



Couple to open ‘cozy, welcoming, warm’ coffee house in Williamston

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Lansing State Journal

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ABOVE AND BELOW: The property in the 7000 block of East Clinton Trail in Eaton Rapids Township, pictured Sept. 3, could house a solar farm. MATTHEW DAE SMITH/LSJ.COM

Ann Arbor company wants to build solar farm in Eaton Rapids Township

Susan Vela
Lansing State Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK – MICHIGAN

EATON RAPIDS TWP. — A Michigan solar company wants to build a 32-acre, 5-megawatt solar facility in this rural community of about 4,000 residents.

Based in Ann Arbor, Prometheus Power Group prides itself on building smaller-scale solar farms and, to accommodate Eaton Rapids Township's country feel, Prometheus' project manager Tyler Stark said he has been talking as much as possible to community members.

"It's a really small plot of low-grade farmland," Stark said, mentioning that it already has energy utility lines, a gas line and oil well. "The land is already being used for energy."

He did not share a dollar amount for the investment but said the project could create up to 20 construction jobs and generate about \$40,000 in annual tax revenues.

The proposed site is 7638 E. Clinton Trail, now owned by Mock Properties and near a Consumers Energy substation, and Stark said trees both new and old should block some visibility of the solar farm if Eaton Rapids Township planning commissioners grant the project the conditional land use permit needed to proceed.

Township Supervisor Scott Wilson and Trustee Amanda Brown, the board's planning person, declined multiple requests for comment. The township has posted on social media that the planning commission will host a 6 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 15, hearing on the permit at the township offices, 2512 S. Canal Road.

The post refers to the project as a distribution-scale solar energy project, and also invites community members to visit township offices to review the conditional land use application detailing that solar arrays will sit on 22 acres of the parcel.

Other details include 100-foot setbacks from property lines and roadway, a natural screening buffer, and a study in-



dicating no adverse impact to the water quality and supply.

The solar farm proposal is subject to local approval, and not the Michigan Public Service Commission, because of its 5 megawatt capacity. If it was expected to have a capacity of 50 megawatts or more, the application would have to go before the Michigan Public Service Commission, rather than local officials.

Jim Mott, chair of the Eaton County Board of Commissioners, said he knows of only two solar proposals being proposed for the county. One is Prometheus Power Group's proposal for Eaton Rapids Township and the other is Chicago-based Hecate Energy's application now being reviewed by the state commission.

Hecate Energy wants to build a 225-megawatt solar farm that would span about 2,100 acres in Springport Township in Jackson County and Brookfield and Hamlin townships in Eaton County. At least 1,500 acres would be in Hamlin Township, comprising scattered parcels in the southwest portion of Hamlin Township.

Construction would start in 2027 and the solar farm parcels would mean a \$400 million project powering 27,000 Michigan residences, according to online

documents and the company's website. The facility would switch on in 2029.

Local officials have no say in whether the project gets approved. The MPSC board, appointed by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, has authority to approve or deny the project because of 2023's Public Act 233, which made the state the approval authority for large-scale wind, solar, and energy storage projects.

Meetings took place in communities affected by Hectare's proposal last year, said Denise Perkins, Hamlin Township's treasurer and zoning administrator.

"We were not pleased," she said, describing an event with different stations where residents could approach with questions. "The public couldn't hear questions from their neighbors or whatever or hear the answers."

Sometimes, she said, questions were merely logged into Hecate iPads.

"The unfortunate thing is that, how they're scattered, there's other farmers that are farming land in between where these solar panels are going so there's a lot of concern," she said.

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Area gains half a dozen restaurants, stores in August

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The Lansing area gained half a dozen new restaurants and retail stores in August.

Get Loaded Kitchen opened in Okemos, blending the menus of two different local food trucks, and Assembly, the latest concept from the restaurant group that owns Saddleback BBQ and Slice by Saddleback, opened in Mason.

The area also lost some long-time eateries, including Dershey's Cafe, a family-run restaurant in St. Johns, and MorningLory Cafe & Bakery in downtown Dimondale.

Here's a look at the month's openings and closings.

OPENINGS

Get Loaded Kitchen, Okemos

Where: 2398 Jolly Road
The details: Get Loaded Kitchen, a restaurant that blends the menus at two local food trucks, Get Loaded and From Scratch, opened on Aug. 3.

The new eatery occupies a 1,500-square-foot space that was formerly home to Tantai, a Peruvian eatery that closed its doors in July 2025 after owner Jose Aste suffered a medical emergency.

The menu mixes loaded mac-and-cheese, potatoes and French fry combinations with Mediterranean dishes. Customers can then choose a protein such as fried chicken, chicken shawarma, pulled chicken, beef chili made with Lebanese seasoning, and cheesesteak, among other offerings.

Learn more about Get Loaded Kitchen on Facebook at "Get Loaded Kitchen."

Wild Roots Play Cafe, Eaton Rapids

Where: 101 S. Main St.
The details: Wild Roots Play Cafe opened on Aug. 3. The business offers play space for children, including an interactive play village and sensory activities, along with snacks and coffee for their parents or guardians.

Daily admission for a child is \$12 and adults pay no fee, according to the business website. The cafe does offer monthly membership.

Learn more on Facebook at "Wild Roots Play Cafe," and online at www.wildrootsplaycafe.square.site.

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Crash kills boy, 12, critically injures sister, 13, riding bikes

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LEROY TWP. — A 12-year-old boy was killed and his sister critically injured on Saturday, Sept. 5 when they were struck by an SUV while riding bicycles along Grand River Avenue near Williamston.

Michigan State Police said the crash occurred east of Williamston, on Grand River Avenue near North Meech Road,

about 11:35 a.m.

Police said a Ford Explorer was traveling west on Grand River when it struck the bicyclists, both from Williamston, who were riding on the shoulder of the roadway. The 12-year-old was pronounced dead at the scene. His 13-year-old sister was transported to a hospital with life-threatening injuries. Their names were not released by police.

The driver of the Explorer, a 64-year-old Williamston woman, was not injured. Both bicyclists were wearing helmets. The use of drugs or alcohol does not appear to be a contributing factor in the crash, police said.

"Michigan law requires motorists to give bicyclists at least three feet of space when passing them. More importantly, drivers have a responsibility to remain alert, slow down when neces-

sary and safely share the road with bicyclists and other vulnerable roadway users," said Lt. DuWayne Robinson, MSP Fifth District PIO. "A tragedy like this is a heartbreaking reminder that we all have a responsibility when we get behind the wheel. Following traffic laws designed to protect everyone using our roadways can help prevent crashes and save lives."

An investigation is ongoing.

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