



FAMOUS GAY-FRIENDLY ECONOMIST COMES TO ALBANY, SEPT. 24

The Stakeholders

ALBANY -- Urban theorist Richard Florida captured the world's attention when he showed that it pays for cities to be gay friendly.

"To put it bluntly, a place where it's OK for men to walk down the street holding hands will probably also be a place where Indian engineers, tattooed software geeks and foreign-born entrepreneurs feel at home," Florida wrote in a 2003 USA Today Op-ed. "Creative, innovative and entrepreneurial activities tend to flourish in the same kinds of places that attract gays and others outside the norm."

On Sept. 24, the best-selling author and pop economist will be at the Palace Theatre in Albany to speak about the concepts in his latest book, "Who's Your City? – How the Creative Economy is Making the Place Where You Live the Most Important Decision of Your Life."

This book is the most recent in a series researching what Florida calls the "Creative Class," an emergent class of highly mobile intellectuals, artists and entrepreneurs.

Florida believes the Creative Class is the core force of economic growth in our future economy. This group of knowledge-based workers, techies, innovators, and artists represents only one-third of the total workforce, but earns more than half of all wages and salaries, and controls nearly 70 percent of all discretionary income in the United States.

Unlike previous generations of workers, members of the Creative Class have much more control over where they chose to live. And they are increasingly choosing places that proactively include GLBT people.

Florida relates this to the "3T's" of economic development: Technology, Talent and Tolerance. He finds that areas with a growing tech-based business economy have the highest concentration of gay couples, while major areas with few gay couples tend not to show any signs of growth.

So how does Albany, with all its efforts to promote itself as Tech Valley, rank on Florida's Creative Index?

In his 2002 "Creativity Rankings," Florida placed Albany at No. 2 among medium-sized cities. The score is based on the number of creative workers, the presence of high tech industries and the level of diversity in the region. (Albuquerque was number 1 on that list.)

This summer, Florida ranked Albany No. 20 on a list of the Top 25 Best Cities for Generation Y (Ages 20 - 29).

Florida's upcoming presentation at The Palace will be co-hosted by The Stakeholders, Inc. and the Center for Economic Growth, with major sponsorship support from General Electric.

"We are bringing Richard Florida to our Capital City to start the discussion about how and why the people of our region should invest in a creative economy," said Catherine Hedgeman, president & CEO of The Stakeholders, Inc., a nonprofit collection of dedicated creative class professionals working in New York's Capital Region. "The Stakeholders believe that the future of our region hinges on revitalization of our cities and on investment in a creative economy to ensure artists, entrepreneurs and social innovators can thrive."

For information and to purchase tickets, visit: <http://www.yourcitycapregion.com>.