

MLICA Scoop

LAND IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTORS ~ MICHIGAN CHAPTER

2024 ISSUE 2

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From the Lead Plow, Russ Talaski, President MLICA

Welcome to fall, a time when harvest has begun, and fields are ready for conservation work or even tile drainage. This can be the most productive season for many of our Members and Associate Members. Take advantage of the opportunities available to you and your business, but also remember to spend time with your family and create lasting memories.

Businesses in Michigan are set to change in the future. Contracts for solar farms are being signed as we speak, and new zoning rules are being written. Even if we don't fully agree with or understand these changes, we must embrace them and seek opportunities within our industry where we can adapt and generate new work.

Your MLICA board met recently, and we've started planning for our Winter State Convention. Educational topics were discussed, and Sarah has been tasked with finding speakers and setting the schedule for the two-day event. Many great ideas were presented, and we believe this year's topics will be of interest to you. We encourage you to join us.

Please take a moment to invite someone you know who could benefit from becoming a LICA member. Many of us got involved this way, and it has kept us engaged ever since.



FEATURES

DIARY OF AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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CROCKPOT CHICKEN & GRAVY | PUMPKIN DUMP CAKE | CLASSIFIEDS

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FARM SAFE 

Diary of an Executive Director

Personal challenges have a way of showing us we are stronger than we sometimes know. Since the last issue of the MLICA Scoop, I've faced a few unexpected hurdles. I experienced an unplanned computer upgrade that threw off my usual workflow, followed by a quick 30-second rollerblading accident that resulted in a broken wrist. Surgery and 6 months of occupational therapy have been part of my healing process. On top of that, an annoying bump under my eye was diagnosed as "the best kind" of skin cancer—yet still a reality check,

Through it all, I'm thankful for the activities that kept me moving forward: my daughter's soccer practices and games, 4-H events, the National LICA Water Management Forum, the

National LICA Summer Meeting in Pittsburgh, a wonderful trip to visit family in Missouri, and even a family wedding! These events provided joy and perspective, helping me not to focus too much on my personal challenges.

*Now that we're into fall, my attention has shifted to some exciting professional milestones. We're deep into dues renewals, convention planning, and, most exciting of all, the announcement of **Michigan LICA's new scholarship**! I'm thrilled to share that all the details have been finalized, and we look forward to awarding our very first one (or two) scholarships this January.*

Thank you to everyone who has uplifted me through this journey.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MLICA WINTER CONVENTION & ANNUAL MEETING

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Michigan LICA Attends National LICA's Inaugural Water Management Forum

This past June, National LICA held its first-ever Water Management Forum, a groundbreaking event focused on the critical issue of effective water management. Held over two days on the former St. Joe Campus in Rensselaer, Indiana, the forum brought together contractors, students, and industry experts for educational sessions and hands-on training.

The forum offered a range of activities designed to improve water management practices. Attendees had access to a variety of both indoor and outdoor exhibits, showcasing the latest equipment, technology, and strategies aimed at addressing the challenges of water conservation, drainage, and irrigation. For contractors, the event was an opportunity to sharpen their skills and network with industry peers, while students gained valuable exposure to real-world applications of water management techniques.

Throughout the two days, attendees participated in a series of educational sessions led by industry experts. These sessions covered key topics such as sustainable water management solutions, erosion control, and the latest advances in agricultural drainage. In addition to the classroom-style learning, the forum featured extensive outdoor exhibits, and hands-on learning. Exhibitors set up outdoor demonstrations, allowing contractors and students to operate machinery and practice various water management techniques in a real-world setting.



ment to workforce development. G.I. Joe, a veteran and recent graduate, showcased his skills on the backhoe under the expert guidance of Cook. The training not only demonstrated the capabilities of modern machinery but also highlighted the importance of empowering veterans with practical skills that translate into meaningful careers.

The National LICA's inaugural Water Management Forum proved to be a resounding success, offering a blend of education, innovation, and hands-on training that left a lasting impression on all who attended. As water management becomes an increasingly pressing issue, forums like these play a crucial role in equipping contractors and future land improvement professionals with the tools and knowledge they need to address the challenges ahead.

For Michigan LICA members, the event was a valuable opportunity to stay at the forefront of industry trends, deepen their understanding of water management, and forge connections with other like-minded professionals. The forum not only celebrated the achievements of seasoned contractors but also underscored the importance of mentorship and education in nurturing the next generation of land improvement experts.

Looking ahead, the success of this first Water Management Forum suggests that it will become a staple event in the LICA calendar, fostering a community of professionals dedicated to advancing the field of sustainable water management across the country.



Region III Vice President Adam Cook assisted with a hands-on backhoe training session for Joe Delusant (commonly referred to as "G.I. Joe"), the first graduate of the LICA Veterans Foundation program. This foundation, which supports veterans transitioning into careers in land improvement, has quickly become a cornerstone of LICA's commit-



Introducing the NEW Michigan LICA Scholarship

Michigan LICA is proud to announce the launch of a new scholarship opportunity for our members and their families. This \$1,000 scholarship is open to Michigan LICA regular, affiliate, and supporting members, along with their spouses, children, and grandchildren.

Eligibility Requirements:

Applicants must be either:

- A currently enrolled college student, or
- A high school senior actively enrolling in a college, technical school, or vocational training in Michigan.

Preference will be given to students pursuing degrees in Natural Science, Technology, Business, Teaching, or Engineering.

Important Dates:

- Applications are open from September 15 to November 15.
- Winners will be announced by December 1, with awards distributed by January 15.

How to Apply:

Submit a completed application by November 15, including a birth certificate, transcripts, and a brief 300-word essay. For more details, visit www.michiganlica.org

We look forward to supporting the next generation of leaders in our industry!

Why LICA?

"I joined by the advice of my father to network and learn about new technologies and equipment. I continue for the same reasons, as well as, the great group of people involved. It's become somewhat of a second family and I feel it's important to stick together, especially when it comes to the legislation governing our industry."

~Mike Pennington, MLICA Member

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NATIONAL HAPPENINGS

LICA LEADERS SHARE INSIGHTS AT NATIONAL SUMMER MEETING IN PITTSBURGH

This summer, during the National LICA Summer Meeting held in Pittsburgh, Region III VP Adam Cook, alongside other prominent LICA leaders,



participated in an engaging leadership panel. The panel aimed to educate and inspire LICA members, offering valuable insights on what it takes to be part of LICA's leadership team.

The session, which covered key aspects of leadership development and involvement within LICA, was recorded and is now available for viewing. Members can access the video on both the LICANational.org website and the National LICA YouTube channel, or by scanning the QR code.



This educational initiative reflects LICA's commitment to fostering future leaders within the organization and ensuring its continued growth and success.

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NATIONAL HAPPENINGS

LICA SUMMER MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: EXPLORING PITTSBURGH'S HERITAGE

The National LICA Summer Meeting in Pittsburgh, PA, was a unique combination of professional growth and cultural immersion. LICA members were treated to an array of activities that showcased the city's history, architecture, and industrial legacy. Our group stayed at the Omni William Penn Hotel, a historic landmark in downtown Pittsburgh. Built in 1916, the hotel offered a luxurious and



timeless setting, providing a perfect blend of vintage charm and modern comfort. Its grand interiors and storied past made it an ideal venue for the meeting, allowing guests to unwind after busy days of exploration.



A particularly moving tour was the visit to the Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville, PA. This site honors the 40 passengers and crew members of United Airlines Flight 93, who heroically prevented a further attack during the tragic events of September 11, 2001. The memorial, with its serene natural setting and reflective design, offered LICA members a moment to honor these heroes and contemplate the significance of their sacrifice. It was a powerful experience, reminding everyone of the bravery and resilience shown on that fateful day.



Architectural enthusiasts were thrilled to visit Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater, one of the most iconic examples of organic architecture in the world. Located in the picturesque Laurel Highlands, the house is designed to integrate seamlessly with the natural landscape, as it is built over a waterfall. LICA members



marveled at Wright's innovative approach, which blurred the lines between the indoors and the outdoors, creating a home that feels like an extension of its surroundings. The visit was an inspiring look at how architecture can coexist with nature in a harmonious and breathtaking way.

The second day of tours included a quick bus stop at the Mr. Rogers Statue, a tribute to Pittsburgh's beloved television icon, Fred Rogers. Located along the North Shore

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near Heinz Field, the statue stands as a reminder of Rogers' profound impact on generations of children through his show *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. For many, it was a nostalgic moment that brought back memories of Rogers' timeless lessons on kindness, empathy, and community, making it a fitting addition to the meeting's itinerary.



Pittsburgh and the confluence of the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio rivers, a perfect spot for photographs and a chance to appreciate the beauty of the city from above.

Rounding out the tours was a visit to the Carrie Blast Furnace, part of the former Homestead Steel Works. This industrial site, once a powerhouse of Pittsburgh's steel industry, now serves as a historical landmark, offering a



Another highlight of the meeting was a ride on the Duquesne Incline, one of Pittsburgh's oldest and most beloved attractions. Dating back to 1877, the incline takes passengers up Mount

Washington, providing sweeping views of the city's skyline and the three rivers that define its geography. At the top, LICA members enjoyed panoramic vistas of downtown



glimpse into the city's industrial past. LICA members explored the massive structures and learned about the steel



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LICA SUMMER MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: EXPLORING PITTSBURGH'S HERITAGE CON'T

production process that helped shape Pittsburgh into a major industrial hub. The visit to Carrie Furnace was a



fascinating look at the gritty, labor-intensive work that fueled the city's growth and played a significant role in American industrial history.

The LICA Summer Meeting in Pittsburgh was an enriching experience, blending professional development with the chance to explore a city steeped in history and culture. From the elegant accommodations at the Omni William Penn Hotel to the thought-provoking visit to the Flight 93 Memorial, the meeting offered a perfect mix of reflection, inspiration, and discovery. Tours of Fallingwater, the Duquesne Incline, and the Carrie Blast Furnace highlighted Pittsburgh's unique place in American history, making the event both memorable and impactful for all who attended.

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Common Driving Procedures: Turns and Intersections

Do you ever get nervous when trying to make a left turn in a large work vehicle? Do you get confused as to who has the right of way when pedestrians are waiting to cross the street? Since the engineering of American roads and city streets can vary significantly from place to place, it is sometimes confusing for drivers to know what to do. However, there are some general rules that apply to most major roadways.

Left Turns

Generally, motorists recognize left turn lanes by signage or arrows painted on the pavement. On many major streets, left turn lanes are separated from other lanes with concrete barriers.

If you are attempting to make a left turn, it is important that you watch out for opposing traffic, traffic making right turns from the other direction, and cyclists and pedestrians also on the road.

- Avoid drifting into other lanes when making a left. Turn into the closest lane possible or the one that is designated for you (if there are multiple left turn lanes).
- If you are turning left from a two-way street into a one-way street or vice versa, turn from the far-left lane into any available lane.
- When making a left at a light-regulated intersection, assume that the oncoming traffic does not stop unless you have a left-turn arrow signal.

- Never enter an intersection to take a left turn on a red light for any reason.

Right Turns

Vehicles can make right turns at any time, unless there is a “No Turn on Red” sign present or when other traffic is passing through.

When making a right turn, be cautious of other vehicles going straight from the perpendicular direction or those turning left into the lane you wish to enter. Also exercise extreme caution around pedestrians and cyclists.

Intersections

Stop at the first white line marked on the pavement at lighted intersections. Avoid stopping between the white lines, as a crosswalk is specifically designed only for pedestrians.

If there are no lines at the intersection, then stop so as not to block the turning or crossing traffic.

As a general rule, never enter an intersection on a red light for any reason. Also, refrain from entering the intersection if it is backed up by other traffic or if pedestrians are crossing.



MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE

SEPTEMBER 2024



Many Americans Remain Unfamiliar With 988

The [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) (988 Lifeline) was launched nationwide in July 2022. The three-digit dialing code replaced the original 1-800 number to make it easier to remember and access. Like dialing 911 for medical emergencies, people in emotional distress or suicidal crisis can call or text 988 to connect with counselors who will listen, provide support and connect them to resources.

Since 988 Lifeline's launch two years ago, counselors have answered over 10 million calls, texts and chats. Despite the volume, a new poll by the National Alliance on Mental Illness revealed that most Americans remain unfamiliar with 988. Two-thirds (67%) of Americans said they are aware of 988, meaning they've at least heard of it, but only one-quarter (23%) are at least somewhat familiar with 988. Additionally, nearly half of Americans (45%) say they wouldn't feel safe calling 911 for help if their loved one was having a mental health crisis, emphasizing the importance of having a separate dialing code specific for mental health concerns.

Spread the Word About 988

Now in its second year, the 988 Lifeline continues to help millions of Americans. According to the poll, people who are familiar show stronger trust in and the likelihood of using the 988 Lifeline. This highlights the need for increased public awareness and education.

The easy-to-remember dialing code provides immediate and accessible care to anyone experiencing mental health-related distress, including thoughts of suicide, mental health and substance use crises, and other emotional struggles. An online chat is also available. 988 Lifeline voice, text and chat options are offered in English and Spanish.

It's vital to continue spreading the word about 988. Keep in mind that people can also call, text or chat if they are worried about a loved one who may need immediate support.

A High-fat Diet May Increase Anxiety

When feeling stressed, you may instinctively reach for junk food, which is often high in fat. However, a new study at the University of Colorado Boulder revealed that consuming high-fat foods might actually worsen anxiety symptoms. Researchers believe this is happening due to the connection between gut bacteria and brain chemicals that regulate anxiety levels.

Experts recommend supporting the gut microbiome and signaling pathways through healthy eating and reducing high-fat and overly processed food intake. Consider incorporating the following foods into your daily diet:

- **Foods with omega-3 fatty acids:** Fatty fish, flaxseeds, chia seeds, walnuts and avocado
- **Foods rich in fiber:** Beans, lentils, sweet potato and whole grains
- **Fermented foods:** Kimchi, miso, tempeh, kombucha, kefir and yogurt
- **Prebiotic foods:** Garlic, onions, asparagus, bananas and oats
- **Dark leafy greens:** Spinach, kale, arugula, Swiss chard and collard greens

- **Berries:** Raspberries, strawberries and blueberries

Not all fats are bad; they can actually be good for your brain, so try to prioritize the consumption of healthy fats. Consider these food swaps:

- Replace full-fat dairy products with low-fat or nondairy alternatives.
- Choose whole grains instead of refined grains.
- Swap high-sugar desserts for a small piece of dark chocolate with at least 70% cocoa content.
- Substitute butter with olive or avocado oil.

These findings about the mind-body connection emphasize the need to consider dietary choices beyond weight management. For guidance on nutrition and mental health, contact a qualified medical provider.

Crock Pot Chicken and Gravy

Crock Pot Chicken and Gravy is a comfort meal made right in the crock pot. Boneless chicken that is cooked in a thick and rich chicken gravy. Serve over potatoes, rice, or even roasted vegetables. An easy weeknight dinner idea.

Prep Time 10minutes

Cook Time 4hours

Total Time 4hours 10minutes

Servings 6 servings



Ingredients

- 2 lbs boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 2 0.87 oz chicken gravy mix envelopes
- 1 10.5 oz can cream of chicken soup
- 1 cup chicken broth
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Minced fresh parsley for garnish

Instructions

1. Place chicken breasts into the bottom of a 5 quart or larger slow cooker.
2. Season chicken with salt and pepper.
3. Whisk the gravy mix, broth & chicken soup together in a small bowl and pour on top of the chicken breasts.
4. Cover and cook on high for 3-4 hours or low for 6-8 hours. Adjust salt and pepper to taste.
5. Garnish with minced fresh parsley. Serve immediately over mashed potatoes or rice or keep on warm until ready to serve, enjoy!

Recipe found at <https://myincrediblerecipes.com/crock-pot-chicken-and-gravy/>

Pumpkin Dump Cake

Pumpkin Dump Cake is a must make dessert for fall. This is a pumpkin pie-based cake that is topped with a yellow cake mix dump cake topping. Bake, slice and serve this delicious fall favorite pie tonight.

Prep Time 15minutes

Cook Time 1hour 10minutes

Total Time 1hour 25minutes

Servings 12 servings



Ingredients

- 2 15-ounce cans of pumpkin puree
- 1 cup light brown sugar packed
- 1 tablespoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 12-ounce can of evaporated milk
- 3 large eggs
- 1 15.25-ounce box of yellow cake mix
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 12 tablespoons of butter thinly sliced

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees, and then grease your 9x13 baking dish with cooking spray and set to the side.
2. Next in a medium bowl whisk up your pumpkin puree, brown sugar, pumpkin spice, and salt. Mix well.
3. Add in the eggs and evaporated milk. Mix to combine fully. Then pour the mixture into the prepared pan.
4. Dump the yellow cake mix on top in an even layer. Then sprinkle the top of the cake mix with the chopped pecans.
5. Slice your butter into small pieces and place on top of the cake in an even layer.
6. Bake for 1 hour 10 minutes or until the cake is baked all the way through. Stick a toothpick in the center of the cake and make sure it comes out clean of wet batter.
7. Let the cake set for 10 minutes to cool. Then slice and serve. Refrigerate any leftover cake you do not eat right away.

Recipe found at <https://mvincrediblerecipes.com/pumkin-dump-cake/>

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Classifieds

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