The Ocmulgee Symphony Orchestra received a $10,000 grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Arts’ Challenge America Fast-Track (CAFT) program. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) supports projects that extend to underserved communities. Only one of 162 grants awarded, this is the first NEA grant the Orchestra has applied for.

The non-profit organization, Friends of the Orchestra (FOTO), applied for the grant with the help of the Archway Partnership in 2011. FOTO is a group of volunteers committed to supporting the Orchestra by engaging in promotional activities and providing financial support. Vivian Penn, President of FOTO, said “Archway is a great resource for both information and contacts”. The Archway Partnership assisted by providing research and data to send with the grant proposal. This demographic data helped support the county’s status to qualify for the grant.

“We are grateful to the NEA for recognizing the artistic endeavors of the Ocmulgee Symphony Orchestra and are excited that this funding will help finance an amazing concert weekend,” said Penn. The grant money will help finance a concert weekend in April 2012 with world renowned performers, which will bring a lot of support for the arts and the orchestra in the community. Penn also said “It’s hard to quantify the intrinsic impact the arts bring to any community, but in general it is believed that the arts are what keeps a community vibrant with energy and appreciation for what our fellow man can create for all of our enjoyment”.

Advancing Community Priorities: Economic Development is an important priority for the Archway Partnership in Pulaski County. The NEA’s $10,000 grant to the Ocmulgee Symphony Orchestra will provide an opportunity for Arts Tourism by bringing many visitors to the community during the concert weekend in April 2012.