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Sault lands biggest sporting event in its history

June 11, 2009

Sault Ste. Marie has hosted a number of major sporting events in the past few decades – the 1993 Memorial Cup and 1990 Labatt Brier to name just a few.

However, the biggest is on its way.

It was announced June 9 that Sault Ste. Marie was picked to host the 2012 Canadian Adult Recreational Hockey Association World Cup. An anticipated 4,000 players, 19 years old and up, from 120 teams around the world will flood the community for seven days, making this event the largest draw in the city's history.

Sault Ste. Marie was one of 13 cities to bid on the championship. Even more significant is the fact that the Northern Ontario community beat out several major centres, including Toronto, for the rights to host the event.

"We saw Sault Ste. Marie as the little city with a big heart," said Nicole Vanbergen, CARHA's Coordinator of Communications and Promotions. "When we came here (for the initial site visit), we were amazed with how welcomed we felt. They really went above and beyond. It was very nice."

Also helpful in the decision to come to Sault Ste. Marie is the city's strategic location. "It's at the centre of Canada," she said.

Tourism Sault Ste. Marie, a division of the SSM Economic Development Corporation, along with the City of Sault Ste. Marie, helped make the successful bid on the sizeable event. Based on previous CARHA Hockey World Cup's – which took place in Quebec City, Vancouver, Toronto and Ottawa – the 2012 games are expected to inject around \$15 million into the Sault Ste. Marie economy, added Vanbergen.

"As far as sporting events go, this will be the largest-attended in the history of the city," said Steve Hollingshead, Coordinator of Special Projects & Sport Tourism for Tourism Sault Ste. Marie. "It fits within the vision of our organization to pursue and secure this type of opportunity. The financial benefit to the local tourism industry and community at large will be very substantial."

For the accomplishment, Hollingshead gave kudos to City Council and staff. "We were very fortunate to have their support," he said.

Hollingshead also gave credit to the partnership within the local tourism industry. "When you have everyone on board, it makes the bid process much easier," he said. "It gave us a compelling argument as to why our city should host the event."

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The 2012 CARHA Hockey World Cup will be held in the same year as the 100th anniversary of Sault Ste. Marie. The event will attract people from around the world to join in the celebration and become a part of the community.

Situated at the heart of the Great Lakes, Sault Ste. Marie is considered to be an original meeting place. The CARHA World Cup reinforces this reputation.

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