



SCHOOLS

CSM Reflects On Rural Innovation At Opening Of Spark! Exhibition At The Velocity Center



by CSM Headline
June 21, 2025



"What is a place of innovation?"

INDIAN HEAD, Md. – Now through June 29, Visitors to the Smithsonian's Spark! Places of Innovation exhibition are invited to consider this question as they explore interactive displays highlighting how rural communities across the United States have used their social, artistic, technological, and cultural strengths to spark meaningful change.



The College of Southern Maryland (CSM) [Velocity Center](#) was selected as the first stop in Maryland for this traveling statewide exhibition. The selection reflects both the center's mission and the community it serves. Located in Indian Head, a town undergoing its own revitalization, the Velocity Center is a hub of creativity, problem solving, and collaboration.

“This collaborative makerspace is a powerful example of rural innovation and what can happen when community partners come together to explore what is possible and then make it happen,” said CSM President Dr. Yolanda Wilson during an opening reception for the exhibit, held May 21.

CSM is hosting the exhibition in partnership with Life Journeys Writers Guild as part of Maryland Humanities' Museum on Main Street program, a collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES). The exhibition will

remain on view at the Velocity Center through June 29, 2025, before continuing to five other locations across the state.

In addition to the main exhibition, a variety of companion events will connect the themes of Spark! to the Southern Maryland community. Life Journeys Writers Guild will host satellite exhibits at the University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center, the Waldorf Senior and Recreational Center, and the St. Charles Towne Center. The organization will also lead a six-part series of writing and mentoring workshops and screen two original short films. Additional community programs will take place at local libraries and festivals throughout the summer.

During the opening ceremony, Dr. Wilson emphasized that innovation is not defined solely by technology or trends.

“This exhibit reflects the values that fuel real innovation, including creativity, collaboration, flexibility, and courage,” she said. “It is about seeing challenges through a new lens, finding possibility where others see limits, and leveraging collective strengths to build something greater.”



Yvonne Medley, executive director of the Life Journeys Writers Guild, greets the audience.

Yvonne Medley, executive director of Life Journeys Writers Guild, echoed the importance of community partnerships in her remarks.

“We live and thrive through storytelling,” said Medley. “That is how we preserve our experiences, inspire others, and celebrate the richness of the literary arts. Spark! gives us the chance to do all of that together.”

She thanked numerous local partners, including the Charles County Public Library, the Charles County Government, and the Charles County Arts Alliance, for their continued collaboration and support.



Lesley Quattlebaum, executive director of CSM's Velocity Center, welcomes guests to the exhibit's opening reception.

Following the formal program, guests explored the exhibition's interactive elements, which encourage visitors to reflect on how innovation is already happening in their own communities and how they might fuel it further. Attendees were invited to contribute their own ideas and inspirations to a growing wall of community insights.

"We believe innovation can and does happen everywhere, especially in places like ours, where people bring heart, grit, and vision to the table," said Lesley Quattlebaum, executive director of the CSM Velocity Center.

As the exhibition text reminds all who attend: "It can happen anywhere."

Visit Spark! at the CSM Velocity Center

Exhibit Dates:

Now through June 29, 2025

Location:

CSM Velocity Center

4465 Indian Head Highway, Indian Head, MD



Hours:

- Monday through Thursday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Friday: 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- Saturday: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Closed June 19 for the holiday

About Museum on Main Street

Museum on Main Street (MoMS) is a Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service program that partners with state humanities councils to bring high-quality exhibitions to small towns and rural communities across the United States. These

exhibits inspire civic pride and foster community dialogue by celebrating local heritage, voices, and innovation.

