



Institute seeking 'catalysts' to aid economy

SPECIAL TO THE DEMOCRAT

• July 15, 2009

The Knight Creative Communities Institute is seeking volunteers to help strengthen Tallahassee's economy.

Thirty new "community catalysts" will be selected to work together with local leaders and advocates to develop projects aimed at diversifying Tallahassee's economy beyond government and education. Members of the first Knight Creative Class were responsible for producing the Tallahassee Film Festival, the environmental group Sustainable Tallahassee and the Get Gaines Going Initiative to turn the street into an arts and entertainment district.

"With the success of the pilot initiative, we saw that the community identifies with our mission of creating a sense of place in Tallahassee," said Mike Pate, Tallahassee program director for the Knight Foundation. "With the current budget crisis hurting the engine that has driven Tallahassee for so long, we have a unique opportunity to reshape and influence the city's economic future."

Catalysts will combine the work of renowned social theorist Richard Florida with survey data and community dialogue to devise new ways to help the city's economy grow. The volunteers will begin by participating in a three-day training seminar and continue to meet over the course of a year.

"We're looking for people with all kinds of expertise, experience and connections," said Laurie Hartsfield, executive director of the institute, which is based at Tallahassee Community College. "Creative individuals who want to make a difference and have a passion for making Tallahassee a more viable community are encouraged to apply."

Applicants must live in Tallahassee or in the immediate surrounding areas.

According to former catalyst Gloria Pugh, CEO of A.M.W.A.T. Moving & Warehousing, "The Knight Creative Communities Institute is a great tool for awakening a community's civic spirit and providing an opportunity to get involved."

To apply to become a community catalyst, please visit www.Tallahassee.com/kcci or to learn more about the institute please visit <http://kccitallahassee.wordpress.com> or contact Hartsfield at (850) 201-6442.