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Author says Austin model recovery city

Richard Florida speaks to leadership conference

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Doug Shupe

AUSTIN (KXAN) - When Ivonne Ruggles and Michelle Perez searched for a city to open their skin care and make-up company, [Evie Evan](#), they researched cities across the country.

"Really Austin fit all of our criteria. It was kind of a slam-dunk," said Perez.

One of the biggest factors: Austin's creativity.

"There's so much talent here," said Ruggles.

At a leadership conference Friday author Richard Florida said Austin is a good model for how to get through the economic crisis.

"The more we can develop the creative economy, the more we can invest in people skills, the more we can create new start up business, I think the stronger our economy," said Florida.

Florida said businesses and communities have a chance to reinvigorate and rebuild now.

He said forces that will shape the new economy include service jobs becoming middle class careers; new infrastructure to speed up the movement of people, goods and ideas; denser economies formed by what he calls "mega regions" that will lead to new industries, new jobs and a new way of life.

Florida said beyond new ways of working there will also be new ways of living.

"As we reset ourselves to a different economic circumstance focus not only on downsizing -- yeah downsizing -- but finding real meaning and purpose in our lives. Connections to our friends, connections to our community giving back to our society -- that's where real happiness comes from," said Florida.

Entrepreneurs Ruggles and Perez said a start-up in a down economy was a challenge but also had a positive effect on their business.

"I know everyone is re-evaluating what's important to them and where they should put their money, and it definitely shows us as a business what's working for our customers. We're getting constant feedback helping us become a better business, especially as a start-up, sooner I think," said Perez.

In Florida's new book called "The Great Reset" he wrote about how economic downturns do cause crisis and pain, but also reminds people that history shows those times also create opportunities to remake our economy and

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