

This is the 46th year for the annual gathering of craft artists from all over the Southeast. The fair, which showcases the work of about 130 exhibiting members of Piedmont Craftsmen, takes place Saturday, Nov. 21 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday, Nov. 22 from noon to 5 p.m. at Benton Convention Center.

The fair first began at the old Krispy Kreme building in Old Salem. Later, it became big enough that it moved to the LVM Coliseum; but, when that space was renovated in the 1980s, the fair moved downtown to the convention center.

According to Piedmont Craftsmen's Jane Doub (left) and Deb Britton, there will be about 130 artists from the Southeast exhibited at the fair.



Piedmont Craftsmen is a guild of craft artists that was founded in 1963. The group currently has more than 400 exhibiting members and has a permanent gallery and shop at 601 N. Trade St. in the Downtown Arts District.

Jane Doub, the president and CEO of Piedmont Craftsmen, says that keeping the fair downtown has many benefits for the organization.

"It really does suit our needs. The convention center has large doors and easy access, and being downtown so close to our own gallery is actually very easy on the staff. That's like a little side benefit," Doub said.

The fair is a big undertaking for Piedmont Craftsmen and its staff. Deb Britton has been the fair's organizer for 11 years. She gets help from more than 100 volunteers on fair weekend to make sure things run smoothly. The fair brings between 4,600 and 5,300 people to downtown each year. Doub says the attendees are from all over the state and the Southeast.

Each year, the fair gives away a door prize, and Doub says most fair-goers fill out the entry form for it. Last year, about 48 percent of those who filled out the form were from outside Forsyth County.

"We're reaching a crowd within the county and beyond," she said.

Some changes are in store at this year's show.

For starters, the fair cafe has been moved to the center of the convention center, giving visitors a better view of the exhibits and demonstrations. Doub says the overall look of the fair is getting an upgrade, with more plants and artwork surrounding the exhibit floor. Also Jean McLaughlin, executive director of the Penland School of Crafts, will give a talk about craftmaking in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

But the real reason visitors come to the