

## **Boat cruise through the Soo Locks is a perfect group tour attraction**

*Planners say an Upper Peninsula excursion must include Soo Locks Boat Tours*

(SAULT STE. MARIE, MI) Whether a bus tour or a field trip, an authentic Pure Michigan excursion requires time on the water. No other venue offers the history and adventure of a Soo Locks Boat Tour. Organizers who have experienced these [group tours](#) say that, much like the famous potato chip, you can't do it just once. It becomes an annual tradition.

"I've been running a Mackinac Island and Upper Peninsula tour for the past five years and I always incorporate the Soo Locks Boat Tour into the itinerary," said Eric Wertz, escorted tour manager for AAA Akron Auto Club. "I plan on visiting them with my tour groups for many years to come."

Operated since 1934, the [Soo Locks Boat Tours](#) is an easy escape for adults and children, placing them within reach of massive freighters and the world-famous Soo Locks. Just like the hundreds of thousands of vessels that came before, each SLBT tour boat is raised and lowered 21-feet through the Locks, allowing safe travel between Lake Superior and the lower Great Lakes.

The St. Mary's River provides a willing backdrop for narration that weaves a tale of history, industry, and culture into one seamless tapestry. With Sault Ste. Marie's status as Michigan's first city and its status as an international border, the opportunities for exploration and learning are endless.

Wertz, whose tour typically caters to senior citizens, said participants are always impressed with the level of service. "The staff at the Soo Locks Boat Tours bend over backwards to accommodate us, even scheduling a special departure to fit our itinerary needs," he reports.

Itinerary planning, special rates, and pre- and post-season scheduling are available for group tours that meet a minimum number. Additionally, complimentary tickets for escort and bus driver are included with each tour, as is free motorcoach parking. For Debbie Strunk, a senior tour operations specialist from Makanda, Illinois, the professional staff is also an asset.

"Presley Tours has included the Soo Locks Dinner Cruise in our program for several years now. It is consistently rated as one of the highlights of the tour. We also appreciate the efficiency of their group sales department," she said.

On perhaps the opposite end of the spectrum, Soo Locks Boat Tours gets rave reviews from student groups, too.

Lorna Rootare, a teacher at Webster Elementary in Livonia, Michigan, escorted her sixth grade class on a 2012 tour and reported back on the reaction of her students.

"They told me 'we loved it' and 'it was amazing' – some even said it was one of, if not THE best, part of the trip," she said, explaining that this was Webster Elementary's eighth consecutive year visiting the Soo Locks. "This is always a hit with kids and parents," she added.

Camden Frontier Elementary (Camden, Michigan) also has an annual history tour, bringing fourth graders aboard the Soo Locks Boat Tours. "It's really amazing how close we get to those giant ships on the tour,"

exclaimed David Follis, teacher and tour organizer. In 2012, Camden celebrated its 15<sup>th</sup> year visiting Sault Ste. Marie.

Group tours aren't limited to students or senior citizens. Corporate gatherings, family and class reunions, and even wedding parties have chosen Soo Locks Boat Tours for events that are unlike any other. A variety of charter cruises are available for special occasions.

When planning your next group tour, contact the Soo Locks Boat Tours sales department for details on your future excursion. Like the tour operators quoted here, you will soon be saying "see you next year."

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