

## **July 12, 2011 - SRAC Receives National Endowment for the Arts Grant**

Shreveport Regional Arts Council will receive an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, one of only 51 grants awarded nationwide, Mayor Cedric Glover announced today. SRAC will use the \$100,000 grant to develop the technical design for Shreveport's first interactive Transportation and Information Substation, the CommonLink.

*Our Town* is the NEA's latest investment in creative placemaking, through which partners from both public and private sectors unite to strategically shape the social, physical and economic character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities.

The design of the CommonLink will launch the development of Shreveport's Cultural District, Shreveport Common, which transforms a neglected, nine-block square in the western part of downtown. CommonLink will include a bus stop and shelter, taxi stand, GPS driven "I-Shuttle" stop, bike racks, charging stations, Wi-Fi and more, and will span 20,000 square feet on a city-owned triangle bordering the Municipal Auditorium parking lot facing Texas Avenue.

"As the area develops into an active Cultural District," what is now a lone, uncovered, unmarked bus stop – rarely used because there is no place to go and nothing to do – will soon be a transportation and information node, called the CommonLink," Mayor Glover said. "This is envisioned as a functional public art installation to be designed in the coming year, and we hope it will be the model for artistic transportation nodes throughout the city."

Last August, Mayor Glover announced that SRAC had been awarded a \$100,000 Mayor's Institute on City Design Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. That grant was dedicated to planning the renovation of the Central Fire Station and creating an overall plan for this western-most part of downtown Shreveport. SRAC raised \$150,000 to match the grant and then engaged in an intense 10-month planning process.

**The National Endowment for the Arts** was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector.

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