Fall color starts now in the Upper Peninsula, moving downstate through October

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There’s no better time or place to plan a fall road trip than in Michigan, where dynamic colors set all the trees ablaze along the highways, country roads and coastlines.

Now is the time to pack your vehicle and choose either a “road less traveled” where you’ve never been before, or check out a favorite destination and watch it come alive in the beauty of autumn hues.

Here are a few “road trips” planned for you by Pure Michigan, starting with the earliest dates of color that are already setting the trees in the Upper Peninsula alive with brilliant color. The fall color season gets started in earnest in the western U.P. during the last week of September and colors peak in the U.P. as the calendar moves into October, according to Pure Michigan.

See ROAD TRIP on 23A
All-terrain vehicles handle many autumn chores

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Whether you use an ATV (All-Terrain Vehicle) to twist around a winding trail or to haul equipment to your hunting camp, you are riding on one of the most popular vehicles in the marketplace.

“There are four times as many ATVs sold in Michigan as there are motorcycles,” said Dan Loiselle, in the sales department at C&C Sports, Inc. in Brighton.

“They’re popular year ’round, but sales really ramp up in the fall.”

ATVs are motor vehicles that can be ridden over land, snow and other terrain without the need of a road or trail. They come in all different sizes, from small electric quads for toddlers to large, fast ATVs for adults.

While ATVs are often used in the summer for recreation — climbing sand dunes and trail riding, for example — 80 percent of ATVs sold are used for utility purposes, according to Loiselle.

Fall is a busy season for ATVs, as people use them as utility vehicles on their property. They can easily haul small cargo loads and can transport people and equipment on large parcels of land. When winter arrives, they are work horses at plowing snow.

“There are so many uses,” said Loiselle. “If you’ve got lots of grass on your property, your ATV can be fitted with a pull-behind mower. People take them to their hunting camps up north. Ice fishermen love them. People who are handicapped can hunt from them.”

ATVs are one in a class of Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs). All ORVs/ATVs are required to have an annual permit, issued by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), unless the vehicle will be used exclusively on private property.

Proper training and experience are important before attempting to ride an ATV. Safety gear is an absolute must, no matter what size ATV you’ll be riding. Equipment includes a helmet, goggles, boots, gloves, long-sleeved shirt, long pants and a chest protector.

Why are the seats on sport ATVs so big? While the seat looks like it is designed for two people, it’s actually designed specifically for a single rider.

“The seat is large because the rider has to move around on the ATV to properly control it. Similar to riding a motorcycle, the rider leans into turns and scoots forward or backward in the seat, depending on conditions and the need for traction.

Fall is the most popular time of year for ATV utility use at home or up north.
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So pack your car and hit the open road with several destinations in mind for the best color show.

MID-SEPTEMBER TO EARLY OCTOBER

Michigan’s fall colors come first to the trees of the Keweenaw Peninsula in the Upper Peninsula, the state’s northernmost point, including the towns of Houghton, Eagle River and Copper Harbor.

A Western U.P. tour, including the towns of Ironwood, Silver City and Wakefield, will provide plenty of color, with 90 percent of the area covered by forests.

The central U.P. towns of Marquette, Negaunee and Au Train provide a driving tour that includes country roads, waterfalls, historic sites and a stunning drive along the Lake Superior shoreline.

Menominee, Escanaba and Manistique offer beautiful shoreline views of Lake Michigan, with plenty of two-lane roads and color ablazing.

A trip through Munising, Newberry and Grand Marais will show stunning displays of color.

EARLY OCTOBER TO MID-OCTOBER

Mackinaw City, Petoskey and Charlevoix will begin their color shows in early October, with early color Oct. 3-4, peak color Oct. 10-11 and peak to past peak color Oct. 17-18. The best of the remaining color will be near the lakeshore in northern Michigan.

A 185-mile loop between Marquette, Cadillac and Ludington will offer plenty of beauty in this western part of northern Michigan. A tour between Pentwater, White Cloud and Muskegon will also provide beautiful color on rolling wooded hillsides, orchards with ripe apples and beautiful views of Lake Michigan.

You’ll also enjoy a tour by car, on foot or in a canoe in the areas of Grayling, Torch Lake and Lake City. The winding Au Sable River is the perfect waterway to paddle while enjoying splashes of vibrant color against towering evergreens.

Michigan’s Sunrise Side, including a 200-mile route between Alpena, Gaylord and Mio, will greet fall color with autumn hues usually lingering until mid-October.

On the northeast corner of the Sunrise Side, you’ll find lots of woods and water in a 200-mile triangle between Rogers City, Cheboygan and Indian River. A highlight will be the only waterfalls in the Lower Peninsula.

Give the Thumb a “thumb’s up” for Pure Michigan color. Take a 130-mile trip skirting the Lake Huron city of Port Huron, motoring north to Sandusky and Imlay City where you’ll find lots of farmland and country roads, cider mills, pumpkin patches and more.

THROUGHOUT OCTOBER

Lower Michigan becomes ablaze with color as the calendar extends later into the month of October.

Take a 150-mile loop starting in Lansing and travel onto Grand Ledge, Hastings, Battle Creek and Eaton Rapids for scenic farm and woodlands, rivers and unique geological formations.

Head west toward Grand Rapids, Grand Haven, South Haven and Kalamazoo for a 195-mile color tour that includes city scenes, sand dunes, win-

maries, farm markets and Lake Michigan sunsets.

Take a 195-mile jaunt between Jackson, Ann Arbor and Monroe and follow old Indian trails and territorial roads, an early tavern, a battlefield, the hometown of an infamous general, and even a winery or two.

Catch the last act of Michigan’s fall color show in the central Lower Peninsula in the towns of Hillsdale, Homer and Sturgis, near the state’s border with Indiana and Ohio. This 155-mile loop travels through countryside known for agriculture, antiques and Amish communities.

• Travel & Leisure magazine’s pick for best scenic fall color tours in U.S., includes “Michigan’s Gold Coast,” a 100-mile route starting in Traverse City.

• What to expect: Lake Michigan’s northeastern shores have charming coves, towering sand dunes and tiny fishing towns. Drive along Grand Traverse Bay, where, in the fall, fiery-hued maple and oak leaves stand out against green pine, fir and spruce trees.

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Sunday, September 20, 2015 23A
CANEVER WINS AWARD

Richard Canever, president owner, received The State Bank Community Contribution to Education Award from the Fenton Education Foundation at the 11th Annual Black Tie Awards Dinner on September 10th. Through Canever’s leadership, generosity as a business owner and community activist, hundreds of students have benefited through the Southern Lakes Parks & Recreation’s driver training program. Vic Canever Chevrolet has donated the cars used for this program for more than 10 years, thus allowing the program to continue. Canever has also been supportive of numerous athletic programs through his corporate sponsorship of numerous teams and events. According to Patricia Lockwood, chair of the Fenton Education Foundation, “Richard was the unanimous choice of the Foundation board. Through his leadership and community commitment, students of all ages have had opportunities to learn and excel in their career paths.”

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