



## **TripAdvisor Names Fort De Soto America's Top Beach** *Pristine Area Favorite Lauded as "Portrait of Tranquility"*

(St. Pete/Clearwater FL - February 28, 2008) – St. Pete/Clearwater's Fort De Soto Park was named America's Top Beach today by TripAdvisor, the world's largest online travel community.

Citing a "spectacular combination of soft white sand, calm, clear water and a laid-back atmosphere," the popular online travel network put the park's North Beach at the top of its annual best-of list, with rankings determined by a combination of site visitor popularity and staff input.



"This is particularly flattering because it's not just one person's opinion," said DT Minich, executive director of Visit St. Pete/Clearwater. "When you have millions of travelers saying we are their favorite, it's a powerful statement and a tremendous honor," he added.

This marks the second time in three years the pristine Pinellas County beach has received top honors on an annual "best-of" list. In 2005 Dr. Stephen P. Leatherman, a.k.a. "Dr. Beach," named Fort De Soto the nation's #1 Beach, and the following year he named nearby Caladesi Island State Park the nation's #2 Beach, a title it was awarded again in 2007.

Of the ten beaches TripAdvisor named tops in its official [press release](#), four are in Florida and three are in Hawaii, with beaches in California, South Carolina and Georgia rounding out the list. TripAdvisor's eight branded travel sites make up the largest travel community in the world, with more than 25 million monthly visitors, five million registered members and 10 million reviews and opinions. The TripAdvisor Media Network is an operating company of Expedia, Inc. (NASDAQ: [EXPE](#)).

“This recognition reinforces the fact that our brand identity is much more than just a marketing slogan,” said Minich. “The St. Pete/Clearwater area really is home to ‘America’s Award-Winning Beaches,’” he added.

*Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater is the official destination marketing organization for Pinellas County.*

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