

So Grimes Made the Happy List

This past week we learned that a website called *HomeSnacks* had named Grimes the fifth “happiest” city in Iowa. The article can be found at <http://www.homesnacks.net/these-are-the-10-happiest-cities-in-iowa-124655/>. That’s pretty impressive in a state with so many wonderful communities as Iowa. We’re

glad we made the list and we agree there is a lot to be happy about in this community.



However, when I learned of the ranking, I had several thoughts. First, the competitive side of me asked “Why aren’t we number one on that list? The analytical side of me wondered “How does one go about measuring happiness? Finally, I wondered “What do rankings like this really mean in the grand scheme of things?”

So let me break down my thoughts on each of those questions. I’ll start with “Why aren’t we number one on the list?” Well, this is actually a pretty easy answer if you read the article...the list was based upon a set list of criteria for which could actually find statistics. As far as I can tell, Orange City was ahead of us because they had more sunny days in an average year (211 vs. 206). Sioux Center has a lower reported crime rate. Urbandale has a higher percentage of married people; perhaps that put them ahead. And Ankeny, well, Grimes had better numbers in the criteria they spelled out, but because I know several happy people from Ankeny, I’ll just assume they beat us in some other considered criteria. Ultimately, it doesn’t matter, as long as we here in Grimes don’t take our eye off of the ball and continue to do the best we can do; be the best we can be.

How does one actually go about measuring happiness? The article indicates what criteria they used to make their calculations, but I expect true happiness is a bit tougher to measure. My hope is that everyone in Grimes is happy with themselves, their family, their friends, their career, their place in life, etc. all the time. But that just isn’t reality, is it. Sometimes we have bad days. Some days, we’re just not all that happy. That’s pretty normal. We want to be happy more often than not, but sometimes those other wonderful variety of emotions that we have are pretty important to who we are as a whole. Check out the Disney Pixar Movie *Inside Out* for a pretty good (and entertaining) insight to this whole phenomenon of emotions.



So, what do rankings like this mean in the grand scheme of things? My first reaction to this question was “not that much”. But then after giving it some thought, I think they do serve a purpose. A. When you run a Chamber of Commerce, they are great for marketing. I mean, who doesn’t want to Live,

Work, Play in a happy community? B. The statistics they used, actually say something pretty great about our community. We have a lot of married families in Grimes, most of us have jobs, our commute times are manageable, we are well educated, and our crime rate is low, so on, so forth.

So after all of that thought I've decided I'm pretty OK with my community being on this type of list. It reaffirms what we here at Grimes Chamber & Economic Development already know. Grimes is a wonderful and HAPPY place to call home! We hope you feel the same way.

BWB

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