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Mayor's message: Providence's creative capital

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In 2010, Jenny Young packed up her things in Texas and headed for a place she'd never been before - Providence, Rhode Island. She did it because of what she knew of its renowned jewelry manufacturing tradition and what she learned about the city on Wikipedia. An artist by trade, she found a welcome home full of creative talent and the inspiration to grow a unique, glass jewelry business.

Today, she works in a studio in the city's West End with several artists, and is the typical story of entrepreneurialism in Rhode Island's capital city. They come here because of its diversity, quality of life and opportunity, and they stay for the very same reasons.

The young artist, who creates her own unique, colorful glass jewelry sells her products online www.firesanddesigns.com, on summer Sundays in the Providence Flea (market) along the city's waterfront, and to wholesalers. She also demonstrates them with a group known as Gather Glass, along the Providence River shores during the much celebrated Waterfire evenings.

Providence's rich tradition of creative excellence has won it numerous national awards, including No. 1 for Food by Travel + Leisure (2012), No. 2 for America's Best Pizza (Travel + Leisure 2009,) and has generated nearly a \$200 million a year industry, with nearly 4,000 direct jobs, according to Americans for the Arts. "These arts-centric businesses play an important role in building and sustaining economic vibrancy. They employ a creative workforce, spend money locally, generate government revenue, and are a cornerstone of tourism and economic development" (Americans for the Arts 2012.)

And with more than a dozen local colleges and universities, including the Rhode Island School of Design, Brown University and Johnson & Wales University, Providence is a magnet for young and talented people, and the intersection of design, art, technology and science.

From glass-designers like Jenny, to Water Fire artist, Barnaby Evans - with his fire-lit cisterns along the city's riverfront drawing millions from around the globe - Providence's reputation of excellence in the arts world is proudly renowned, and accessible to people of all backgrounds.

Add to that our reputation for big-city feel with small-scale walkability, proximity to all major forms of transportation and a location along the Boston-Washington corridor, and we're attractive to business executives, retirees, artists and more - there's plenty of reason to think about us in your relocation and expansion plans.

Summers are especially inviting: come and see our Opera-in-the-Park, to Friday Night Concert Series at Waterplace Park, and our thriving hospitality scene, world-class restaurants and theatre, twenty-five unique and diverse neighborhoods and historic architecture. And like Jenny, you may never want to leave.

To learn more about our creative capital - and about our other thriving sectors and extraordinary quality of life, visit www.providenceri.com.

Angel Taveras is the mayor of Providence.

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