

Prosperity index' gives Portland area high marks

by Ted Sickinger, The Oregonian

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Greenlight Greater Portland, a privately funded economic development group, issued a "prosperity index" today that compared the metro area with nine other western cities and touted its robust economic prospects during the next five years.

» [Greenlight Greater Portland's "prosperity index"](#)

The group released the study at a luncheon at the Portland Art Museum featuring Richard Florida, the urban studies theorist who became a darling of liberal economic and urban development circles with the 2002 release of his book "The Rise of the Creative Class." That and two subsequent books explored the connections among economic development and a variety of demographic factors, including diversity, tolerance and high concentrations of artists, gays and techies. Florida's theories and methodology are dismissed by some critics.

His new effort, "Who's Your City," expands on the oeuvre, exploring the correlation between place, happiness, talent migration and ultimately, economic vitality.

Greenlight's "prosperity index," which will likely serve as marketing collateral in its recruiting efforts, follows in Florida's footsteps, comparing business, demographic and quality-of-life metrics in Portland to those of nine other hot metropolitan areas in the West, including Seattle, San Francisco, Denver and Austin, Texas.

Greenlight predicts that Portland's economy will expand 29 percent by 2013, outpacing all but Austin's growth during the period.

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