



## **Business visionary Florida to speak at Tech**

BY MATTHEW MCGOWAN

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Florida's cutting-edge theories about the modern economic landscape have redefined the way business leaders are approaching their workforce and their sense of place in a rapidly globalized economy.

Florida, director of the Martin Prosperity Institute and professor of business and creativity at the University of Toronto, will offer his revolutionary insight to Lubbock's business leaders and students Friday at Texas Tech.

The best-selling author has received international acclaim for his book "The Rise of the Creative Class," which unveiled a rising new professional class that drives the modern economy. His theories earned him a designation as one of Esquire Magazine's best and brightest in the country.

This creative class, he said in an e-mail to the Avlanche-Journal, has two basic categories: creative professionals like lawyers and teachers with a classic knowledge base; and the super-creative core of engineers, scientists, musicians and writers.

This newly defined class of workers — as opposed to those in the manufacturing or service industries — will fuel the 21 century American economy, Florida believes.

"The Creative Class is the core force of economic growth in our future economy," Florida said. "In fact, the Creative Class is expected to add more than 10 million jobs in the next decade."

Florida's most recent best-seller, "Who's Your City," approaches the wheres of the future economy.

According to Florida, the future of innovation and growth rests almost entirely in the world's 40 mega-regions — geographic concentrations of people like the I-35 corridor in Texas. These super-concentrations of people are home to a disproportionate amount of innovation and growth.

Florida says the world's 40 significant mega regions are home to 20 percent of the world's population, but they account for two-thirds of its economic output and 85 percent of all worldwide innovation.

These areas, he said, should be the focus for communities like Lubbock.

“For smaller communities to compete, and even survive, in the growing global economy, they have to increase their connectivity to their respective mega-region and major economic engine,” he said. “Communities in the Texas Panhandle like Lubbock, Amarillo and Abilene, should look to strengthen their connection and access to the Dallas-Austin mega region, which ranks among the top 15 mega regions worldwide for economic output and innovation.”

But the mega-region concept applies on a smaller scale, too, he said. Individuals should also pay careful attention to where they live. Place plays an equally pivotal role on an individual basis.

Some communities are best suited for the young, upwardly mobile creative class while others are a better fit for the middle-aged family.

“The place we choose to live is the single most important decision we make,” Florida said. “It has a profound impact on the jobs we have access to, our career path, our social networks, family and lifestyle choices and ultimately the wealth we accumulate as well as our overall happiness.” This is not to say, he added, that everyone should pack up and move to a mega region like New York, San Francisco or Dallas. The decision should ultimately come down to each family or individual's priorities.

“Here's the takeaway: when it comes to the decision about our place, like most other important things in life, we can't have it all,” Florida said. “There are real tradeoffs to be made.” Florida is also a regular contributor to publications such as Atlantic Monthly, the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal.

“Because of the breadth of his knowledge and research, Dr. Florida brings a global view to why people live where they do, what is important to them, how a city retains its citizens and how a city prospers,” said Tech President Guy Bailey in a statement about the upcoming lecture. “His talk on campus will focus on economic prosperity through support of arts and culture by the creative class, whether students, artists, scientists or researchers.”

Florida plans to specifically address the role of cities like Lubbock in the new economic landscape.

“I will discuss the importance of place, Lubbock's role in the Creative economy and what the community can do to leverage its regional strengths and assets to compete in the changing global economy,” he said. “In addition, I will preview my new book, “The

Great Reset,” which provides my perspective on how the current economic downturn will affect our competitiveness.”

Richard Florida

What: Texas Tech Presidential Lecture & Performance Series.

When: 7 p.m. Friday.

Where: Tech’s Allen Theatre, Student Union Building, 15th Street and Akron Avenue.

Admission: \$12 at Select-A-Seat locations or online at <http://www.ticketsage.com/lubbock>. Free to Tech students with ID.