

#1 in Grand Strand, #1 in SC — ALEX Intelligence 2026

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Highest median gross rent — ALEX Intelligence 2026

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THE DATA

\$1,751

Median Gross Rent (2024)

Murrells Inlet leads the Grand Strand and South Carolina in rental prices.

This figure, drawn from the 2024 American Community Survey, reflects a market where high-end residential demand is concentrated in coastal enclaves with premium amenities and limited supply. The data reveals that Murrells Inlet is not just a high-rent location — it is the highest-rent city in both the Grand Strand metro and the entire state of South Carolina. This ranking is not driven by affordability, but by exclusivity and scarcity.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 • ALEX Intelligence computation
<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-10-11-grand-strand-gross-rent-place-mkt>

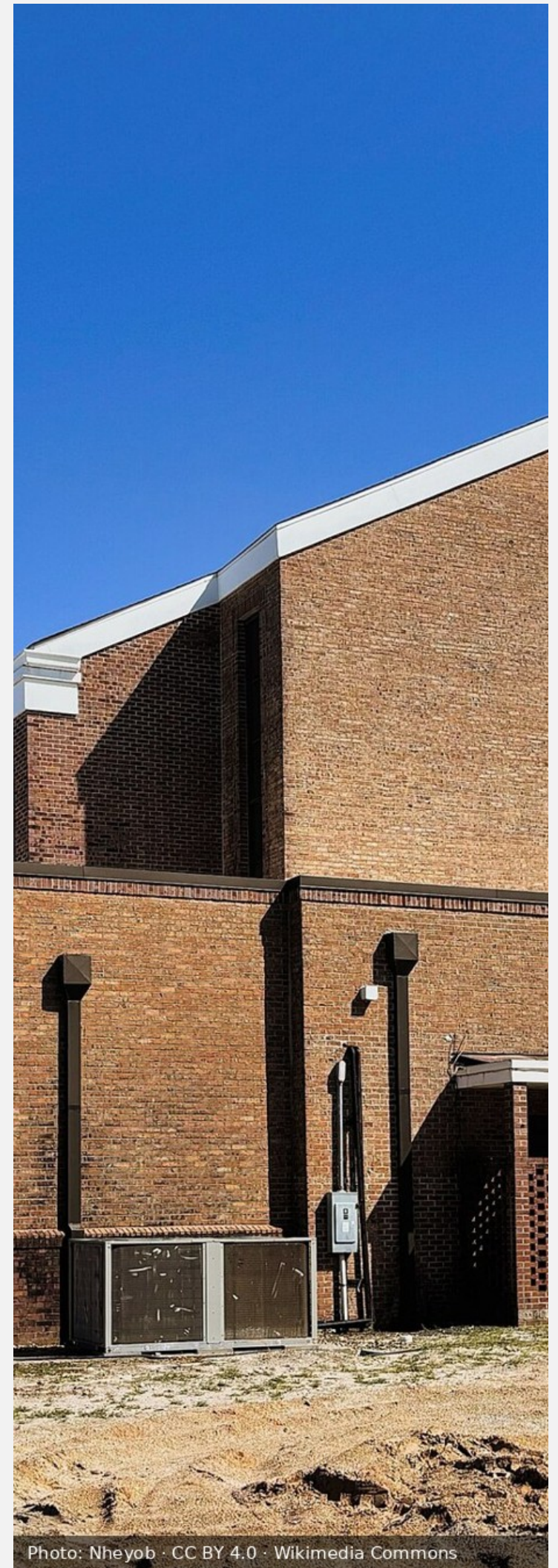


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01

Rent as a signal of scarcity, not wealth

The fact that Murrells Inlet holds the top rental rank in both the Grand Strand and South Carolina is not a sign of broad economic strength, but of supply constraint. High rents here reflect a market where demand far exceeds available inventory, particularly for single-family homes with waterfront access or private beach access. This scarcity is not driven by population growth alone, but by zoning restrictions, environmental regulations, and limited new construction approvals — structural barriers that keep the housing stock fixed while demand rises.

02

The paradox of rental dominance

What's counterintuitive is that the highest rental prices in South Carolina are not in a city with the most population or employment growth, but in a place where seasonal migration and second-home ownership dominate. Murrells Inlet's economy is not built on permanent residents, but on transient wealth — retirees, investors, and seasonal renters. This creates a feedback loop: high rents attract investors seeking short-term returns, which further reduces long-term rental availability and increases pressure on the existing housing stock. The result is a self-reinforcing cycle of exclusivity, where affordability is sacrificed for prestige.



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