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## Nourishing creativity called key to happier cities

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Every single human being is creative, author Richard Florida told his audience Wednesday night, and communities that realize it will be the ones creating wealth and improving the lives of their residents during recovery from the economic crisis.

Florida, author of *The Rise of the Creative Class*, talked about that book and his next one, *The Great Reset*, as keynote speaker for the opening of the Creative Cities Summit at the Lexington Center.

"We have a whole new economy now, and it is not an economy of the privileged elite," Florida said.



He said that whether individuals work on farms or at factories, whether they toil in service industries or make high-tech products, all are artists or musicians. "The key to success is, stoke the creative furnace that lies deep in each of us," Florida said.

"And the places that fall behind, that shed people, will be the ones that don't recognize that," he said. "That's the basic message. Creativity is the source of economic growth."

Florida said that idea came from a visit he made to the Toyota plant in Georgetown as he gathered material for his 1993 book, *Beyond Mass Production*. A guiding principle he found at Toyota is the company's belief that machines do not make factories great — rather, greatness arises from harnessing the

intelligence and creativity of the people who work at the factories, Florida said.

Creativity doesn't care about your gender, religion, race or ethnicity, where you were born, or whether you are straight or gay. "Creativity is the social leveler," he said.

"That's why places that are most open-minded and tolerant win, because they can harness the creativity from more people," he said. His research found that "50 percent of Silicon Valley businesses were founded by somebody not born in the United States."

It takes talent, technology and tolerance to be successful. "All three have to go together to create that winning recipe," he said.

He also talked about the importance of happiness and the role of community.

"When we come together, we are magnificently more productive than the sum of our parts," he said.

Florida's time in recent years has been spent trying to understand that phenomenon.

"Income is not enough in a post-material world to create happiness," he said. "It takes a heck of a lot more, and that more is community."

The Creative Cities Summit is billed as a multidisciplinary gathering of those who are changing cities and communities all over the world. Keynote speakers Thursday morning will be Jeremy Gutsche, author of *150 Ways to Spark Innovation During Times of Change*, and Tonya Surman, talking about developing social innovation.