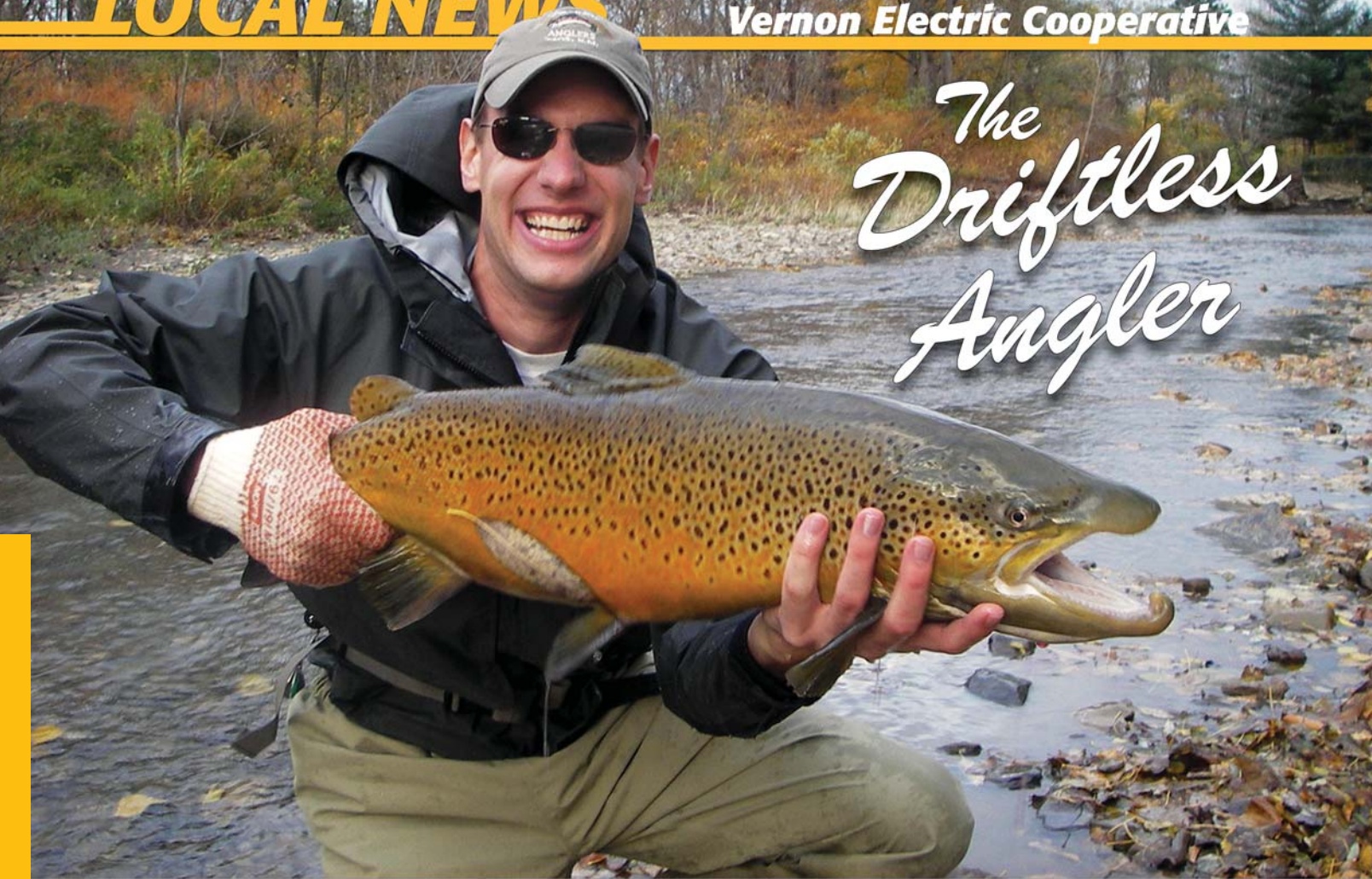


The Driftless Angler



New Business Takes Advantage of Area Trout Streams

*“Wisconsin?! Why the h*** would you want to move there?”*

From the initial pitch to his wife and family, to sharing his idea with fellow anglers back in the Rockies, the reaction was always the same. Their wide-eyed stares said it all. What person in their right mind would leave the fishing out West and head to what they thought was a no-name town, in a no-name area of Wisconsin, to open a fly shop called the Driftless Angler? They were ready to check Mat Wagner into the asylum.

After their initial shock, his family and friends listened as Mat calmly began to explain what an incredible fishery there was in the Driftless Area. He explained the thousands of miles of spring creek water, the close proximity of the creeks to town, the easy public access and friendly landowners, the ability to leave the crowds, and fish water much more intimate and relaxing than anything they had seen on the steep slopes of the Rockies. After a while their jaws were picked up off the floor, their

eyes were shrunk to normal size, and the conversation always ended with them saying, “Wow, that sounds like paradise; when can I come out and fish?”

Our little corner of the world is geographically unique in that the last glaciers did not deposit their gravel and dirt, or their “drift.” This “driftless area” has been carved into the earth over a period of millions of years. The effects of this carving are evident in our valleys, coulees, breathtaking bluffs, and a hilly topography more reminiscent of the mountainous West. But what is most important to anglers is the formation of limestone spring creeks.

Spring creeks are a very rare type of creek. They are formed when water underground seeps and bubbles up through cracks in the ground, carrying minerals from the rocks they pass through, in our case limestone. This limestone-enriched water, the same stuff that leaves that white residue on your faucets, is ideal for a productive trout stream. Amongst other things, it helps stabilize the pH of the water and provides essential minerals for growth