

# Grand Haven is America's Happiest Seaside Town

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Last fall, the Visitors Bureau was notified by Coastal Living that Grand Haven was in the running to be named 2017's Happiest Seaside Town in America and an online vote would determine this year's winner. Game on. Though Grand Haven was the only Great Lakes community in the running, we knew with our strong social media following and community support we had a real shot of winning.

According to Coastal Living, the 2017 finalists were chosen by "reviewing destinations that have been covered by the magazine and nominated via social media. From there, we looked at rank on the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, percentage of clear and sunny days, healthiness of beaches, commute times, walkability, crime ratings, standard of living and financial well-being of the locals, geographic diversity, and our editors' assessment of each town's 'coastal vibe.'"

Past winners of the Happiest Seaside Town include Stuart, Florida; Southport, North Carolina; and Chincoteague, Virginia. Grand Haven led the voting for most of the contest but we were unsure how close the other challengers were behind us. The rankings were blacked out during the last few days of voting so it was an even bigger mystery. When voting concluded at the end of October, no one knew for sure who ended up in the top spot. With that, the long wait for the results to be announced sometime in January began.

Finally, in mid-January, the Visitors Bureau was notified the winner would be announced live via Coastal Living's Facebook page on Friday, January 27th at noon. We gathered around a computer and watched on pins and needles as they revealed the final ranking: #5 Langley, Washington; #4 Fernandina Beach, Florida; #3 Sarasota, Florida...

When they announced Orleans, Massachusetts was the runner up - our office exploded with cheers, high-fives, and yes, a little bubbly. Grand Haven is the first ever Great Lakes, freshwater 'sea' community to claim the title! On top of being named the 2017 Happiest Seaside Town in America, we were surprised to find out that the Coastal Living editorial team was flying in to spend Winterfest celebrating with us - how cool is that?! Needless to say, the Coastal Living editors had a blast even though they had to wear coats, gloves, and winter hats while visiting our beach town. Our community gave them a warm welcome and they plan to return later this summer.

Accolades like this are priceless when it comes to promoting the Grand Haven area as an incredible place to visit, live, work, and start a business. We've had many recognitions in the past, but this is by far the biggest yet. Grand Haven was featured in the May edition of Coastal Living and the Visitors Bureau is working with the magazine on more ways to celebrate Grand Haven being named the Happiest Seaside Town in America.

Read the Coastal Living Article at [http://www.coastalliving.com/travel/top-10/2017-happiest-seaside-towns?xid=cl\\_socialflow\\_facebook#grand-haven-michigan-lighthouse](http://www.coastalliving.com/travel/top-10/2017-happiest-seaside-towns?xid=cl_socialflow_facebook#grand-haven-michigan-lighthouse)