

## It Doesn't Take Hollywood — Even Iowa Links Creativity and Growth

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Crisis? What Crisis? Well, Wall Street, yet UI research links creativity, economic growth in Iowa

By Jeffrey Jolson

HOLLYWOOD, CA (Hollywood Today) 9/17/08 — You don't have to live in NY, LA or Paris to have your creativity benefit your personal prosperity or that of your community. According to a new report, the farm belt can build minds as strong as their corn crops. Even accounting for a bit of local boosterism in the following report, everyone has reason to be gladdened by the fact that no matter the locale, encouraging creative thought helps the economy in a time when the economy needs all the help it can get.

A new study by a University of Iowa economics professor suggests that Iowa counties with a higher concentration of people who are part of the so-called "creative class" have stronger prospects for economic growth.

The study, by professor John Solow in the Tippie College of Business, ranks all of Iowa's 99 counties in a Creativity Index based on the one developed by economist Richard Florida. Perhaps not surprisingly, the top four counties are made up of Johnson and Story counties (home to the state's two largest universities) and Polk and Linn counties (home to Iowa's two largest metro areas and financial centers).

Most counties that scored on the lower half of the index, meanwhile, are rural and geographically isolated with small populations and an economic dependence on agriculture with the exception of Jefferson County. Jefferson County is the top ranking rural county in Iowa.

Richard Florida is the economist who has argued the U.S. economy is becoming a knowledge-based economy that will be driven by creative initiatives, and the people who will be most successful in that economy are people who work in creative professions. As a result, Florida argues those places that will fare best economically are the places that are most attractive to creative people.

Using Florida's model, Solow ranked each of Iowa's 99 counties to create an Iowa Creativity Index. Solow has an ongoing research interest in Florida's Creativity Index theories and he compiled the Iowa Index for a paper still in progress.

articleThe top 10 counties on the Iowa Creativity Index are Johnson, Story, Linn, Polk, Scott, Jefferson, Black Hawk, Dallas, Jasper and Woodbury.

SOURCE: University of Iowa News Service, 300 Plaza Centre One, Iowa City, Iowa 52242-2500

FYI: The towns of Fairfield and Maharishi Vedic City are both located in Jefferson County, homes to largest number of practitioners of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhis programs, including Yogic Flying, taking place twice daily in the two Golden Domes on the campus of Maharishi University of Management. M.U.M and the Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment, who's students win more top prizes in academics and sporting events than any other school of it's size, are both based in Fairfield. A few miles north of town is Maharishi Vedic City. Many of the residential and commercial buildings in these areas of the county are built according to the health-enhancing and fortune-producing effects of Maharishi Sthapatya Veda, ancient Vedic architectural principles, also incorporating current green sustainable practices. Large organic green houses produce organic vegetables for sale and consumption to the surrounding population.

Maharishi Vedic City, Iowa's newest city, is also home to The Raj, America's premier Ayurvedic Health Spa, rated as one of the top 5 authentic spas in the country, and one of the top 12 in the world.

Fairfield's booming economy and artistic community has spawned the First Friday's Art Walk, leading to the cultural distinction as one of the Great Places in Iowa. Fairfield was also chosen nationally for the top Entrepreneurial Award for cities of populations of 10,000.