

BUSINESS COMMENTARY

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PROJECT INNOVATION

Talk by Richard Florida a 'must-see'

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It has been described as a "must-see" event.

Richard Florida is coming to Naples this week as part of Project Innovation, a community-wide project the Economic Development Council of Collier County launched late last year to build an action plan for a better economy.

Florida is the author of the national and international best-selling book, "The Rise of the Creative Class," and the founder of the Creative Class Group, an advisory firm he says is "charting new trends in business and community."

He's the last speaker in the



■ **Richard Florida** is the last speaker in the "Community of Innovation" series, which has brought in experts from around the country to share new, innovative ideas in economy building.

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Bill O'Neill, chairman of the Economic Development Council, urged the dozens attending a Project Innovation tour of North Naples medical device manufacturer Arthrex last week to sign up to see Florida, if they hadn't already.

He described Florida as the "leading light" of creativity. "He will solidify everything we have been working on," O'Neill said.

A group of community and business leaders involved in Project Innovation has settled on six drivers for a new economic action plan: talent, governance, business climate, quality of place, innovation and infrastructure. On top of the drivers

are the words "World Class." That means the standard for everything will be to make it world class, from schools and parks to businesses and research.

The action plan will be finalized during the summer, and projects will be identified to "make it happen," said Beth Skotzke, the Economic Development Council's events and communications manager.

Nearly 400 have responded to attend Florida's talk today, "It Pays to be Creative." The Economic Development Council is still taking reservations. The event is from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club off Gulf Shore Boulevard.

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Richard Florida online

For more information on Richard Florida, visit www.creativeclass.com. For reservations to hear him talk, go to www.projectinnovation.cc or call the Economic Development Council at (239) 263-8989.

Other interesting links:
www.theatlantic.com/doc/200903/meltdown-geography
www.city-journal.org/2008/bc0328sm.html
<http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/toronto/archive/2009/05/13/richard-florida-goes-to-city-hall-quotes-karl-marx.aspx>
www.youtube.com/watch?v=khQ9BaXZAJM