

A mission out of Michigan



Economics senior Antonio Lombardo is moving to Chicago after he graduates in May. The Bloomfield Hills native said that he chose to look for jobs in Chicago because it's close to Michigan and is a city with lots to do. He will be moving there in September for job interviews and plans to stay with friends and family.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY NICK DENTAMARO/THE STATE NEWS

Audio

To hear Antonio Lombardo speak about his plans to move to Chicago, visit statenews.com/multimedia.

Students, residents flee the state in search of jobs

"I figured if I didn't have anything set here I'd rather move someplace else. ... I'd rather start from scratch someplace where I might have better luck."

Antonio Lombardo, economics senior

By Jeff Kanan
THE STATE NEWS

Warmer weather, cheaper housing and, more importantly, better job prospects have kept Michigan residents streaming out of the state, but some experts think the trend will slow down. An annual survey released last month by the trucking company United Van Lines found that more than 67 percent of Michigan moves in 2008 were out of the state. Last year marks the third straight time that Michigan has had the highest rate of outbound moves for any state in the country.

Despite Michigan's grim migration numbers, 2008's figures match those of 2007 and seem to signal a slight turn in the opposite direction, state demographer Kenneth Darga said. "(Last year) was about the same as 2007, and 2007 was worse than 2006; there was a gradual worsening from 2002 to 2006,"

Darga said. "Things you read might say that Michigan is increasing its outbound migration rate — but that's not necessarily true."

An ongoing issue

Hard-hit by auto industry and manufacturing job losses, many down-on-their-luck residents must face the reality of being jobless.

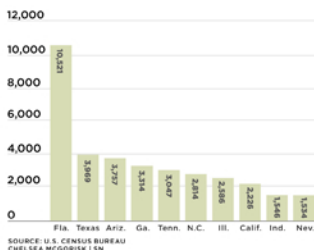
"Michigan is historically very reliant on manufacturing jobs ... but those are going away," said Mark Skidmore, professor of agriculture, food and research economics at MSU. "We've seen modest job growth in other years, but it's stopped this year."

The state's manufacturing industry has decreased

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Headed South

Southern states are the leading recipients of Michigan out-migrants, according to the latest available data from 2005-06.



COURT

MASON SENTENCED TO ALMOST 22 YEARS FOR 1999 ARSON

By Kyle Feldscher
and Liz Kersjes
THE STATE NEWS

Lansing — The Ohio woman who pleaded guilty to setting Agriculture Hall on fire in 1999 was sentenced to almost 22 years in prison Thursday.

Marie Mason, 47, of Cincinnati, said she committed the arson with her then-husband Frank Ambrose on New Year's Eve, 1999. She said the two set the offices of the Agriculture Biotechnology Support Project on fire to protest federally funded research on genetic modification of potatoes.

Hagen Frank, the U.S. attorney

who prosecuted the case, said he found Mason's sentence — 21 years and 10 months in prison and more than \$4 million in restitution — appropriate though federal prosecutors had asked for a sentence of only 20 years.

"Eco-extremist groups may view (Mason's) sentence as the government prosecuting an activist," Frank said. "But we were prosecuting an arsonist."

Mason and Ambrose were members of the Earth Liberation Front, or ELF, when they committed the arson. ELF is a radical environmental group that uses violence as a means of protest.

Ambrose was sentenced to nine years in federal prison in October. He had agreed in 2007 to be an informant to the FBI while it built the case against Mason, which is why he received a significantly reduced sentence. Frank said Mason was offered a similar deal to cooperate with investigators, and she repeatedly refused.

John Minock, who represented Mason, said the sentence is unheard of for an arson that was not set with the intent to commit murder. He said the defense plans to appeal the decision.

"Asking for a 20-year sentence for someone like Marie Mason is like using a cannon to shoot a mouse," Minock said.

Andrew Arena, the special agent in charge of the FBI Detroit division, said ELF and its sister group, the Animal Liberation Front, or ALF, are simply domestic terrorist groups.

"They are nothing more than spoiled children who stamp their feet and sit in the corner to get their way," Arena said. "They are increasingly turning to violence."

He thanked MSU President Lou Ann K. Simon and MSU police Chief Jim Dunlap for their roles in the investigation, saying the FBI viewed it as a personal attack

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The convicted

Marie Mason — Pleased guilty to conspiring to commit arson, aggravated arson and arson for the Agriculture Hall fire on New Year's Eve 1999. Sentenced to 21 years and 10 months in prison and more than \$4 million restitution.

Frank Ambrose — Pleased guilty to conspiracy to commit the MSU arson. Sentenced to nine years in prison and more than \$4 million restitution.

Stephanie Fultz — Pleased guilty to one count of misprision of a felony, which amounts to knowing about and failing to report the MSU arson. Sentenced to two years of probation and 100 hours of community service.

Aren Burthwick — Pleased guilty to one count of misprision of a felony. Sentenced to 14 months in prison, one year supervised release and a \$2,000 fine.

SOURCE: COURT DOCUMENTS