

Awesome YouTube lip dub proves Grand Rapids is awesome

By Helen A.S. Popkin

In an epic single-shot video lasting almost 10 minutes and featuring more than 3,000 people, "marching bands, parades, weddings, motorcades, bridges on fire," and a helicopter takeoff, a so-called "dying" America city spanked a statistically-dying magazine, and entertained the Internet, too.

Grand Rapids shut down a good chunk of its downtown earlier this week to film its response to a [Newsweek piece from January](#), which listed the Michigan city as No. 10 on a list of America's "dying" cities. Set to a live recording of Don McLean's "American Pie," the city's sassy citizens prove their town is very much alive via a massively multi-performer, lip-sync video done in a single, unedited take, what's known on the InterWebs as a "lip dub."

As [the Grand Rapids Press reports](#), the video, "featured familiar faces, including entertainers, political figures, media celebrities surrounded by hundreds of football players, musicians, cheerleaders, police and firefighters, swing dancers, kayakers and more." Of course, those faces probably aren't familiar to you, unless you're familiar with Grand Rapids ... except for maybe WOOD-TV (Channel 8) [chief meteorologist Bill Steffen](#). (All great weathermen look familiar.)

"If you have lived in Grand Rapids your whole life, or even just arrived, it would be hard to not say that the tiny hairs on your arms don't stand straight up when you see the shots of the city's most well known landmarks and the people who make this city so wonderful," [describes the Grand Rapids Press](#). Even if you're not familiar with Grand Rapids, you'll find this video thrilling. (It's got pyrotechnics! Impeccably-timed pyrotechnics!)

No wonder Newsweek wanted to distance itself from the insult, posting this message on its [Facebook page](#):

To the Grand Rapids crowd:

First off, we *LOVE* [your YouTube LipDub](#). We're big fans, and are inspired by your love of the city you call home.

But so you know what was up with the list you're responding to, we want you to know it was done by a website called [mainstreet.com](#)--not by Newsweek (it was unfortunately picked up on the Newsweek web site as part of a content sharing deal)--and it uses a methodology that our current editorial team doesn't endorse and wouldn't have employed. It certainly doesn't reflect our view of Grand Rapids.

Lip dubs, when executed by the [overprivileged 20-somethings](#) who [pounded the Internet meme into existence](#), are generally precocious and annoying. But when an entire community — be it [amicable rival high schools](#) or an entire city — gets together on a single joke, it shows a sense of kinship that is endearing to us because it gets at who we are, and gives us a sense of what we can do together. It's how communities survive.

Nice job, Grand Rapids! Well done.

http://technolog.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2011/05/27/6730473-awesome-youtube-lip-dub-proves-grand-rapids-is-awesome