

The Story of the Soo and the State

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Have you ever been approached by someone who asked you if you knew anything informative about this small college community? Was there ever a scenario in which you could not tell that special individual anything at all? Around eighty percent of the students know nothing about the environment that they spend thirty-two months of their lives to get a degree in. Well, for those of you who don't want to be that person who wants to be ready for that scenario previously mentioned, here is some information on the wonderful city of Sault Ste. Marie and the colorful campus that is Lake Superior State University.

Sault Ste. Marie is the oldest city in the state of Michigan. It is at the eastern edge of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, on the Canadian border, separated from its twin city of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario - the oldest city in the Canadian province of Ontario - by the St. Mary's River. The two Saults were formally founded in 1668 by Father Jacques Marquette as one city, then split into two in 1797 (when the Upper Peninsula was transferred from the province of Upper Canada to the United States). Sault Sainte Marie is Old French meaning "Rapids of St. Mary's", a reference to the rapids in the Saint Mary's River, which joins Lake Superior to Lake Huron. Either city, or the vicinity as a whole, can also be informally called "The Sault" or "The Soo". More recently, there have been a few references to a Greater Sault Ste. Marie, encompassing both cities and their outlying satellite communities, although as of 2006 this term is not in widespread use. The two cities are joined by the International Bridge, which connects Interstate Highway 75 in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan and Huron Street in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. Shipping traffic in the Great Lakes system bypasses the Saint Mary's Rapids via the American Soo Locks, the world's busiest canal in terms of tonnage that passes through it, while smaller recreational and tour boats use the Canadian Sault Ste. Marie Canal. Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan lies within Chippewa County. As of a 2005 U.S. Census estimate, the city's population was 14,318. It is the county seat of Chippewa County. The city is the site of the Soo Locks, which lets ships travel between Lake Superior and the lower Great Lakes. Although the locks are not as busy as in past years, a considerable amount of domestic and foreign commerce passes through them. People come from around the world to view close up the ships passing through the locks. The largest ships are 1,000 feet long by 105 feet wide. These are domestic carriers called "Lakers", which are too large to transit the Welland Canal around Niagara Falls and thus are land-locked. Foreign ships called salties are smaller.

As far as Lake Superior State University is concerned, it is Michigan's smallest public university with an enrollment around 3,000 students. It is known for its academic programs such as fisheries and wildlife management, engineering, teacher education, nursing, geology, business management, fire science and criminal justice. It offers Michigan's only accredited undergraduate degree program in environmental health. In addition, students attend for LSSU's degrees in forensic sciences, recreation management and legal studies. With so many students from Canada, Lake State is one of the most Canadian-friendly colleges in the country. The campus is minutes away from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. LSSU has both Canadian and United States flags adorn their campus, and sing both Canadian and American national anthems at athletic events. Some other history involves information such as this. The institution now known as Lake Superior State University was established in 1946 to address the needs of returning World War II veterans and to provide educational opportunities to the people of the Eastern Upper Peninsula. The 115-acre campus overlooks the St. Mary's River and the Soo Locks in the Michigan side of Sault Ste. Marie. The area that currently makes up the campus of Lake Superior State University served as Fort Brady from 1894 to 1944. Several buildings on campus are included in the National Register of Historic Places. Much of the university's upbringings can be credited to Michigan College of Mining & Technology, which is now known as Michigan Technological University. The mining and technology college opened the Sault Ste. Marie Residence Center of the Michigan College of Mining & Technology, which was commonly shortened to Soo Tech. The original class consisted of 272 students. The institution was later renamed Lake Superior State College of Michigan Technological University in 1966. The college received autonomy from Michigan Tech. in 1970 and was known as Lake Superior State College until 1987, when the institution was granted university status. So the next time you come face to face with a situation that involves knowing your school or knowing your town, go ahead and give that person what for.