

FORT PIERCE NAMED 'IDYLIC' SMALL TOWN

BY SUSAN BURGESS



MAIN STREET AND INDIAN RIVER MAGAZINE PHOTOS

Scenic views, ripe fruits and vegetables at two farmer's markets, a classic car show, seafood festivals, waterfront drinking and dining, festivals and more define the community character of historic Fort Pierce.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

USA Today applauded Fort Pierce's downtown in its Aug. 11, 2014, edition in an article headlined, "Idyllic and historic main streets across the USA." Here is the entry that appeared in the newspaper:

Fort Pierce, a Treasure Coast "Old Florida" town, cooled by breezes off the Indian River, won the 2011 Best Main Street designation from the National Trust. Swaying palm trees line the sidewalks, and the atmosphere evokes the early 1900's when the city came into its own. Period Spanish architecture punctuates the downtown area, the star of which is the historic Sunrise Theatre. The Saturday Farmer's Market is a must.

If bricks and mortar make a town, it's the people who bring it to life and give it a personality and culture.

Last summer, Fort Pierce residents were surprised — and delighted — to see their city listed in *USA Today's* feature on the nation's most historic and idyllic main streets. Just 10 cities were listed.

The newspaper cited Main Street Fort Pierce's "Great American Main Street" recognition by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2011 along with the city's early 1900s atmosphere.

The city's rebirth and transformation into a charming, historic downtown with waterfront views at every cross street was a team effort between Main Street Fort Pierce, a large team of volunteers, and the city of Fort Pierce.

"What isn't idyllic about it?" says Main Street Manager Doris Tillman. "What makes it so special to me is that people >>

“History is so rich here. And the sense of community is so strong.”

— Doris Tillman,
Main Street manager



The P.P. Cobb facade has changed little from the days when the building was where everyone shopped in Fort Pierce.



The 1923 Sunrise Theatre is the crown jewel of historic downtown Second Street.

here are real. They're not judged, they know each other, they come together in a laid-back atmosphere and they do whatever needs to be done. It's a community. And it's a small town with great views and a lot of generosity."

With a reborn Sunrise Theatre and the Arcade Building on the National Register, renovation of the old City Hall, the nostalgia-evoking P.P. Cobb building with its long front porch, a busy marina and waterfront park, the historic downtown regained its appeal during the last few decades.

It is a busy small town too, with the colorful and very successful downtown farmer's market every Saturday, the monthly Friday- >>



There's always something to do in Fort Pierce

FACEBOOK.COM/FTPIERCE | WWW.CITYOFFORTPIERCE.COM | 772.467.3000

Here to Help You Build a Better Way Since 1902

**Full Service Lumber, Hardware
and Building Material Supplier**



**Open Monday thru Friday 7:30am-5pm
Saturday 8am-4pm**

ACE at our Fort Pierce location
The helpful place.



Join Ace Rewards and Save \$10
Save \$10 when you sign up for (or already belong to) the Ace Rewards program at:

This coupon is valid for

\$10 off*

any \$25 or more purchase on your next in-store visit.

\$10.00 COUPON

* Coupon valid for 30 days from merchandise pickup on...
Original sales receipt must be attached for validation. Good on all regular, sale and clearance priced merchandise at this location only. Not valid on the purchase of sale or close out merchandise. Ace gift cards, Ace gift certificates, or previous purchases. Valid for one transaction only. Cannot be combined with any other coupon offer. Limit 1 coupon per visit. Not redeemable for cash. No change given. Void if copied or transferred and where prohibited, based on restrictions. Cash value of 1/100th of 1 cent. Note to cashier: Scan barcode.



80034148

Fort Pierce - 308 Avenue A, 772.461.5950
Vero Beach - 1103 20th Place, 772.562.2368
Stuart - 416 SE Flagler Avenue, 772.287.1611
Truss Division - Fort Pierce 5285 St. Lucie Blvd, 772.466.2480
Cocoa Yard - 1330 North Cocoa Blvd, 321.636.0411
Melbourne Yard - 938 East Lincoln Avenue, 321.723.4141
Corporate Office - 308 Avenue A, Fort Pierce, FL 34950 - 772.466.1700



R.L. Lewis Jr. an original Highwayman artist, shows his work at the Sandy Shoes Festival at Veterans Memorial Park.

Fest, historical trolley tours, weekly motorcycle evening, occasional concerts in the park, and other festivals like Sandy Shoes, the OysterFest in the spring, and holiday events.

Fort Pierce Mayor Linda Hudson talks about the many physical changes in Fort Pierce that have brightened up the city.

New parks have been created and old ones spruced up, she says. The city's marina, nearly destroyed in the back-to-back hurricanes of 2004, is in the last phase of restoration with the replacement of docks that the storms took out. New storm protection islands were built in a unique project to protect the entire downtown waterfront from the wrath of future storms.

Two historical trails were created, one for author Zora Neale Hurston, and the other for the Highwaymen artists who were named to the Florida Artists Hall of Fame. There are two marine research institutions and a museum honoring A.E. "Bean" Backus, the dean of American landscape artists who is also in the Florida Artists Hall of Fame.

Popular trolley tours, with a guide narrating the history of the city, run during the winter season. Then there's Halloween. Ghost walks began as a simple tour with stories of the past, and now the event requires nearly 100 volunteers, many of whom dress in costumes representing events in the city's history. The walking tours are always filled.

Mayor Hudson also mentions these anecdotes:

- A new resident chose Fort Pierce to retire because of its cultural diversity and its arts community, as well as its small-town feel and beautiful beaches.

- "A St. Lucie West resident told me he heads to his condo every weekend and as soon as he heads east on the South Bridge in Fort Pierce, he begins to relax and be happy. He loves the 'shorts and flip-flop' atmosphere that you can find on South Beach, the kind of life that Archie's promotes: 'No shoes, no shirt, no problem.' "

- At Coffee With the Mayor, on Friday, Jan. 16, several new business owners in town attended. "One of them told me that Fort Pierce needed to be marketed and promoted because it is so wonderful. He said something like, 'millions

TOP TOWNS

Here are the historic and idyllic small towns on *USA Today's* list in August 2014.

In alphabetical order:

Bethlehem, Pa.
Charleston, S.C.
Fort Pierce
Franklin, Tenn.
Galena, Ill.
Julian, Calif.
Rome, Ga.
Saratoga Springs, N.Y.
Staunton, Va.
Wallace, Idaho

On the web at
<http://tinyurl.com/FPi-idyllic>

visit Disney World from all over the world. They need to know about Fort Pierce, how close it is to Orlando and Miami and the Bahamas."

"History is so rich here," Tillman says. "And the sense of community is so strong. It really is an idyllic small town that reminds you of the way small towns used to be and of things, like the theater, that I remember when I was growing up." *AP*



This farmer's market shopper epitomizes the green concept, buying home-grown food and traveling around using pedal power.

COASTAL LIVING
REALTY OF FLORIDA
772.595.0555

With our local experience, knowledge, and history, every member of the Coastal Living Realty team is uniquely positioned to serve your real estate needs across the entire Treasure Coast.

Move to Paradise!

- Fishing, Farmer's Market & Festivals
- Golf, Galleries & Gardens
- Surf, Sand & Shells
- Pools, Porches & Patios



"Selling and Living the Florida Lifestyle"

Donna L. Benton, Broker-Owner

Betty Brolmann, Realtor-Owner



985 Seaway Drive, Suite B, Hutchinson Island, FL 34949 | www.coastallivingrealtyofflorida.com

FORT PIERCE