



ETC INSTITUTE

MARKETING RESEARCH, DEMOGRAPHY, STATISTICAL APPLICATIONS

725 W. FRONTIER CIRCLE, OLATHE, KANSAS 66061  
(913) 829-1215 FAX: (913) 829-1591

July 22, 2022

Steve Griffin  
City Administrator  
City of Gulf Shores  
1905 W. 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
Gulf Shores, AL 36547

**Subject: Leading the Way Award Winners – Summer 2022 Announcement**

Dear Mr. Griffin:

On behalf of ETC Institute, **I want to congratulate the City of Gulf Shores for winning our Leading the Way Award.**

ETC Institute's "Leading the Way Award" was created to recognize local governments for outstanding achievement in the delivery of services to residents. Recipients of the award rank in the top 10% of all local governments in the United States with regard to their composite performance in the three core areas that are assessed on ETC Institute's DirectionFinder® Survey:

- satisfaction with the overall quality of services
- satisfaction with customer service provided by employees, and
- satisfaction with the value residents think they receive for local taxes and fees.

A maximum of 100 points are awarded in each of these areas based on the results of the survey. In order to rank in the "Top 10% of All Cities", a city must have received a composite score of 210 or more, which means the city scored an average of at least 70 points in all three areas. The threshold of 210 was established using the results of surveys from more than 400 communities that have participated in ETC Institute's DirectionFinder® Survey over the past two years. **The City of Creve Coeur's composite rating was 235 which was 59 points above the average composite score of 176 for all cities in the United States.**

**The City of Gulf Shores is truly setting the standard in many areas.** In addition to ranking in the top 10% overall, the City also rated in the top 10% of all cities that participated in our DirectionFinder® between December 2021 and May 2022 in the areas listed below.

- Visibility of police in neighborhoods and in commercial/retail areas
- Overall quality of police services

- Feeling of safety in City neighborhoods
- Overall quality of fire services
- Condition of sidewalks
- Mowing and tree trimming along streets and public areas
- Quality of on-street bicycle infrastructure
- Maintenance/appearance of community centers
- Appearance of the community

Since 1999, ETC Institute's DirectionFinder® Survey has been administered to nearly two million residents in all 50 states. Although ETC Institute has provided "benchmarking" data that has allowed communities to compare their results with other communities for many years, ETC Institute did not formally recognize the top performers until 2020. The crystal award that you are receiving weighs 11 pounds to represent the 11 cities that participated in ETC Institute's DirectionFinder® Survey the first year the survey was conducted in 2000.

More details about the Leading the Way Award, including the names of other award winners, are now available on our website at [etcinstitute.com](http://etcinstitute.com).

ETC Institute will feature the City of Gulf Shores as a winner of the award on our website and social media pages over the next few weeks. If you would like us to present the award virtually at a future meeting, we would be glad to do so. We can even provide a sample press release if needed.

**Once again, congratulations to you, the Mayor, the City Council, and all City staff for your outstanding achievements!**

Sincerely,



Christopher Tatham, CEO  
[Chris.Tatham@etcinstitute.com](mailto:Chris.Tatham@etcinstitute.com)  
913-669-6053