



Creative Occupation



When thinking of the arts and culture of the Rocky Mountain West, images of everything from the landscapes of Albert Bierstadt or Georgia O'Keefe and the photographs of Ansel Adams, to the characteristic black-on-black pottery of Maria Martinez and the musings of Leslie Marmon Silko, quickly surface. One can't help but quote the prophetic sense of place of Wallace Stegner's "geography of hope," and feel resonance with Horace Greeley many years after he penned the phrase "Go West, young man, and grow up with the country." Born from our history and even more so our landscape, our art forms are uniquely diverse and authentic. But while they tend to reflect us at our best, expressing our local connection to place, they often reveal us at our worst, instead perpetuating stereotypes of the American frontier.

A clear and distinguishing faction between a romanticized western culture and an eclectic mountain culture in the Rockies has emerged in the wake of the booming tourist industry. A homogenous, and often frivolous, western folk art designed for large audiences of transient-bobo-skiers blankets the Rocky Mountains West.

From the travels of Buffalo Bill's Wild West show to the contemporary shops of imposter-katchina dolls and peculiarly out of habitat paintings of saguaro cacti, the West has long wrestled with its pervasive art forms. But there may be a new call to reform the unique identity of the arts and culture in the towns and mountain valleys of the Rockies. There may be, in fact, distinct economic advantages to places that harbor new forms of creativity and authenticity.

In his book, *The Rise of the Creative Class and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, and Everyday Life*, Richard Florida chronicles the emergence of a new socio-economic and demographic group that he claims has become the principal driver of economic productivity, affluence, and ingenuity in contemporary society. Since publication of the best-selling book in 2002, attracting and retaining Florida's

that a place will attract different types of creative people with different skill sets and ideas. Places with diverse mixes of creative people are also more likely to generate new combinations, a notion Albert Einstein referred to as "combinatory play," through their interactions with each other. Greater and more diverse concentrations of creative capital, ultimately, lead to higher rates of innovation, business formation, job generation, and economic growth.

According to Florida, gone are the days of luring industry into a region with excessive tax breaks and white-elephant mega projects like new sports stadiums and business parks. Using a more bottom-up approach to economic development, one that harnesses the arts and culture, desirable life-styles, cultural and natural amenities, and most importantly, a tolerance for new ideas and people, will lead to business attraction and growth generation on its own.



But why should we devote all this attention to creative occupation patterns? According to Florida, the creative class makes up only some 30% of the nation's jobs, but disproportionately generates more than half of its earned income.¹ Here in the Rockies, the creative class accounts for over 27% of employment, more than 15 times the amount of employment in forestry, agriculture, and extraction related industries that are commonly thought to dominate economic activity in the region (these industries amount to only about 1.8% of all employment. See **Table 1** for a description of how the classes were measured.)

Still, nowhere in the country has the shift from natural resource production and manufacturing to predominantly low-wage service jobs been as pronounced than here in the Rockies. Global market forces, including increased competition from abroad and improved technology requiring less labor and more capital, are likely the reasons that the traditional western mainstays of forestry, agriculture, mining, and oil and gas extraction have been in precipitous decline. Today, an overwhelming 49% of the region works in the service class, which consists of low-skill, low pay, occupations like cleaning, maintenance, and food preparation.

Economic development strategies for the region are no longer based solely upon acting as a low-cost producer of food, timber, and minerals for the nation and world, but are now geared towards trying to diversify the local economic base, be it still traditional, or more contemporarily composed of tourism and the so called "quality of life" industries. Florida's hypothesis holds great potential for a region looking to generate new forms of economic activity. In fact, the "new" competitive advantage of communities in the Rockies may depend upon whether they are able to complement the tourist economy with the creative economy.

Patterns

creative class, a diverse mix of everything from architects and software designers to musicians, artists, and management consultants, has taken center stage in economic development circles around the nation and world. Florida's assertion that "place is the key economic and social organizing unit of our time" has fueled the now popular notion that economic competitive advantage is a product of a region's ability to attract and retain creative workers.

In a nutshell, Florida's theory of regional economic growth postulates that growth is driven by the location choices of creative people who prefer places that are diverse, tolerant, and open to new ideas. Diversity, in turn, increases the odds



If Florida’s theory holds true for the Rocky Mountain region, then areas with high proportions of creative workers should have high concentrations of creative economic outcomes in the form of innovations and industry growth. These areas ought to be experiencing high levels of population and employment growth as well, both sound indicators of regional vitality.

But what drives creativity in this region? As George Sibley notes in his *Writer’s on the Range* editorial for the *Denver Post*, “it wasn’t love of fellow man that led people to places where people were few. It was more an attitude of indifference – a willingness to let everyone go to hell in his or her own way with neither help nor hindrance.”² In the past, it wasn’t tolerance that drove migration patterns in the Rockies, it was, as Sibley notes, a “tolerable tolerance.”

Have things changed? Are areas that are more open and tolerant experiencing higher levels of economic productivity and increased concentrations of the high-paying creative industries in the Rockies? Do open spaces and the variety of the physical landscape lend themselves to the autonomy, flexibility, and stimuli one needs to be creative? Does biodiversity similarly lend itself to the collision of ideas and experiences in the same way that cultural diversity benefits creativity? It is to these questions and more that we now turn our attention.

Measuring Creativity

Table 1 depicts Richard Florida’s occupational clusters for the creative, service, working, and agricultural classes. Data from the 2000 Census, both at the town/city level and the county level was taken to measure employment trends in accordance with these clusters.

In addition, Richard Florida uses a series of statistical indices, which we have also replicated for both town/cities and counties in the Rocky Mountains:

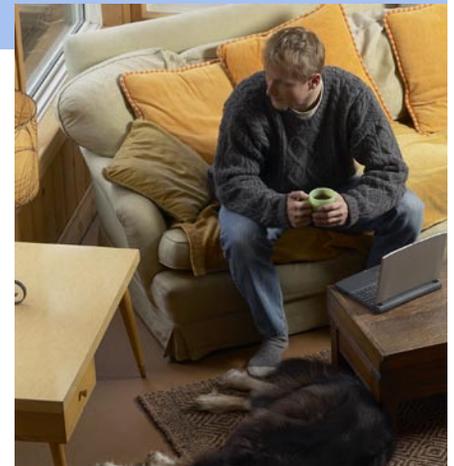
Innovation Index: measures the number of patented innovations per capita. Data for the number of patents was tabulated by inventor city for the period from 1974-2005 from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in order to calculate this index.

Gay Index: measures the over or under representation of gay people in a region relative to the Rockies as a whole as calculated from the 2000 Census. Florida refers to gays as the “canaries of the creative economy,” arguing that their presence is indicative of a high degree of community tolerance.

Bohemian Index: measures the over or under representation of artistically creative people – authors, designers, musicians, composers, actors, directors, painters, sculptors, printmakers, photographers, dancers, artists, and performers – relative to the Rocky Mountains as a whole. 2000 Census data was also used for this tabulation.

What makes for a “creative” place:

- * the combination of the built and natural environments, a proper setting for creative lives
- * diverse people, interacting and providing cues that anyone can plug into and make a life in that community
- * the vibrancy of street life, café cultures, arts, music, and people engaging in outdoor activities – altogether a lot of active, exciting, creative endeavors³



Talent Index: measures the region’s share of residents with a bachelor’s degree or higher from the 2000 Census.

Melting Pot Index: measures the relative percentage of foreign-born people in a region from the 2000 Census.

Composite Diversity Index: combines the gay, bohemian, and melting pot indices



Evaluating Creative Employment Concentrations in the Metropolitan Rockies

When Richard Florida came to the Colorado College campus in November 2004, the Rockies Project met with him and Rod Frantz of the Creativity Group to discuss their theory as it pertains to the Rocky Mountain Region. Because the Rise of the Creative Class already details the top and bottom creative Metropolitan Statistical Areas in the country, Florida challenged us to seek out what he called the “emerging areas of indigenous culture on the fringe.” By indigenous, Florida meant local. Where are concentrations of creative people living within metropolitan areas? Are they in the suburbs or the central city? Where are the concentrations of innovation and tolerant communities?

Table 2 depicts measurements of the creativity indicators for cities within the largest metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) in the Rockies. Cities are ordered according to their composite creativity score (combines the Creative Class,

Composite Diversity Index, Talent Index, and Innovation Index) within the greater metro area.

Of the ten MSAs explored here, only three central cities, Boise, Salt Lake City, and Tucson, are the top creative places in their respective metro-areas when a composite creativity score was calculated from the Diversity Index, Talent Index, Creative Class Index, and Innovation Index. Smaller neighboring areas like Manitou Springs, Boulder, and Incline Village out-compete their respective central cities on the creativity measures. It should be noted that these findings are based upon where people live and not their place of work. The dynamics of commuting have impacts on the creative theory that are in fact pertinent, but are beyond the scope of this discussion.

A quick tabulation reveals clear earnings discrepancies between the top creative areas and the creative losers of each metro-region. On average, household earnings exceed \$75,000 for nearly 27% of all households in the top two creative places in each metro area, while only 13% of households experience these remarkably high earnings in the two cities ranking lowest in each metro area.

Table 1. Counting the creative class

Super-Creative Core: primary function is to produce widely transferable new forms

- Computer and mathematical occupations
- Architecture and engineering occupations
- Life, physical, and social science occupations
- Education, training, and library occupations
- Arts, design, entertainment, and media occupations

Creative Professionals: apply or combine standard approaches in unique ways to fit the situation

- Management occupations
- Business and Financial occupations
- Legal occupations
- Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations
- High-end sales and management

Measuring the Working Class:

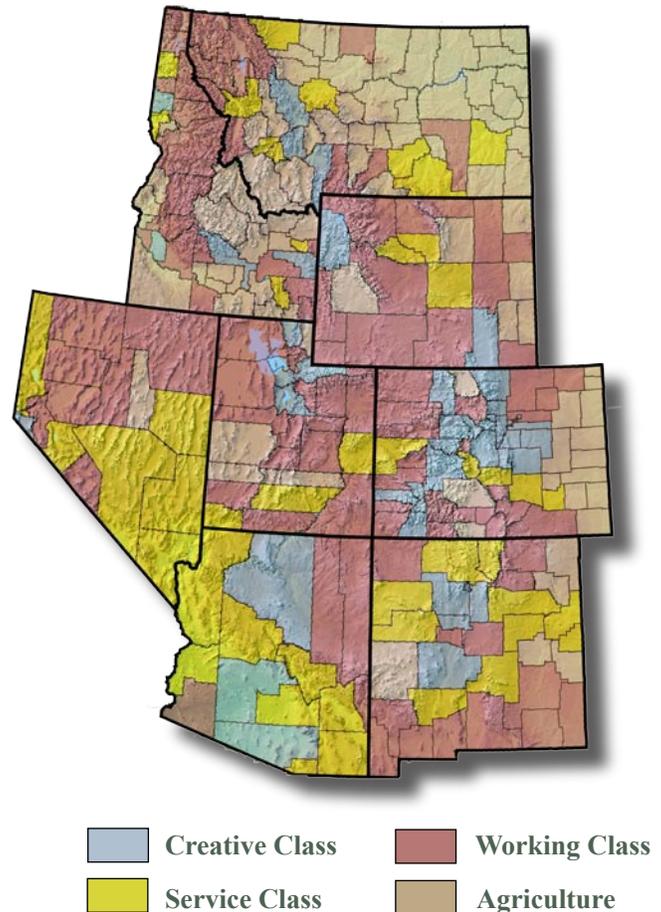
- Construction and extraction occupations
- Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations
- Production occupations
- Transportation and material moving occupations

Measuring the Service Class:

- Health care support occupations
- Food preparation and food-service related occupations
- Building and grounds maintenance and cleaning occs.
- Personal care and service occupations
- Low-end sales and related occupations
- Office and administrative support occupations
- Community and social services occupations
- Protective service occupations

Figure 1. Employment structure by class

Counties are categorized based upon having greater than the regional average employment in that class with the exception of agriculture areas, which have greater than 10% of their employment in ag. occupations



Metropolitan Statistical Area City/Town Name	Total Workers Age 16+	Creative Class	Working Class	Service Class	Ag. Class	Innovation Index	Gay Index	Bohemian Index	Talent Index	Melting Pot Index
Albuquerque MSA										
1. Placitas	1,727	56.1%	13.6%	29.0%	1.3%	33.04	1.95	1.78	44.9%	4.3%
2. Corrales	3,683	54.4%	14.5%	30.5%	0.6%	19.11	0.72	1.68	45.7%	3.0%
3. Los Ranchos de Albuquerque	2,509	50.6%	14.4%	35.0%	0.0%	0.40	2.25	1.51	38.2%	5.5%
4. Albuquerque	215,222	36.9%	16.5%	46.4%	0.1%	8.57	1.23	1.15	29.4%	9.5%
5. Bosque Farms	1689	37.6%	20.1%	41.8%	0.4%	5.03	2.28	0.93	23.7%	2.51%
Boise MSA										
1. Boise City	99,005	37.1%	18.0%	44.4%	0.5%	58.47	0.82	1.13	31.3%	5.2%
2. Meridian	17,458	35.6%	19.3%	44.8%	0.3%	69.91	0.60	0.91	25.8%	3.6%
3. Eagle	5,470	41.0%	13.4%	44.9%	0.7%	71.88	0.00	0.64	36.2%	2.0%
4. Garden City	5,354	30.7%	24.9%	43.9%	0.5%	1.92	1.12	0.67	22.2%	8.2%
5. Nampa	23,154	24.4%	32.0%	42.1%	1.6%	20.78	0.40	0.63	15.1%	9.2%
Colorado Springs MSA										
1. Manitou Springs	2,940	39.8%	19.5%	40.4%	0.3%	12.29	2.23	2.32	42.2%	4.0%
2. Colorado Springs	183,806	36.4%	19.2%	44.2%	0.2%	10.68	0.81	1.10	31.7%	7.6%
3. Gleneagle	2,028	60.6%	5.9%	33.4%	0.0%	0.00	0.00	2.43	55.4%	4.1%
4. Woodmoor	3,425	55.8%	8.7%	35.4%	0.1%	0.00	0.00	1.55	55.7%	4.1%
5. Air Force Academy	4,668	43.1%	4.9%	51.6%	0.4%	0.40	0.61	0.27	38.7%	4.9%
Denver MSA										
1. Boulder	53,828	52.1%	9.3%	38.4%	0.1%	77.15	1.38	2.39	62.7%	11.9%
2. Niwot	2,000	57.4%	5.1%	37.4%	0.2%	69.71	2.81	0.99	54.7%	4.4%
3. Superior	5,160	67.2%	7.8%	25.1%	0.0%	38.41	1.25	1.89	64.1%	14.2%
4. Louisville	10,679	56.7%	8.6%	34.5%	0.2%	74.31	0.83	1.47	56.4%	6.2%
5. Golden	9,197	45.2%	15.3%	39.4%	0.1%	110.73	0.12	1.00	43.8%	7.1%
Las Vegas MSA										
1. Boulder City	6,254	28.6%	23.7%	47.7%	0.0%	11.43	0.73	1.33	20.1%	3.3%
2. Summerlin South	1,979	41.4%	11.4%	47.2%	0.0%	0.00	0.00	2.58	32.1%	16.4%
3. Las Vegas	210,806	24.7%	20.5%	54.7%	0.1%	4.83	1.11	1.09	16.2%	20.5%
4. Henderson	88,076	30.2%	17.9%	51.9%	0.0%	3.17	0.78	1.09	21.9%	8.9%
5. Spring Valley	62,005	26.2%	15.4%	58.4%	0.0%	0.00	0.89	1.38	18.7%	20.2%
Phoenix MSA										
1. Paradise Valley	5,689	66.0%	4.3%	29.1%	0.7%	48.50	0.92	2.20	56.0%	10.1%
2. Cave Creek	1,891	40.3%	14.9%	44.3%	0.6%	58.07	1.33	2.25	36.8%	7.2%
3. Scottsdale	102,824	45.8%	8.3%	45.8%	0.1%	25.36	1.11	1.68	40.3%	10.0%
4. Tempe	89,233	38.1%	16.2%	45.5%	0.1%	26.51	0.75	1.38	37.3%	13.6%
5. Chandler	91,261	39.5%	18.4%	41.6%	0.5%	22.79	0.99	0.92	31.1%	14.2%
Provo-Orem MSA										
1. Alpine	2,633	40.9%	14.2%	44.4%	0.5%	20.20	0.74	1.38	40.3%	3.1%
2. Highland	3,011	48.2%	14.4%	37.2%	0.1%	15.44	0.48	1.02	42.5%	2.1%
3. Provo	51,013	36.4%	16.5%	46.8%	0.2%	7.17	0.48	1.72	34.1%	10.5%
4. Mapleton	2,391	31.6%	26.4%	41.6%	0.5%	13.29	1.97	1.27	25.1%	2.3%
5. Orem	37,687	36.4%	20.2%	43.1%	0.2%	9.43	0.48	1.15	33.7%	9.2%
Reno MSA										
1. Incline Village-Crystal Bay	4,955	38.6%	14.8%	46.3%	0.4%	45.30	0.82	1.47	40.4%	12.6%
2. Verdi-Mogul	1,648	51.3%	12.3%	36.0%	0.4%	8.98	0.00	1.67	37.3%	0.7%
3. Reno	88,851	28.2%	19.5%	52.0%	0.2%	9.29	1.02	1.00	23.0%	18.5%
4. Carson City	23,282	28.7%	23.1%	47.8%	0.4%	9.93	0.59	0.77	16.7%	10.6%
5. Sparks	33,533	23.0%	25.2%	51.8%	0.1%	7.53	0.65	0.75	16.5%	16.8%
Salt Lake MSA										
1. Salt Lake City	90,187	36.6%	19.7%	43.5%	0.2%	29.20	1.65	1.58	31.2%	19.9%
2. Mount Olympus	3,231	58.3%	7.5%	33.9%	0.2%	0.00	1.30	2.40	49.8%	8.7%
3. Fruit Heights	2,284	42.3%	14.1%	43.6%	0.0%	17.50	0.56	1.22	37.1%	1.9%
4. Farmington	5,174	44.1%	15.5%	39.9%	0.6%	19.09	0.00	1.07	38.0%	2.2%
5. Sandy	44,232	36.8%	16.1%	46.9%	0.2%	19.53	0.81	0.86	32.6%	5.6%
Tucson MSA										
1. Tucson	216,314	30.2%	20.5%	49.0%	0.3%	11.10	1.07	1.03	21.4%	15.4%
2. Oro Valley	12,335	50.7%	9.9%	39.2%	0.2%	3.91	0.59	1.00	40.6%	6.5%
3. Catalina Foothills	26,057	58.4%	6.7%	34.7%	0.2%	0.00	1.13	1.62	52.0%	9.4%
4. Green Valley	2,368	31.1%	9.0%	59.4%	0.5%	4.15	0.45	1.70	31.6%	5.6%
5. Tanque Verde	8,101	52.3%	12.6%	34.8%	0.3%	0.00	0.82	1.39	45.2%	5.4%



Table 2.
**Creativity within
the largest Metro
Areas of the Rockies**

All figures are expressed as a number or percent except the Innovation Index, measured as patents per thousand people, and the Gay and Bohemian indices, which measure relative concentrations of their respective demographic. For those indices, values higher than 1 indicate greater than the regional average and less than 1 indicate less than the regional average concentrations. Cities within MSAs were ranked based upon a composite score of their Creative Class, Innovation, and Combined Diversity (not shown) indices. Only the top 5 creative cities for each MSA are shown. For more information on how the Rockies Project calculates composite scores, please see the *Methods*



Boise Convention & Visitors Bureau/Tom Volk

Cities looking to reinvigorate their downtown experience have much to learn from neighboring communities that seem to fare better at attracting and retaining a more diverse, creative, and innovative workforce. Moreover, peer cities, like Boise, that fare well on Florida’s measure of creativity for the entire metro region as compared to the rest of the nation, and still also retain a strong creative environment relative to the communities in their backyard, may provide excellent examples of effective economic development strategies and investments. Consider this Boise downtown Vision statement:

“The Downtown Boise Mobility study has a vision for downtown that will retain Boise’s position as the foremost urban center for business, government, culture, education and urban living in the region. New land-use policies and real estate developments will continue to keep downtown an attractive and exciting environment with a lively mix of uses—including housing, offices, retail, hotels and convention facilities, public spaces, and cultural, entertainment, research and learning opportunities—where people and businesses thrive.”⁴

Boise Convention & Visitors Bureau/George Bemick



Other communities may be able to learn a lot from the efforts to revitalize downtown Boise (pictured above).

Understanding Creativity in the Non-Metropolitan Rockies

Relatively unexplored by the Richard Florida Creativity Group are the implications of their theories for non-metro regions. As George Sibley aptly put it, “Florida’s focus is so narrowly metro-urban that he considers Boulder to be sort of ‘rural.’ But a lot of the restless types Florida describes have been finding their way to the West’s small towns for a long time.”⁵

Florida does, however, find that his “focus groups and interviews with Creative People reveal that they value active outdoor recreation very highly. They are drawn to places and communities where many outdoor activities are prevalent...”⁶

Still, the changes occurring in the economies of the non-metropolitan Rocky Mountain West may go well beyond a loose connection between recreation amenity values and economic development. Technological advances in the manufacturing industry have limited the demand for raw materials, while other technological advances in communications and transportation have contributed to rural economic vitality in new ways. Fax machines, modems, wireless internet access, efficient delivery carriers like Federal Express and UPS, and increased commuter air travel destinations have all contributed to the ability of small firms and individuals to work where they want to live rather than live where the jobs exist.⁷ Access to natural amenities like scenic beauty, recreational and hunting opportunities, clean air, and small communities have been demonstrated by some researchers to take precedence over the typical business and individual location decisions based on low cost of living and job opportunities.⁸

The climate for creativity in the non-metropolitan Rockies is in fact uniquely ripe. In addition to evaluating Florida’s creativity measures for all non-metro counties in the Rockies, three new indices of natural diversity and amenity conditions were generated by the Rockies Project to test their association with the creative indices.

The Protected Public Lands Index: measures the percent of a county’s land area that is preserved as either Federally designated Wilderness, or managed by the National Park Service.

The Natural Amenity Index: This index was developed by the US Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service. The index, which ranks all counties in the US on the quality of their natural amenities from 1 (lowest) to 8 (highest), takes into account favorable climate conditions, topographic variation, and high levels of county water area.⁹

The Charismatic Mega-fauna Index: This index uses data from each state’s Gap Analysis Program, organized by the Bureau of Land Management, to identify the habitat overlay of three mega-fauna species that are known to occur in all eight of the Rockies States: black bear, elk, and mountain lion. Using a Geographic Information System (GIS) suitable habitat areas were overlaid to find the appropriate “eco-tone” where all three species are predicted to occur.

Table 3 shows the top 25 non-metropolitan counties and their associated creativity measurements. Counties were ranked based upon the combined score of their Creative Class, Composite Diversity, Innovation, and Talent indices.

Table 3.
The top Non-Metro Creative Counties in the Rockies

Rank	County Name, State	Total Workers Age 16+	Creative Class	Working Class	Service Class	Ag. Class	Innovation Index	Bohemian Index	Gay Index	Talent Index	Melting Pot Index
1	Los Alamos County, NM	9,656	62.9%	7.6%	29.4%	0.1%	693	3.85	0.66	58.9%	6.7%
2	Pitkin County, CO	9,832	37.2%	13.7%	46.7%	2.3%	110	1.40	2.25	51.7%	10.9%
3	Latah County, ID	17,223	33.7%	17.4%	45.3%	3.6%	78	2.02	1.57	39.0%	4.3%
4	Albany County, WY	17,168	33.6%	16.1%	47.5%	2.8%	71	1.94	0.15	42.2%	3.8%
5	San Miguel County, CO	4,542	32.8%	20.9%	44.8%	1.6%	24	1.05	1.80	45.6%	7.3%
6	Blaine County, ID	10,846	30.4%	19.6%	46.8%	3.2%	93	1.24	0.61	39.8%	10.6%
7	Gallatin County, MT	37,611	29.8%	22.2%	45.1%	3.0%	120	1.37	0.76	38.6%	2.7%
8	Summit County, CO	16,596	27.6%	19.6%	50.5%	2.4%	49	0.86	1.40	46.2%	11.6%
9	Eagle County, CO	25,729	29.1%	22.3%	47.7%	0.9%	36	0.95	1.08	40.3%	18.2%
10	San Juan County, CO	319	30.1%	31.3%	38.6%	0.0%	0	1.38	1.61	43.7%	2.5%
11	Teton County, WY	11,687	28.2%	20.2%	49.7%	1.9%	53	0.98	1.04	41.2%	5.9%
12	Routt County, CO	12,298	28.4%	23.5%	45.3%	2.8%	52	1.11	0.95	39.9%	4.1%
13	Gunnison County	8,175	27.2%	20.3%	49.8%	2.7%	8	1.15	1.03	41.3%	2.9%
14	La Plata County, CO	22,990	28.5%	19.6%	50.0%	2.0%	24	1.23	1.36	33.8%	2.7%
15	Socorro County, NM	7,127	29.9%	22.8%	42.4%	4.9%	37	1.79	2.13	18.2%	6.4%
16	Douglas County, NV	19,348	28.5%	20.4%	50.0%	1.0%	126	0.93	0.61	21.1%	5.7%
17	Lewis and Clark County, MT	28,651	32.2%	17.1%	48.6%	2.1%	15	1.23	0.57	28.9%	1.6%
18	Jefferson County, MT	4,895	31.2%	19.8%	45.6%	3.5%	0	1.22	1.45	25.4%	1.0%
19	Beaverhead County, MT	4,478	21.9%	21.1%	43.3%	13.6%	139	0.97	0.24	24.8%	1.6%
20	Ouray County, CO	1,818	28.7%	23.6%	43.3%	4.5%	0	1.05	0.55	33.0%	3.2%
21	Wasatch County, UT	6,989	26.7%	26.8%	45.5%	1.0%	28	1.08	0.96	25.0%	4.2%
22	Grand County, CO	7,520	25.5%	25.6%	45.0%	4.0%	0	0.85	1.03	32.8%	3.4%
23	Taos County, NM	13,556	25.8%	20.0%	52.4%	1.8%	23	1.17	0.87	24.5%	4.1%
24	Box Elder County, UT	18,298	22.4%	34.1%	39.1%	4.4%	106	1.13	0.56	18.8%	3.0%
25	Santa Cruz County, AZ	12,875	20.7%	24.6%	52.7%	2.1%	4	0.74	1.77	13.5%	37.7%

All figures are expressed as a number or percent except the Innovation Index, measured as patents per ten-thousand people, and the Gay and Bohemian indices, which measure relative concentrations of their respective demographic. For those indices, values higher than 1 indicate greater than the regional average and less than 1 indicate less than the regional average concentrations. Counties were ranked based upon a composite score of their creative class, innovation, and combined diversity (not shown) indices. For more information on how the Rockies Project calculates composite scores, please see the *Methods Section*.

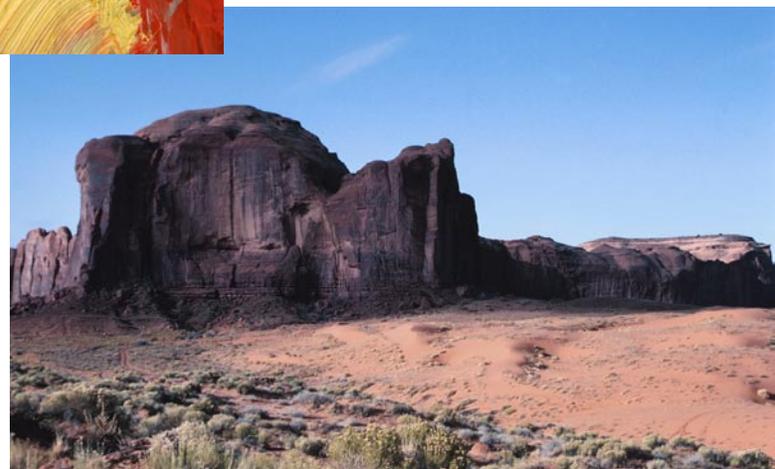
Los Alamos is at the head of the class, excelling in nearly all of the creativity measurements as a result of the Los Alamos National Laboratory. Following Los Alamos, creative places include Pitkin County, CO, home to Aspen, Latah County, ID, home to the University of Idaho, Albany County, WY, home to Cheyenne and the University of Wyoming, and then a list of generally affluent communities, many of which contain ski-resorts, several of which also contain institutions of higher education.

Are non-metro creative areas experiencing high levels of prosperity in accordance with Florida’s theory? Does there seem to be any connection between the quality of the natural environment and creativity?

Simple correlation statistics were used to measure the degree of association between the various creativity indices, indicators of economic condition, and the Rockies Project natural amenity indices. **Table 4** depicts the significant results of these correlation tests. (Note: for more information on correlation statistics please see the *Methods section*.)

Significant associations between our composite creativity measure and job and population growth indicate that a vibrant local economy is associated with creativity. Also noteworthy is a significant correlation between growth in real (adjusted for inflation) earnings per job and creativity. Earnings per job have been in persistent decline throughout the non-metropolitan Rocky Mountain West in response to a number of factors, including the influx of part-time workers, and the decline of natural resource-based jobs. However, this correlation indicates

that an association between creativity and rising growth in earnings is significant. Finally, strong associations with the Rockies Project natural amenity indices indicate that healthy natural conditions are associated with flourishing creative economies. More research will have to be done to determine causal relationships, but the strong correlations between the Charismatic Mega-fauna index and all of the major creativity indicators (including the Composite Diversity index at .264 – not shown in Table 4) indicate a particularly noteworthy association between diverse, intact habitat conditions and prospering levels of creativity.



Under One Roof: Jackson, Wyoming Reinvents its Creative Infrastructure

Dance classes were held in the basements of downtown businesses. Community arts organizations were confined to small nooks of retail space. There existed only one major blockade between artisans and community members collaborating and educating both within and between disciplines to realize new and exciting forms of expression – the affordability of downtown Jackson, Wyoming.

“It was hard to see what was going on collectively with the Arts in Jackson,” says Chris Hansen, communications director of the recently completed 41,000 square foot Center For the Arts, a collaborative project between 18 local and regional not-for-profit art organizations, the Town of Jackson, Teton County, and two higher-education institutions, Central Wyoming College and the University of Wyoming. The new facility allows the existing art, performance and musical community of Jackson to flourish through financial security and focal downtown visibility. Sixteen non-profit arts organizations have made a permanent home in the facility, and countless community organizations will make regular use of its studios and rehearsal and meeting spaces.

With the local community character potentially threatened by dispersed development and the evolution of nearby Teton Village into a central node of its own, Jackson has envisioned the Center For the Arts as a catalyst for maintaining the vibrancy and vitality of downtown. The community has unanimously embraced this notion of the “town as the heart of the region,” now that the fruition of over ten long years of feasibility studies and planning has made the Center for the Arts a reality.

Bradley J. Boser/ CENTER FOR THE ARTS



Jackson’s new Center for the Arts (above and on title page) may be the most exciting model of how to harness a community’s creativity anywhere.

Imagine the creative possibilities of even just the third floor of this amazing structure, where a drawing studio, painting studio, photography darkroom and digital arts studio co-exist with an organization catering to constructive extracurricular activities for teens and another organization that helps local Latinos learn English. Groundbreaking on the next phase of the project, the Performing Arts Pavilion, is planned for Summer 2005, and includes a 500-seat theater, a Community Clubhouse, music and theater rehearsal space, and additional administrative offices. New breath has been restored to the non-profit arts community in Jackson. “These organizations finally have a state-of-the-art, financially secure place to grow their programs,” says Hansen. Now the creative endeavors of a whole community have a place to grow too, under the same roof.

	Composite Creativity Score	Bohemian Index	Innovation Index	Talent Index
Job Growth from 1970 - 2000	0.388	-	-	0.523
Population Growth from 1970 - 2000	0.311	-	-	0.379
Real Growth in Average Earnings Per Job 1970 - 2000	0.246	-	0.203	-
Protected Public Lands Index	0.335	-	-	0.482
USDA Natural Amenities Index	0.306	-	-	0.322
Charismatic Mega-fauna Index*	0.636	0.546	0.555	0.594



Table 4.
Creativity, Economic Prosperity, and Natural Amenities in the Rockies

Correlation’s between Richard Florida’s creativity indicators and indicators of economic and natural conditions for the non-metropolitan Rockies.

P = at least .006

dashes indicate that no significant relationship exists between the indicators.

*Note: due to data inconsistencies in measuring the Mega-fauna Index, the correlation was not run for the northern Rockies states of WY, MT, and ID.