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15 August 2016

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Louisiana Company Promotes the Arts During State Crisis

Shopping local conjures up images of "mom and pop" storefronts and rows and rows of booths at local farmer's markets, but what happens when those businesses fall on hard times? Historic flooding has left many business districts throughout Louisiana devastated. Thankfully, the state has a varied culture to help keep its economy afloat. Parish Parcel, a Louisiana owned and operated start-up, is not only exporting Louisiana products, it's exporting the unique culture. Thanks to Parish Parcel, local artists and musicians are reaching entirely new audiences, forging a true global economy while the state struggles to recover.

"We are passionate about marketing the Louisiana music we love to new customers around the world," says Joel Savoy with Valcour Records, "but we're also helping Cajun people and existing Cajun culture, it's a win for us all."

Joel Savoy produces music with Doug Kershaw and Steve Riley, two living legends of Cajun Music. They have followers around the world, especially in French-speaking areas, but Savoy explains that having music available online sometimes isn't enough. Valcour Record's partnership with Parish Parcel means the monthly subscription service will ship parcels of their music from the heart of Cajun country to the rest of the US. The state's unique sound can be heard and felt from miles away; a sound that's especially meaningful in tough times.

"Cajun culture is truly special, our fans can survive anything, but it's nice they will get the comforts of home, while living anywhere." says Savoy.

Louisiana has long been a hub for the arts. Music and art fill the streets of every town from the marshes to the concrete streets of New Orleans. But most local artists and musicians rarely get the type of exposure Parish Parcel is offering.

"Our culture is known for food, but when we sit at the dinner table, we are talking about music and art. It's so much of who we are as a people. What's good for the arts is great for local businesses in general. When we have an event, like the floods that just hit our area, our economy depends on our culture," says Jaci Russo owner of Parish Parcel.

Russo easily explains the co-mingling of art and business in Louisiana because the two are so interconnected. A thriving local art scene can become the heart and soul of any

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town, large or small. The trick is getting the rest of the world to pay attention and not just take notice during a tragedy.

"Showcasing my work through Parish Parcel is a great opportunity for people to become familiar with my style and my state," says Lynn Sanders. "As an artist it is always nice to have people appreciate your work whether they are local or nationwide."

Louisiana artist, Lynn Sanders, knows the importance of reaching the number of people Parish Parcel has access to, not only for her art pieces but for the culture of Louisiana in general.

"My abstract landscapes are influenced by my surroundings here in Louisiana. My state and my culture are part of who I am as a person and artist. We need as many people as possible to fall in love with Louisiana."

Russo says, "Cities and towns that have embraced local art and music thrive. Their businesses thrive. Everything comes alive from bookstores to coffee shops to restaurants. Parish Parcel is an extension of that success and we want to be a inspiration of cultural success as the flood waters recede."

The parcels come together with 7 to 10 Louisiana tokens that can be shipped just about anywhere. Parish Parcel's monthly subscription means a box of handpicked Cajun curated items will be delivered on a regular basis. Homes across the country can come alive with the sights and sounds of Louisiana while helping to preserve what is so special about the state. The legendary culture is captured through the many hardships of its people. This last flood, being called a once in 500 year event, is just the latest test, no doubt it will add to the character of the musicians and the artists who call Louisiana "home."

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