

# Michigan Every Day

## By Patrick Sullivan and Carole Eberely

Sept. 27, 1962  
Nuclear Plant opens in Charlevoix

The first nuclear plant in Michigan opened without much fanfare on Sept. 27, 1962. Consumers Power Company officials said at 2:35 p.m. that day they had achieved a controlled nuclear reaction -- seven fuel bundles were lowered into a reactor. The plant took 30 months and \$27 million to build and would at first produce enough electricity to power a community with a population of 65,000. Although the plant closed in 1997, a decade later debate still lingered about what should be done about the site. At the time of its closing, it was the oldest nuclear plant in the country. The little Traverse Bay Conservancy wanted to buy a large portion of the property with the help of the state funds to make it a nature preserve. It said the land was habitat for deer, bear, porcupine and bald eagles, It is a rare chunk of Lake Michigan property in an area where most of the lakeshore is privately owned and developed. A coalition of environmental groups opposed the plan because of radioactivity at the site and the possibility that the state could spend millions of dollars to assume liability for ruined land and dangerous groundwater.