ON a Tuesday night at a downtown lounge here, Ryan Flickinger, 30, was preaching the economics of hip. Specifically, he was talking about young professionals, the most mobile class in American history, who are choosing not to come to this river city despite what seem attractive amenities: cheap housing, good music, excellent barbecue and a major employer, FedEx, with 30,000 jobs in the area.

"I want to start stealing those people from the cities of Chicago, St. Louis, Birmingham," he said.

His audience was about six dozen members of Mpact Memphis, a group of 900 volunteers in their 20's and 30's who joined in 2001 to try to help Memphis lure people like them. In marketing terms, their mission is to build a brand.

This brand-building is part of a new wrinkle in urban development, said Anna McQuiston, 33, a volunteer at Mpact and the marketing director for a local real estate developer. "It's turning the formula around," she said. "You create an attractive place for people to live. Then the corporations will come after them."

Memphis, which has just over a million residents and is still scarred from the 1968 assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., is one of several cities that have come to see hip as a bottom line issue. In his 2002 book, "The Rise of the Creative Class," the economist Richard Florida wrote that the healthy cities of the 21st century will be those that can compete not for big companies but for educated, creative young people. This "creative class," he argued, will revitalize downtowns, start
new companies, attract other entrepreneurs and build solid tax bases. Mr. Florida, a professor at Carnegie Mellon University, says that Austin, Seattle and Portland are thriving in part because they became hip destinations for young talent -- offering not just jobs, but cafes, clubs, tattoo parlors, tolerant gay neighborhoods and bike routes. "If places like Buffalo, Grand Rapids, Memphis and Louisville do not follow suit," he wrote, "they will be hard pressed to survive."

Christian Patterson, 31, a photographer, is one of the people cities like Memphis are trying to attract. Last year, he left a $750-a-month studio in Park Slope for a $500 one-bedroom in Memphis and a chance to work with the photographer William Eggleston.

In a leatherette booth at the Arcade Restaurant downtown, Mr. Patterson weighed the pros and cons. He said he made friends easily in the local rock scene, and the scenery was great to shoot. But he felt more racial tension and segregation than in Brooklyn.

Then he added: "There's a certain greater potential for weirdness here. It's a funky and eclectic town with funky and eclectic characters. There's a certain weird underlying sadness and mystery and heartbreak. You have the history of the civil rights movement here, and Memphis music was the soundtrack to it."

During the dot-com boom, theorists predicted that in a wired age, when people could work wherever they wanted, they would scatter away from central cities. The tech guru George Gilder wrote in 1990, "Big cities are leftover baggage from the industrial era." But the opposite has proven true. People and companies have flocked where the rents are highest, not lowest, to be in creative meccas with people like themselves. Where cities were once organized around the availability of coal, steel, transportation or labor, as Joel Kotkin noted in "The New Geography: How the Digital Revolution Is Reshaping the American Landscape" (2000), they now cluster around entrepreneurs, geeks and espresso bars.
In a 2001 paper, Mr. Florida and Gary Gates, a researcher at the Urban Institute in Washington, found that these geek clusters did not form in a vacuum. The cities with the most high-paying high-tech jobs also had high populations of bohemians, immigrants and gays and lesbians.

Without suggesting that one caused the other, the authors concluded that tolerant, funky, hip, diverse cities were also rich ones. "The losers are the cities that don't let these people organize and be themselves and express their energy," Mr. Florida said in a telephone interview. "A city that allowed a gay community to emerge 10 or 20 years ago, set up its own retail stores and clubs, a city that allowed a music scene to happen, a city that allowed an arts community to emerge -- there's something in the ecosystem of that community that allows individuals to get there, to be themselves and to mobilize resources. That of course is the same thing that high-tech entrepreneurs do."

Some economists question whether government can have much impact on this mix. Edward Glaeser, a professor of economics at Harvard, agrees with Mr. Florida that cities should court workers rather than companies, but observes that creating a good punk rock scene or Thai takeout restaurants is beyond the city charter. "I have no idea that government can create a cultural scene," he said. "Say you set up a cultural office. You think these guys are going to get it right?" He added that politicians might hesitate to commit resources to amusements for "26-year-olds with advanced degrees" rather than less affluent parts of the population. Even where cultural scenes have attracted skilled workers, Mr. Glaeser said, real economic change can take decades.

Yet as cities around the country face budget crises and the flight of manufacturing jobs, this model is appealing. Young, childless musicians or gay couples will risk moving to neighborhoods with subpar school systems, fixer-upper housing stock or a little street crime, Mr. Gates said. In other words, they bring more resources than they consume. Though city officials make headlines with big capital projects, they may benefit more from attracting bright
entrepreneurs. About 75 percent of new jobs come from companies with fewer than 500 employees, according to the most recent statistics by the federal Small Business Administration. Mr. Glaeser added that in almost every decade since the 1880's, the level of skills in a city has been the best predictor of economic growth.

In the same way that companies during the dot-com boom tried to present their offices as playgrounds, adding slides and masseurs, cities are now getting in on the act. In Michigan, Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm encouraged the mayors of 200 towns to form "cool commissions" to attract and retain the state's young people. In Baltimore, a nonprofit group called Live Baltimore Home Center, partly financed by the city, has gone after young professionals as "low-hanging fruit," as the group's executive director, Tracy Gosson, called them on National Public Radio. The group advertised in a gay newspaper in Washington, pitching one property naughtily as "completely stripped and ready for you to have your way with it."

And in Cincinnati, executives at Procter & Gamble, which has its headquarters there, have campaigned to repeal a local law known as Article XII, which prohibits the city from banning discrimination against gays and lesbians. The company maintained that the law was hurting its ability to attract young talent, gay or straight, to Cincinnati. Governing magazine, published by Congressional Quarterly Inc. for state and local government officials, made the campaign the cover story of its October issue, asking, "Is a Gay Population an Engine of Urban Revival?"

For Memphis, the impetus was the 2000 census figures and tax data. Though the city's population had grown by nearly 6,000 since 1995, and though its capital investment led the state, its net income had fallen by almost $90 million.

"That was alarming," said R. Marc Jordan, president of the Memphis Regional Chamber. "We had to ask, 'Is this another way to measure a community's viability?' " City leaders concluded that people were being born, but that recent college graduates, the most mobile members of society, were not choosing to move
to Memphis, and that workers moving in earned less than those moving out.

Companies like FedEx had trouble recruiting young people or finding qualified candidates in town. Though Memphis had a lower cost of living than places like Austin, New York or Seattle, when companies interviewed job candidates, "people said that it's a dull river city, and that there's a lot of racial tension," said Jim Wallace Jr., head of recruiting at FedEx.

Mr. Wallace said that while the city had made great progress on both those problems, the word had not reached many job candidates. "We find that if we can get people to visit the city, our success rate goes up," he said.

For Memphis, the climb to hip would be considerable. In Mr. Florida's rankings of the 49 urban areas with more than a million people, Memphis ranked 48th as a tech center, 41st as welcoming to gays and 40th as a mecca for artists, writers and musicians.

In March 2001 the city, the chamber of commerce and surrounding Shelby County began a study called the Memphis Talent Magnet Project, with counsel from Mr. Florida, to address the problem. In offices here you can hear people use the phrase "creative class" in conversation. At Empire Coffee on South Main Street downtown, Mr. Florida's book stands at attention on a shelf.

For cities as for individuals, though, cool does not come easy. At midday recently, there were zero pedestrians on South Main Street near Tonic, a stylish new fashion boutique run by Katrina Shelton, 35, who moved back to Memphis after studying at the Parsons School of Design in New York. She called herself a pioneer, drawn to a retail space she could not have afforded in SoHo. She lives in a loft nearby. "You've heard of the creative class, Richard Florida?" she asked. "They're recognizing that. No, it hasn't happened yet. I think it's happening." Though the city is helping developers, she said, it is doing less for renters like her.
After the Talent Magnet report, Memphis revamped its promotional literature, which had offered sleepy images of riverboats or Elvis, and accelerated tax breaks to developers to convert downtown industrial buildings into loft apartments. These supplement more conventional big-budget redevelopment projects, including downtown sports centers and a mall. "We're trying to create walkable communities," said A. C. Wharton Jr., mayor of Shelby County, whose campaign platform included trying to attract young talent. "The folks we're talking about are not interested in long commutes in and out. They may work all hours of day or night."

Mayor Wharton said that while it was important for the city to welcome gays and lesbians, he did not feel government should lead this effort. "The worst way would be to set up an initiative with a gay label on it that brings a backlash," he said. Rather, he said that as in Cincinnati, business leaders should push for tolerance in their own interest. At FedEx, the company offers extensive tolerance training programs, but unlike Procter & Gamble, it does not extend benefits to employees' domestic partners, said Mr. Wallace, the recruiting chief.

Some gays and lesbians said that except in certain neighborhoods, Memphis was not always hospitable. Rumi Toninaga, 25, said she was asked to leave a store for holding hands with her girlfriend. "Being called out was atypical," she said. "But intolerance was typical."

Developers in the downtown area around South Main Street, which emptied out after the King assassination, have for the last few years offered low rents to galleries to foster an arts district. One of the first, the Jay Etkin Gallery, arrived in 1999, in a heavily discounted 8,000-square-foot warehouse. Other galleries and a few restaurants, bars and cafes have followed. "I made a partnership with the landlord to be an arts developer," Mr. Etkin said. At the time, the neighborhood was deserted, he said. Now, he added, "what you start to see are young girls with dogs in the morning -- and joggers."

To help recruiters, volunteers from Mpact Memphis take visiting job applicants or summer interns around the city -- not just to
the tourist mecca of Beale Street, but to ethnic restaurants, art galleries and other less obvious spots.

To encourage entrepreneurs, the city helped finance a business incubator called Emerge Memphis, where 21 startup companies receive subsidized rents and free professional advice. The incubator is near the arts district. The city also adopted plans for greenbelts and bike trails along the Mississippi to appeal to active young adults.

The results so far are mixed. In the slumping national economy, the city has been unable to create new jobs, which was a major goal, said Mr. Jordan of the chamber of commerce.

Christopher Reyes, 34, said he ran up against the city's reputation when he tried to start an interactive music company. "It didn't do well because no one thinks of Memphis as a tech place," he said. He was ready to leave in 2001, he said, until his music work took him to clubs like the Young Avenue Deli and the Hi Tone Cafe, where he discovered a rich supply of bands -- one factor behind the growth of Austin, Seattle and Chapel Hill, N.C., according to Mr. Florida. Mr. Reyes stayed and started livefrommemphis.com, an online slice of the local music experience.

"This is our treasure, but people are still promoting Elvis," he said. In a computer-filled loft downtown, where he also lives and teaches karate, he streamed samples of local music from his Web site. The city's music commission has expressed interest in supporting the site, which he pays for himself, "but they're not even close yet," he said.

"The most help I get from the city is exposure," he added. "This isn't something that they embrace quickly, because it's a lot of technology they don't understand."

John Gasquet, 33, belongs to the class Memphis is trying to court. Two years ago, after losing a job designing computer systems in Las Vegas, he moved to Memphis and joined a Web developer. In June he opened Empire Coffee, where he displays Mr. Florida's book on a shelf. He has since started a coffee
distributorship and opened a kiosk in a local hospital. Looking at a nearly empty sidewalk outside, he said that things used to be worse.

"This is a long, involved project," he said. "There's no magic bullet. We're not Manhattan or New Orleans. If we try to be Manhattan or New Orleans, we fail."
Sex and the City. 13,607,349 followers · TV programme. BuzzFeed Ladylike. I'm the kind of person that will walk right into a field of poison ivy ago Why my itchy welcome daters It's treasure hunt time The objects you will find on this island are related to something you share in common There's something down here by this Can you see it I can Some kind of candy This gummy bear. Sex-traffickers hunt for victims outside large group homes filled with foster kids who have been abandoned by their families and near high schools because...Â As many as 90 percent of sex-trafficking victims suffer abuse â€” mental, physical, sexual â€” long before they are forced onto the streets to sell themselves, and traffickers know and exploit the damage that such trauma can cause, she told The Post. The traffickers â€œwill try everything. Itâ€™s very simple, itâ€™s very easy...Â â€œThe method is to try and put their arm around them and gain their trust and give them a place to stay and make it look as if someone actually cares about them,â€ Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance explained.