



Northern Michigan Ice Storm: Impact on Antrim County

The late March ice storm downed power lines, toppled power poles, and destroyed trees and structures from Atwood to Alpena and from Mio to Mackinac City. The storm also resulted in widespread flooding on the Upper Chain of Lakes due to still-frozen ground and iced-over inland lakes. Though hundreds of people in other counties remain without power, Antrim County residents have had their power restored.

Great Lakes Energy noted on April 14 that “our construction teams typically replace approximately 800 poles per year, across our entire 26-county service area. We have replaced over 2,770 poles so far, due to storm damage.”

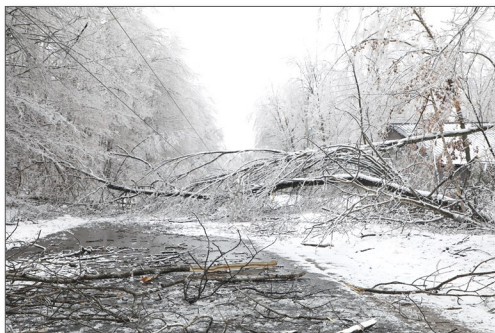


Photo credit: Joanie Moore

Damage assessments are currently underway. A self-reporting damage assessment tool is available on the State’s [2025 Northern Michigan Storm](#) webpage. In

addition, Northern Lakes Economic Alliance and other partners are collecting data regarding initial impacts of the ice storm on area businesses. An online survey can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/BusinessImpacts>.

The ice storm created damage that will last decades. However, throughout the storm and well into storm recovery, there were many inspiring examples of neighbors helping neighbors and strangers reaching out to assist those in need, showing once again the strength of our community.

Barnes Park Campground: 2025 Reservations Now Open

Camping starts on Thursday, May 22. Reservations opened Saturday, April 12. Over that weekend, 493 reservations were made for almost 4,000 site nights. To reserve a site, go to campspot.com/park/barnes-park-campground.

Please note that the park will be closed September 11-30 to resurface the road. This work was scheduled after Labor Day as the last three weeks of September typically have weather that is suitable for construction projects and have relatively few campers. The park will reopen for camping if the roadwork is completed before the end of September. Watch the Barnes park website and/or Facebook page for updates.

Public Safety Center Update

The November 2024 construction millage failed by 223 votes. This left the Board of Commissioners with a difficult decision as the 1955 jail continues to be unsafe, deficient, and non-compliant. To help ensure the safety and security of residents and to reduce the County’s liability, the Board voted in February to build the Public Safety Center without the financial “safety net” of a construction millage.

That process requires issuing bonds, the municipal version of getting a loan. The Board voted to issue up to \$25 million in bonds, to be paid back in no more than 25 years.

The bonding process also required the publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI). The notice included the information that, if the statutory number of signatures were gathered within 45 days, the bonds could NOT be issued without a public vote.

The County Clerk has certified the petitions with more than enough signatures gathered. This leaves the Board with another difficult decision given the jail’s numerous issues. Current options being considered are:

- A) Place the questions of bonding of \$25 million at no more than 25 years on a future public ballot.
- B) Continue to repair and maintain the existing jail.
- C) New construction of a holding facility.
- D) New construction of a jail or jail pod only.

An additional option is being developed: E) phasing the project. While a phased build is not ideal as overall construction costs would inevitably be higher, one possible concept for a Phase I is to include holding facilities, sheriff’s office, road patrol, dispatch, evidence storage, training room, emergency management—essentially everything except the jail housing unit itself. The most appropriate size of a jail housing unit could be determined over the next few years and built as a Phase II.

A review and discussion of the above options is on the Board’s April 17 agenda.

Petoskey Stone Festival: Saturday, May 17

The Petoskey Stone Festival and Memorial Weekend camping at Barnes Park have both become so popular that the decision has been made to hold the Festival one week earlier than in the past.

The new date of Saturday, May 17 will provide more parking for festival goers and more space for vendors and events. New this year is a small animal petting zoo! Check the Petoskey Stone Festival Facebook page for details.