

Small town kids and city folk meet

Written by Julia Evelsizer, Reporter
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ISU is home to all different kinds of students from different ethnicities, ages and backgrounds. Many of these students are not originally from Bloomington-Normal and they carry their own unique stories and experiences from their hometowns.

Some students come from large bustling towns with over 100,000 inhabitants, and others come from small farm towns where everyone knows each other.

Either way, these places are what students call home, no matter how different they may be.

As of 2010, the population of Bloomington and Normal combined is over 129,000. Bloomington-Normal not only offers multiple spots for entertainment and restaurants, but are also home to State Farm, Mitsubishi and two universities.

Bloomington may be home away from home for many students, but for some it is where they grew up. Ryan Loy is a freshman history major, and Bloomington is his hometown.

“I love the fact that I know my way around town and I can go home to do my laundry,” Loy said. “It’s also nice that my parents can come pick me up any time and take me shopping for food or school supplies, too.”

Going to college also gives students the opportunity to meet new people from different towns, states or even countries. The size of their hometown does not stop students from getting to know each other.

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“A lot of my friends are from the Chicago area and I think their college experience is different because they are a few hours away from home,” Loy said. “They only get to see their family and friends when they come to visit.”

While the city of Bloomington and the town of Normal may seem rather average-sized, or even small to some, it can seem much bigger to others.



Heather Pavlik is a junior at ISU majoring in elementary education. Her hometown is Atlanta, Ill. with a population of around 1,600. Atlanta is located 30 minutes south of Bloomington-Normal. Pavlik has grown up there and graduated from Olympia High School with a little over 100 students in her class.

“I went to Heartland for two years before ISU. I felt that it was just a little step up from high school, but with more independence and freedom involved,” Pavlik said. “But when I transferred to ISU I felt much more on my own, but I really like being able to pick what classes I take and what days I have off to fit into my schedule.”

While the differences of small towns and big cities probably will not drastically change the college experience for many, it can give students different outlooks on life.

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“The environments are different,” Pavlik said. “You may have completely different ways of living and speaking. What I love most about my hometown is that I feel really safe there. I know mostly everyone in town.”

It is common to see students coming to ISU from Chicago suburbs. With Chicago only being a few hours away, ISU is far enough from home for the college experience, but close enough to visit family over breaks.

Danielle Lawry, junior visual communication major, is from Elgin, Ill., a northwest Chicago suburb.

“Coming to Bloomington Normal from Elgin didn’t seem that different,” Lawry said. “ISU is a big school, but the campus is very compact and gives the illusion of a smaller school.”

Elgin has a population of 109,000 people. Lawry graduated from Elgin High School with 500 people in her graduating class.

“I love the few friends I’ve kept from home as well as my family,” Lawry said. “That’s really all I’m attached to. The memories are great too, but I’m making better ones here.”