



## OVERVIEW

### PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

*Agawa Canyon Tour Train* – CN has indicated that the train will be operating this season. The expected start will be in September and will run to mid-October. Additional details pending from CN.

*Algoma Trail Network*- Crews are continuing to work on construction of the trail network. Scheduled completion remains on track for September 2021.

*Website*- Staff are beginning to develop the corporate side of the Tourism Sault Ste. Marie website. This section of the website is designed specifically for planners, event rights holders and media/travel trade contacts. Information provided in this section will assist in securing groups (sports tournaments, meetings/conventions, media and travel trade).

*Sail Superior Zodiac Tours* began operating on the waterfront on Saturday August 7<sup>th</sup>. The initial weekend was sold out with ticket sales increasing moderately throughout the week. Three tours were offered: 60 minute, 90 minute and ½ day (5 hour). The 90-minute tour and the ½-day tour include an interpretive guide to give information about our area.

*Sail Superior Safari Tours*- In collaboration with Algoma Country and Destination Northern Ontario, staff have been working with Sail Superior to develop a 5 day trans superior zodiac safari tour. The SSM leg of the tour (day 5 if travelling from Thunder Bay) runs from Wawa to Sault Ste. Marie. A mock tour will be held August 13<sup>th</sup> to gather photo and video assets in an effort to develop an itinerary to be sold on the travel trade market.

*Canada Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF)*: staff submitted an application to FedNor CCRF for the Hiawatha Highlands Connector Trail and Wishart Bridge project. The project was advanced through Phase 1. Staff are working to complete the Phase 2 application. If successful, this funding will secure a trail connection and bridge infrastructure to connect 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Line to the Hiawatha Highlands/ ATN project.

### MARKETING & PROMOTION

- Staff completed and recently posted two new itinerary blogs for the Travel Inspiration page;
  - How to spend a day with the family in SSM (written by Instagrammers 'Adventure with the Hills' in paid collaboration with Sault Tourism.
  - Canada Is Calling! Visit Sault Ste. Marie this summer (targeted at the US audience)
- Staff continues to work with Attractions Ontario to increase Sault Ste. Marie's presence through their marketing platforms; i.e. website site, social media.
- Staff have initiated the process to begin planning the 2022 Sault Ste. Marie Visitors Guide.

### PAID MEDIA

#### **Village Media (Sootoday)**

On July 15<sup>th</sup> we launched a Sootoday piece called '*An unforgettable summer: Why Sault Ste. Marie is an adventure seeker's dream*'. This was combined with a digital advertising campaign with social media boosting. The results of this campaign will be available mid- August.



<https://www.sootoday.com/spotlight/an-unforgettable-summer-why-sault-ste-marie-is-an-adventure-seekers-dream-3957180>

- Village Media: 1,129 website click-throughs to Saulttourism.com to date

### **BlogTO**

On July 13<sup>th</sup> we launched a BlogTO piece called *'How to spend 36 hours in the Soo'*. This was combined with social media posts and a newsletter/

<https://www.blogto.com/travel/2021/07/36-hours-sault-ste-marie-ontario/>

Metrics to date:

- BlogTO: 1,288 website click-throughs to Saulttourism.com to date
- BlogTO: The Instagram posts added around 100 new followers to the SSM Tourism account.

### **Coming Up:**

- Narcity Video (filmed at the end of July) and scheduled to be release August 16-20
- Narcity fall colours content piece
- Continuing with Expedia advertising until the end of August

### **Media FAM/ Earned Media**

- No notable FAM or earned media during July.
- Gabriela Ghisi is a diverse media influencer that will be visiting Sault Ste. Marie in August- paid for through Attractions Ontario. Her visit will focus on local attractions registered through AO including the Canadian Bushplane Heritage Museum.

### **Website (July Statistics)**

27,287 users (330% increase from June)

55,217 page views (290% increase from June)

- Canada 84%, US 11.6% (Michigan 24%)
- Within Canada: Ontario 88%, Quebec 9%,
- By City: (GTA around 40%) Toronto 25%, SSM 9%, Brampton 7%, Mississauga 5%, Montreal 5%

Primary drivers:

- Paid Search drove 8,307 users to the website
- Social media drove 5,469 users to the website, mostly via Facebook. This was up from 3,198 click-throughs in June.
- Organic Search drove 5,181 to the website
- Referrals: 1,934 click-throughs from other websites up from 860 in June. Some of main referrals websites were:
  - SooToday (570 users)
  - NorthernOntario.Travel (423 users, up from 240 in June)
  - Agawatrain (315 users up from 187 in June)
  - Narcity (145 users)
  - WelcometoSSM.com (87 users similar to 74 in June)
  - SAH.on.ca (59)



**Instagram (July 2021)**

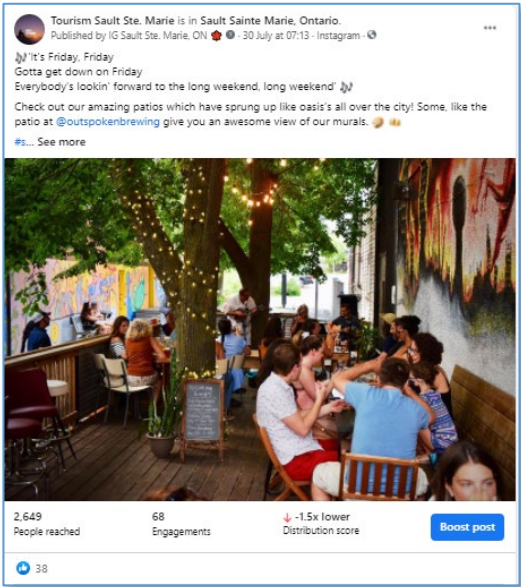
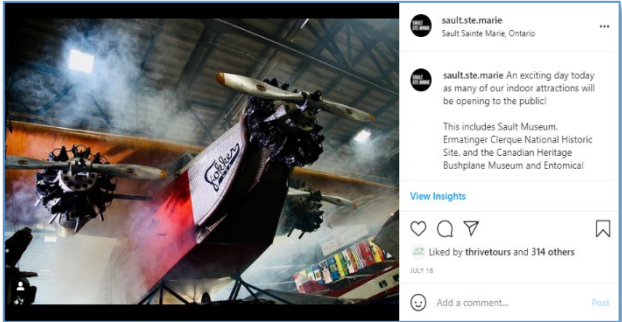
- 11,760 page follows
- 224K accounts reached (up 119%)

**Facebook (July 2021)**

- 28,029 followers (144 new followers)
- 487k accounts reached

**Paid Social (Facebook)**

- 7 paid promotions
  - Narcity Summer article
  - Sail Superior ticket giveaway
  - Sail Superior Book today
  - Sail Superior (to US)
  - Paddling Travel Inspiration article on website
  - Canada Is Calling (Targeting US audience)
  - Instagram post boost
  - To date we have spent \$4,661 (via Cavera's account, running through July) and \$2,057 on paid search (via Cavera) out of the total budget of \$19,000



**GROUP TOURS & SALES**

Bus Tour Groups: Staff have continued to keep connected to incoming bus tour groups and develop fall itinerary options. Road Scholar has unfortunately cancelled their 2021 program due to the uncertainty of the border opening.

Staff have confirmed alternative itinerary option for a tour group (coming 2x) in September

**SPORTS TOURISM AND SPECIAL EVENTS:**

Undisclosed Bid Opportunity: Staff have started to develop bid contents to submit a proposal to host a Provincial level championship event in Sault Ste. Marie in spring 2022. Letters of intent are due August 13<sup>th</sup> with full bid package submitted by August 27<sup>th</sup>.

**OTHER TOURISM INITIATIVES**

- In collaboration with the Ontario Tourism Innovation Lab and Algoma Country, Sault Ste. Marie will be launching a regional "Spark" Mentorship and Grant Program to encourage individuals, small businesses and non-profits to apply with their new tourism ideas for the region.
- Staff is working with the 4 Culture Group ( Bushplane, Ermantinger Clergue, Art Gallery of Algoma and SSM Museum) to promote "the Attraction Passbook", a discounted admissions voucher. The coupon will be available online on our website, attraction site and Attractions Ontario for customers to utilize.
- Staff has reached out to the Downtown Association and the Chamber of Commerce to collaborate on making Sault Ste. Marie's Downtown core a Bicycle Friendly Business Area; an Ontario by Bike Certification.



**Film:**

Feature Film:

Status: In progress

Room Nights: currently this film has generated 1360 room nights with an anticipated estimate of 1400 by the time of completion of the film.

Feature Film: Do Not Disturb

Status: In progress

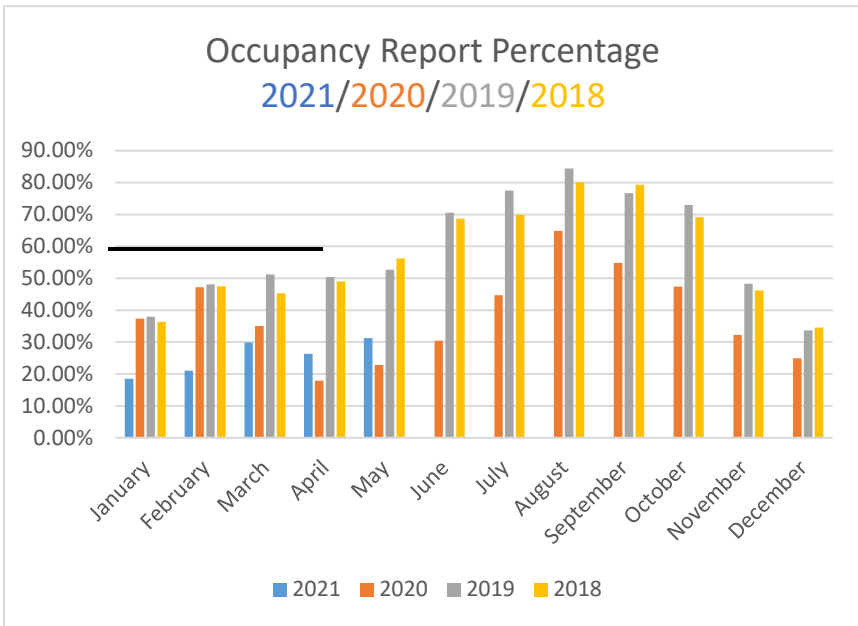
Room Nights: To date this film has generated 375 room nights with more to come

Feature Film: Upcoming Film

Status: Scouting

Staff have completed film scouts in the area generating 3 nights in July and 3 in August with production scheduled for the end of September,

**Occupancy Report**



Report of Rooms Operations for Sault Ste. Marie				
	Occupancy Percentage			
Month	2021	2020	2019	2018
January	18.50%	37.4%	38.0%	36.4%
February	21.0%	47.2%	48.1%	47.5%
March	29.8%	35.0%	51.2%	45.3%
April	26.3%	17.9%	50.4%	49.0%
May	31.2%	22.8%	52.7%	56.2%
June		30.4%	70.6%	68.7%
July		44.7%	77.5%	69.9%
August		64.8%	84.4%	80.1%
September		54.8%	76.7%	79.3%
October		47.4%	73.0%	69.2%
November		32.2%	48.3%	46.2%
December		24.9%	33.6%	34.5%



**Municipal Accommodation Tax Collection**



Month	2019	2020	2021
January	\$ 61,402.77	\$ 62,208.56	\$26,308.63
February	\$ 73,525.06	\$ 77,030.47	\$29,161.20
March	\$ 81,314.31	\$ 61,777.73	\$39,562.96
April	\$ 83,529.32	\$ 19,975.27	\$37,064.14
May	\$ 95,421.32	\$ 29,273.55	\$47,417.99
June	\$127,202.00	\$ 46,100.00	\$65,706.77
July	\$152,541.57	\$ 80,779.28	
August	\$173,804.29	\$123,601.95	
September	\$154,367.41	\$ 96,304.68	
October	\$151,211.55	\$ 81,808.25	
November	\$83,086.94	\$ 50,936.13	
December	\$63,379.61	\$ 37,395.67	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,300,786.15</b>	<b>\$ 767,191.54</b>	<b>\$245,221.69</b>