Profile of the City of Sault Ste. Marie

The City of Sault Ste. Marie, (aka.”The Soo”), is a Canada-United States border city located along the St. Mary’s River between Lake Superior and Lake Huron, approximately 335 km west of Sudbury and 700 km south-east of Thunder Bay. Sault Ontario has a population of approximately 75,000 people and our twin city, Sault Michigan, has approximately 15,000 people. Both communities are surrounded by smaller ones, adding more than 10,000 residents.

Sault Ste. Marie is one of the oldest settlements in Canada, having been established as a Jesuit settlement in the late 1600s and prior to that it was an Anishinabe village. It has an extremely large and varied ethnic population, largely as a result of European immigration after the two Great Wars. More recently the community has been enriched by people from the Middle East and East Asia.

Sault Ste. Marie is strategically located at the eastern outlet of Lake Superior. The Sault locks connecting to Lake Huron handle the greatest marine tonnage in the world.

Travel to and from the city is easy. The Sault International Airport is served by Air Canada and Porter Airlines for the 1 ¼ hour flight to/from Toronto. An airport on the Michigan side also provides air service to Detroit and other areas of the United States. Driving access to the south and west is available on good highways via Ontario and Michigan. The city is located on the Trans-Canada Highway and at the northern terminus of U.S. Interstate 75.

Sault Ste. Marie enjoys a wide selection of shopping facilities, including four indoor malls and assorted strip malls. Easy access to Michigan greatly expands those opportunities, including for getaways. Michiganders also frequent Sault Ontario. Travel to Sault Michigan is a 10-minute drive across the International Bridge, and border clearance is usually easy.

The education systems in Sault Ste. Marie are excellent, offering French Immersion and English and French instruction in elementary and secondary settings in public and separate school systems. Sault Ste. Marie is the home of Algoma University and Sault College of Applied Arts & Technology, with a unique link to Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. All the institutions have grown considerably over the past 10 years and have further expansion plans underway.

Health services in Sault Ste. Marie are varied and of high quality. The new hospital completed in 2010 offers a wide range of specialty services. The community is also supported by most medical specialties. The Group Health Centre and many smaller clinics support the health needs of the community.
Sault Ste. Marie offers a variety of recreational activities. It is the home of the Soo Greyhounds Junior A hockey team. Other activities and amenities include curling, cross country and downhill skiing, snowmobiling, sport fishing and ice fishing, golf courses, marinas, a Family YMCA, community pool, an indoor soccer facility and several ice arenas, many private gyms, and newly expanded community hiking trail. Cultural activities abound with a multi-purpose theatre, local performing arts groups, symphony orchestra, conservatory of music, dance schools, major Canadian and world class performers, art gallery, museums, primarily the Ontario Bush Plane Heritage Centre and the Ermatinger/Clergue National Historic Site. Beautiful parks, historic locks and a waterfront boardwalk should not be missed. Fine restaurants with various ethnic specialties, and seasonal festivals and celebrations highlight the diversity of our city. The city has also hosted numerous provincial, national and international sports competitions and has been the site of a number of movies.

There are approximately 35,000 individual homes in Sault Ste. Marie and a variety of rental/condominium facilities. Compared to larger urban centres, the cost of accommodations in the Sault is more affordable. Many residents also spend time at cottages north or east of the city, usually accessible in about 30 to 45 minutes. One can be out of the city in 15 minutes to enjoy the area’s varied outdoor possibilities.

The Garden River First Nation and Batchewana First Nation border the city to the north and east. These communities are increasingly integrated with the Sault as their members shop in stores, attend schools and work in the city. What is now Algoma University was the site of the former Shingwauk Indian Residential School in partnership with the Anglican Church. Algoma University is in the process of establishing a major Canadian Centre for Indigenous Studies. In co-operation with its partner Algoma University, Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig (SKG) offers the only Anishinaabemowin (Ojibway Language) B.A. program in Canada and has begun offering an Anishinaabe Studies B.A. program.

The major industries in Sault Ste. Marie include Algoma Steel, Tenaris (Algoma Tubes), Arauco Flakeboard Company, Eacom Timber Corporation, Huron Central Railway, Canadian National Railway (Freight), Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation, along with both Provincial and Federal Forestry Research Centres. There is also a large influx of money coming into the local economy through the development of several call centres.