

LMC's GED going online

By **RALPH HEIBUTZKI**
HP Correspondent

BENTON TOWNSHIP — The days of taking your GED test with a pencil and paper soon will be history at Lake Michigan College, which is switching to a computerized format.

LMC will roll out the computerized version in January 2014 at MTEC in Benton Harbor, the college announced.

Students more comfortable with paper and pencil have until the Dec. 9 state-wide deadline to take their tests.

"Otherwise, they lose their scores, and they have to start over," chief examiner Jennifer Oldenburg said.

The paper version consists of five tests, which take about seven hours to complete. The computerized version will feature four tests that will take three hours to complete, mainly by combining the reading and writing portions into one subject, chief administrator Debbie Gillespie said.

"The other subject matters will still stay the same ... they'll still have math, social studies and science," she said.

LMC is completing the registration process to become a recognized electronic test administrator through Pearson Vue and

GED Testing Service.

The new test will cost \$150 to take, which is about \$50 cheaper than the present version, Gillespie said.

Concerns have been raised on whether the fees will shut out poorer students from the process.

Gillespie said students worried about the fees check should with the entity that's helping them to prepare for the test.

"As a testing agency, we don't offer the tutoring here because that would be a conflict of interest. They may have to find another avenue to get funding that wouldn't involve us," Gillespie said. "I know some people have gotten money from their churches."

The biggest concern, Gillespie said, is how students with few or no computer skills will adapt to the new format.

"Because it is a timed test, it would be our recommendation that these folks practice some keyboarding, or maybe take a class because that's going to be an additional challenge to people who are computer-savvy already," she said.

To register, or get more information, contact Oldenburg at 926-2554 or visit the College's M-TEC facility at 400 Klock Road, Benton Harbor.