



# Folk Arts Apprenticeships & Wisconsin Native Artists

Folk arts specialist Richard March will tell the story of the Wisconsin Arts Board Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program, and give a presentation about the artisans who participated and the art objects they created.

**Saturday, October 23**  
4 – 6 pm

**Woodland Indian Art Center**  
562 Peace Pipe Road  
Lac du Flambeau  
715-588-3700

**Free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served.** Lac du Flambeau community members, area artists, and everyone are invited to enjoy this unique presentation sponsored by the Wisconsin Humanities Council and Northwoods Nijjii Enterprise Community.

**Presenter: Richard March, Folk Arts Specialist of the Wisconsin Arts Board.** Rick served as the Folk and Community Arts Specialist for the Wisconsin Arts Board from 1983 through 2008. In that capacity he initiated numerous efforts to support folk arts, including the Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program, which put an emphasis on the traditional arts of Wisconsin's eleven Native tribes and bands. Richard March also produced and hosted "Downhome Dairyland" on Wisconsin Public Radio, and co-authored the book, *Wisconsin Folklife: A Celebration of Wisconsin Traditions*.

**The Wisconsin Arts Board Folk Arts Apprenticeships have played a critical role in the cultural conservation of Woodland Indian Arts in Wisconsin.** The 1980s was a critical time for the conservation of many Woodland Indian traditional arts. A cultural revival spearheaded by a burgeoning pow-wow movement reinvigorated youth interest in their tribal traditions, but the number of elders with the skills to make tribally-specific dance outfits, drums and other artifacts was rapidly diminishing.

In 1983 the Folk Arts Program at the Wisconsin Arts Board (WAB) began. Native cultural activists communicated to WAB the need to ensure the continued vitality of Woodland Indian traditions, and in consultation with them, WAB initiated the Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program. From 1985 to 1998, about a dozen elders each year had the opportunity to teach their skills to apprentices of their choice. After a decade hiatus due to funding cuts, the Program was restored in 2009.

The apprenticeships helped a new generation of tribal members to gain traditional skills and knowledge. Through a continuation of the Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program, many of these original apprenticeship artists are themselves elders and are passing on the knowledge to yet another generation.

**Folk Arts Apprenticeship Awards** are \$3,000 grants that support respected master traditional folk artists in teaching their skills to committed and talented apprentices. If you would like to study with a Wisconsin traditional artisan, musician, singer, dancer or storyteller, or if you are a locally respected traditional folk artist who would like to teach your knowledge to others, the Wisconsin Arts Board may be able to support this activity. The next application period will open on 2/7/11. For information, see <http://artsboard.wisconsin.gov>.



Northwoods Nijjii  
ENTERPRISE COMMUNITY, INC.  
P. O. Box 786  
Lac du Flambeau WI 54538  
Phone: 715-588-9325  
[www.nijjii.org](http://www.nijjii.org)



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