



Kendra Wiig

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Arts are an engine of economic sustainability- Create Denver is the fuel

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In this month's *Atlantic Monthly*, Richard Florida's piece "[How the Crash Will Reshape America](#)" argues that while New York City will be hobbled by the global financial melt-down, it will be in a better position than many other financial centers. Why? Because the city's rich cultural heritage and strong arts, entertainment and creative communities contribute to a brisk "[urban metabolism](#)"- that is, the flow of energy and resources in city. This makes NYC a resilient and innovation-fertile place that can more quickly reabsorb displaced workers or give them more opportunities to launch their own enterprise.

As urbanist [Jane Jacobs](#), author of the seminal "Death and Life of Great American Cities" argued, a strong city is a city with a diversity of cultures and professions- that the artists, musicians and actors are at least as vital to an area's sustainability as are finance and industry. The interaction of diverse population (creative types, pragmatic types, those with resources, those with needs) in a dense urban environment is a critical engine of the kind of innovation that is the critical engine of the American economy. In short- America needs cities and cities need artists.



So how is Denver's urban metabolism? According to a recent [study](#) by the Colorado Council on the Arts, jobs in creative enterprise account for the 5th largest industry cluster in the state, almost as large as information technology/communications and larger than agribusiness. In addition, this sector is expected to grow 30-45% in the next 10 years, outpacing the projected state average of 25%. In other words, the future for arts in Denver looks good.

Of course, this growth is not occurring without the inspiration/perspiration of dedicated arts professionals and advocates from around the state, many of whom were represented at this weekend's [Create Denver Expo](#). The expo, held at the Wellington Webb building on Saturday, provided workshops and seminars for local (broadly-defined) artists interested in learning more about the business, legal and marketing aspects of the creative industries and to meet others in their community exploring the same challenges.



While the formal workshops were informative and highly regarded by attendees, the casual conversations in the expo hall or later over a beer at [Cap City Tavern](#) were at least as important to the success of Create Denver's mission- supporting, promoting and growing Denver's creative sector. Jane Jacobs would have appreciated the rich, dynamic interactions of expo participants as painters, stagehands, lawyers, educators, software developers, musicians, builders and a guy in a banana suit all engaged each other in the continuing creation of this creative community.

Author: Kendra Wiig



Kendra Wiig is an examiner from Denver, Colorado. You can see Kendra's articles on [Kendra's Home Page](#).