



PRESS RELEASE

Embargoed Until Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at Noon EDT

Contact: Kim Skeltis, APR; 616.419.8385; kim@blueblazepr.com

LUDINGTON VOTED “BEST HISTORIC SMALL TOWN” BY USA TODAY 10BEST READERS’ CHOICE AWARDS; ONLY MICHIGAN DESTINATION ON LIST OF 20

LUDINGTON, Mich. – *April 10, 2024* – Ludington is known for its miles of sugar-sand beaches that draw locals and visitors to this Lake Michigan resort town. As of today, it *also* is known nationally as “[Best Historic Small Town](#)” in the country by *USA TODAY’s 10Best Readers’ Choice Awards*.

The only city from Michigan on this prestigious list of 20 nominated small towns (fewer than 25,000 people), [Ludington](#) landed the #1 spot among such popular U.S. destinations as Carmel-by-the-Sea, California; Breckenridge, Colorado; and Moab, Utah.

“We are overjoyed to receive this incredible news about Ludington being the best historic small town in America,” said Brandy Miller, executive director of the Ludington Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. “We are the perfect city to claim this title, with our rich history dating back to 1873 celebrated at last year’s sesquicentennial and our many historic attractions. It’s one of the top reasons people visit Ludington.”

The [USA TODAY 10Best Readers’ Choice Awards](#) highlight top-notch attractions and businesses, providing readers with trusted recommendations. Nominees are chosen by a panel of relevant experts, including a combination of editors from *USA TODAY*; editors from 10Best.com; relevant expert contributors; and sources for both these media and other Gannett properties. Kicking off March 4, the “Best Historic Small Town” contest lasted four weeks, closing April 1 at 11:59 a.m. Individuals 18 years and older could vote online once a day.

“To receive the recognition from not only USA TODAY’s expert panel but all of the people who voted for this great city is truly an honor,” said Ludington City Manager Mitch Foster. “The work that has been done by citizens and non-profits to preserve and restore our community and its assets is something we are proud of here locally and is worthy of this incredible recognition.”

Following is how USA Today 10Best described Ludington in the contest:

Building its economy on the lumber industry, Ludington continued to thrive as a shipping port, both by water and by train. Today, visitors come to explore Ludington’s small-town charm, take advantage of its waterfront location for swimming, boating, and more, and shop at its many specialty shops and art galleries. Explore the town’s past at Historic White Pine Village and the Port of Ludington Maritime Museum.

“The nautical history and beautiful natural resources of this Michigan small town have clearly charmed our readers,” said Katie Ford, USA TODAY 10Best managing editor.

Ludington History

Celebrating its sesquicentennial in 2023, Ludington was established in 1873 due to its abundant natural resources and prime location on Lake Michigan. For centuries the home of Ottawa Indians, the area was later

- more -

visited in the mid-1600s by French missionary Father Jacques Marquette. By the mid-1800s, settlers and lumber barons such as James Ludington came to the area lured by the virgin pine forest and its location where the Pere Marquette River empties into Lake Michigan.

The area was named Ludington in 1873 in honor of the man who platted the land and helped develop the area with his logging operations, using the channel deepened by Charles Mears for commercial shipping on Lake Michigan. The city's history continued to be shaped by its proximity to the water even after the last sawmill closed, building and dedicating its "million dollar harbor" in 1914 that later served the salt, sand and chemical industries in addition to fostering commercial fishing, shipping, the U. S. Coast Guard and tourism that established Ludington as a major Great Lakes port.

A visit to Ludington today showcases much of Ludington's rich history, with two historic lighthouses (circa-1867 [Big Sable Point Light](#) and [Ludington North Breakwater Light](#) celebrating its centennial in 2024), the [Port of Ludington Maritime Museum](#) in a 1934 U.S. Coast Guard Station, [Historic White Pine Village](#) with 30 buildings from the late 19th to early 20th-century, Victorian lumber baron homes-turned [bed & breakfasts](#), and the [S.S. Badger](#), the last coal-fired steamship in the United States, among other historic attractions.

"Ludington embodies the quintessential American small town, steeped in a rich tapestry of history, culture, and community spirit," said Rebecca Berringer, executive director of the Mason County Historical Society that oversees the Port of Ludington Maritime Museum and Historic White Pine Village. "From its storied lumbering and maritime heritage to its vibrant cultural attractions and picturesque landscapes, Ludington is a shining example of small-town charm. Being named America's Best Historic Small Town not only honors our past but celebrates the enduring spirit of its people. Ludington is truly a special place to live and a wonderful location to vacation when visiting the Great Lakes state."

About Ludington

Located on the shores of Lake Michigan with 28 miles of beachfront and water access, Ludington, Michigan, offers a quintessential "Up North" experience close by. Ludington and Mason County deliver the perfect combination of unspoiled natural resources and unrivaled outdoor recreation with historic, small-town charm from its 1873 roots – all within easy reach at the intersection of U.S. 31 and U.S. 10. For more information, visit [pureludington.com](#), [Facebook.com/PureLudington](#) and [twitter.com/@Pure_Ludington](#).

About the Ludington Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

The [Ludington Area Convention & Visitors Bureau \(LACVB\)](#) is the official destination marketing organization for Mason County, Michigan, promoting the region to business and leisure visitors to maximize economic impact. An independent nonprofit organization, the LACVB collaborates with its partners to champion the continuous improvement of the region as a unique and memorable tourism destination. For more information, visit [pureludington.com](#), [Facebook.com/PureLudington](#) and [twitter.com/@Pure_Ludington](#).

About USA TODAY 10Best Readers' Choice Awards

[USA TODAY 10Best Readers' Choice Awards](#) highlight the very best in travel, food + drink, and lifestyle. Every week, USA TODAY 10Best invites a panel of relevant industry experts to nominate their favorite points of interest and businesses across a wide range of categories. 10Best editors then vet these nominations and select a final set of nominees to be presented to the voting public. 10Best readers are allowed to vote once per day per award category for a period of four weeks. Winners are announced on [10best.usatoday.com](#) and promoted across the USA TODAY Network and through Gannett Media partners.

####