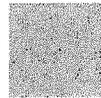


PORTAGE 2020



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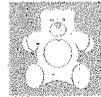
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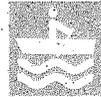
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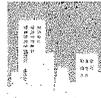
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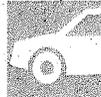
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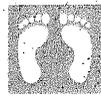
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INTRODUCTION

*The Portage 2020 Plan is a product of dedicated citizen involvement produced through the collective vision of many Portage volunteers. Countless hours have been contributed to the development of the Plan which will guide future policy decisions for Portage City Councils for years to come.*

*The citizen-driven nature of this planning effort ensures that the Portage 2020 Plan truly represents a future vision for the community by the community. Through the prudent implementation of Portage 2020 goals, the high-quality of life currently enjoyed in Portage will be maintained well into the 21st century.*

*Portage residents are deeply indebted to those volunteers who have contributed so significantly to the production of the Portage 2020 Plan.*

*Mayor Donald Overlander*

The Administration acknowledged a large task in suggesting that the City Council charge a representative citizen group with the responsibility of developing recommended directions, which could serve as a foundation for progress for the City of Portage over the next 30 years.

The effort of these individuals who completed this task is a testimony to the caring attitude of Portage citizens. Such an attitude is critical to a community's progress.

This 2020 project provides evidence to future generations of the caring attitude of those serving on this Committee. The strong desire for the continued progress of this community by those who readily gave of their time and talents in this effort will be most evident to all who study this 2020 Report.

Sincere thanks to all participants of PORTAGE 2020!

*Michael L. Stampfler, City Manager*

The City of Portage has a short (incorporated in 1963) but tempestuous history. Its burgeoning population has spawned a diversity of religious, racial and ethnic groups. The city can boast of residential, commercial and industrial development; an enviable school district; and an always supportive corporate resident, The Upjohn Company.

In January 1991 The Portage City Council selected citizens to participate in the Portage 2020 Advisory Committee.

A nationally known futurist led several sessions with the Advisory Committee in order to extend thinking and vision toward a larger community of the nation and the world.

The Committee, comprising eight task forces, was charged with identifying the needs of the City of Portage and establishing direction toward the year 2020. The citizen task forces reviewed the city's position in the current year with regard to the categories delineated. Research, interviews, consultants and a regular schedule of meetings preceded the final task force reports.

The chairperson of each task force met on another schedule as a Steering Committee to guide the development of the final Portage 2020 project to completion. Portage 2020 takes shape in three distinct forms: The Working Document (the total reports from the eight task forces); the Summary Report, an edited version with photos and graphics; and a condensed report mailed to all Portage households in a special edition of *The Portager*.

It is hoped that all of the Portage residents and others who read this report will benefit and enjoy Portage 2020 as much as those who participated in its development and production.

*Betty Lee Ongley, Chairperson  
Portage 2020 Steering Committee*

A VISION OF THE FUTURE

In 2020 the City of Portage will be a "world class community," where the needs of its diverse population will be met through a coordinated effort of city, county and regional services.

Portage will remain a good community to raise a family because of access to decent, affordable housing and public and social services. An environmentally responsible attitude shared by industry and residents and a diverse economic base will also contribute to a high quality of life for Portage residents.

The city's population, expected to reach 50,000, will be rich in ethnically diverse cultures. The City will welcome this diversity and have the resources to maximize communication among all populations.

As will occur nationwide, Portage will have an aging population. Eighteen percent of the population will be 65 and older. An aging society will require changes in terms of housing, social services, recreation, transportation and in all

other areas of life.

Portage will adapt and respond to the changing populations by providing appropriate services and cultural, recreational, educational and other opportunities.

Residents of all ages and ethnic backgrounds will congregate at a centrally located community center. The multi-functional community center will be the site for both passive and active recreational and leisure activities for people of all ages. Business and special interest organizations will also utilize the community center for many functions. One of its functions will be as a cultural center.

Portage will be a regional cultural area that provides a forum for live theatre, performing arts, music and festivals. Many of these events will take place at the Celery Flats Historical Area. In addition to entertainment, this area will be home to the Portage Historical Museum, which will serve as an educational and cultural facility for Portage's history.

However, no community can enjoy a wealth of cultural, social and leisure activities without a strong economic base to support them. Portage will enjoy positive economic growth. Through comprehensive regional economic development efforts, the City will establish more commercial and industrial establishments. Additionally, the city's residents will enjoy the lowest taxes per capita in the state.

Portage will have to balance the needs of industry with the need to protect its land, air, water and other natural resources. It is envisioned that by 2020, Portage's natural resources and commercial development will co-exist in harmony. This will result in part to strict enforcement of environmental laws, citizen education and involvement and alternative forms of transportation.

Such transportation may include bicycles, shuttle buses or a commuter train. The demand for public transportation is expected to increase due to the growth of an aging population and individuals who cannot afford an automobile. The major

OUR VISION

change in transportation, however, will be in the alteration of the major and local road system to alleviate congestion and allow easier access to and egress from the City.

By 2020 communities will maximize their resources through regional cooperation. Portage may find it advantageous to participate in the areas of public utilities, waste disposal, road maintenance, public services and other areas as well. A regional business assistance center will greatly benefit Portage and the rest of the region in attracting new business. A sophisticated telecommunications system will link departments, buildings and cities.

While the city's globalized approach to communication will vastly improve the delivery of some services, the rapid acceleration of technology does not always parallel advances in lifestyles. Many of today's pressing social issues will not disappear in the future. Portage will provide social service and community resources through a non-profit organization that recognizes human problems are

often intertwined with one another and require overlapping services.

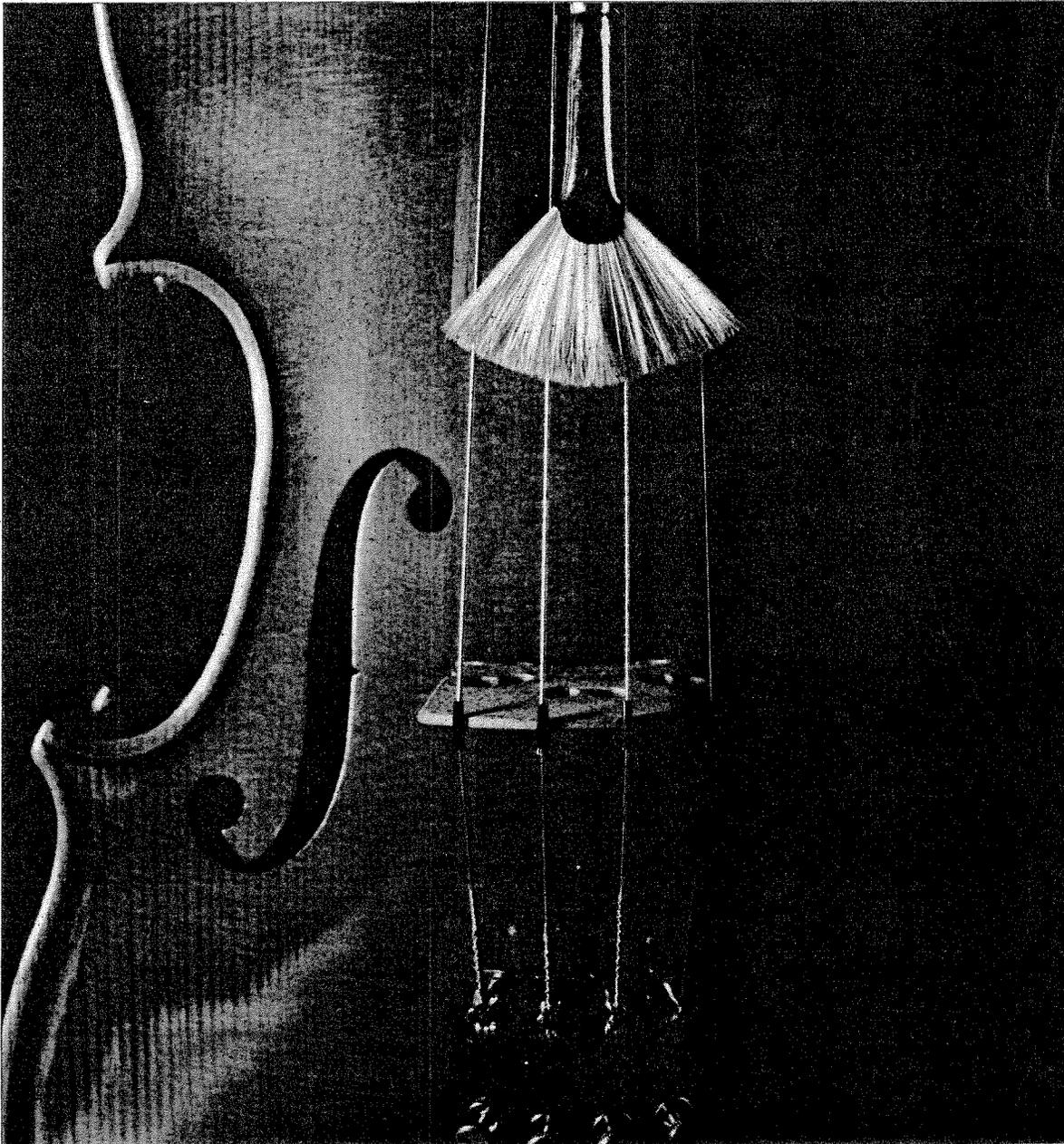
The services will primarily be in the areas of marriage and the family, divorce, single-parenting, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, elder abuse and childcare.

It is of course the youth who are the future of any city. To prepare today's youth to live productive adult lives in 2020, the school system will have to adapt its methods. An estimated 20 million U.S. industrial and information sector jobs will be lost as productivity and technology increases. Automation and foreign competition will eliminate three to ten times more skilled, technical and professional jobs than are created by the end of the century.

As a result the trend in education will deviate from traditional college-oriented curriculum. Eighty-five percent of future jobs will not require a college education. Instead students will be directed toward curriculums in vocational, highly technical and professional areas. Additionally, the trend indicates that lifelong

learning rather than the traditional kindergarten through twelfth grade education will predominate. The Portage Public Schools must be responsive to these changes and prepare the teachers, staff and curriculum to meet the evolving needs of education.

No major city is without problems, but the residents, business and government of Portage are committed to shaping the city in which they live and work to ensure that by 2020, Portage will be a "world class community."

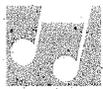


### *Vision Statement*

*In 2020 Portage will be a magnet city that attracts visitors from surrounding areas to participate in activities that entertain, inform and educate. Residents of Portage and Kalamazoo County will enjoy access to a variety of cultural arts through local groups dedicated to the performing, visual and artistic arts in the community. Many of these events will take place in a centrally located community cultural center utilizing the various organizations and groups in the City.*

*Whether attending a musical performance or a museum that honors the region's history, visitors and residents will find Portage a cultural center unparalleled in the region.*

ARTS AND CULTURE



### Situation Analysis

The university community in Kalamazoo County promotes a broad range of cultural, academic and leisure activities. In Portage the diverse population abounds with artistic interests and abilities. However, with no performing arts facility and limited storage space, performing groups have no place to rehearse or perform.

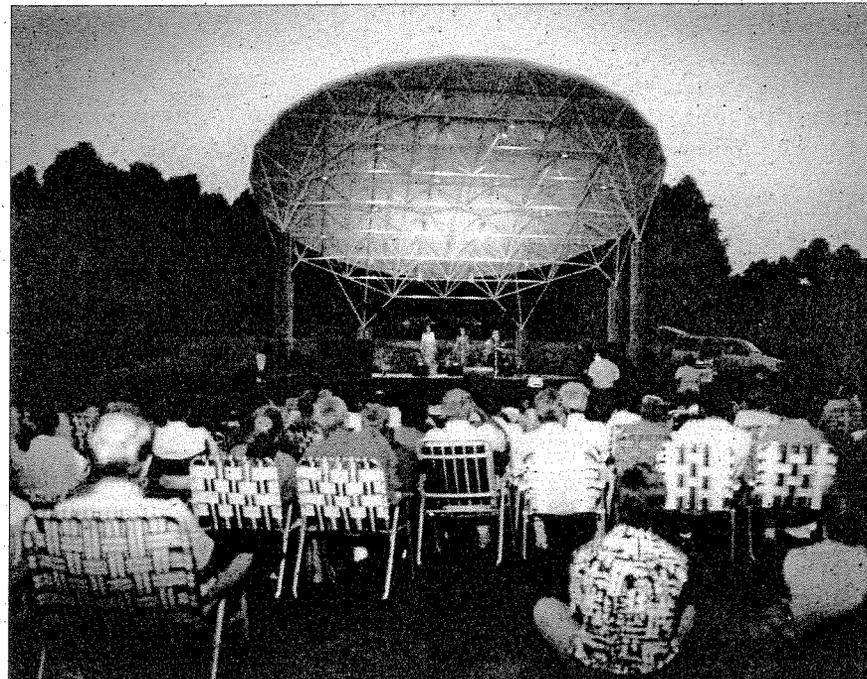
### Strategic Direction

A vibrant community requires a cultural base that encourages growth and participation in the arts. Portage and the arts community should provide the physical facilities for its residents to enjoy these quality-of-life opportunities. The recommended five areas are:

- Regional
- International
- Entertainment
- Educational
- Festivals

### REGIONAL

A community cultural center built in the City Centre Area would house various groups for cultural, educational and artistic events. The cultural center, designed for multiple uses, should include an auditorium for local performing amateur groups and touring professional groups and a "school" to allow for diverse ethnic and cultural groups to share their ideas and experiences.

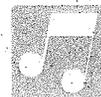


### Showcasing Portage's History

As Portage grows and matures, steps to record and preserve its history must be taken. The first step is to build a museum in the Celery Flats Historical Area to house historical documents and memorabilia. An oral history catalogue could be developed by working with the Historical Commission and interviewing Portage residents.

Residents and visitors will further appreciate the city's history by adding historical markers and guides designating areas of interest in Bicentennial Park, as well as developing a historical trail in the city.

An artistic view of Portage's history could be expressed by displaying in City Hall a mural painted by schoolchildren showing Portage's history and development.



### INTERNATIONAL

As our global environment shrinks, cities like Portage must create an environment sensitive to other cultures by providing ethnic, cultural and language centers in the cultural center for business, travelers and local residents.

A way of recognizing the Portage area population's continued growth in ethnic diversity is to create an "International Day Celebration of Arts and Culture."

As further awareness of its ethnic diversity, the community should develop a sister city relationship with a foreign city.

Recognition of Portage's ethnic diversity extends to developing and placing a multi-lingual brochure about Portage activities at strategic locations such as the Kalamazoo-Battle Creek International Airport and the Kalamazoo Center.

Adding telephones at travel areas throughout southwestern Michigan will allow people to dial a central area number for information on Portage events.

### ENTERTAINMENT

The cultural center will provide a place for local and visiting groups to perform and practice. With a modular construction, the center could accommodate both a large auditorium, as well as classrooms.

The Celery Flats Historical Area, already a frequently visited area, can be enhanced by purchasing the Roberts barn and wellhouse on Milham Avenue. This structure could be used as a theatre, a dance area or a lecture hall.

### EDUCATIONAL

The community cultural center will provide a place for the schools to hold music festivals, forensic contests and exhibit areas for the performing and fine arts. Its design may include a mural of Portage painted by various Portage cultural groups.

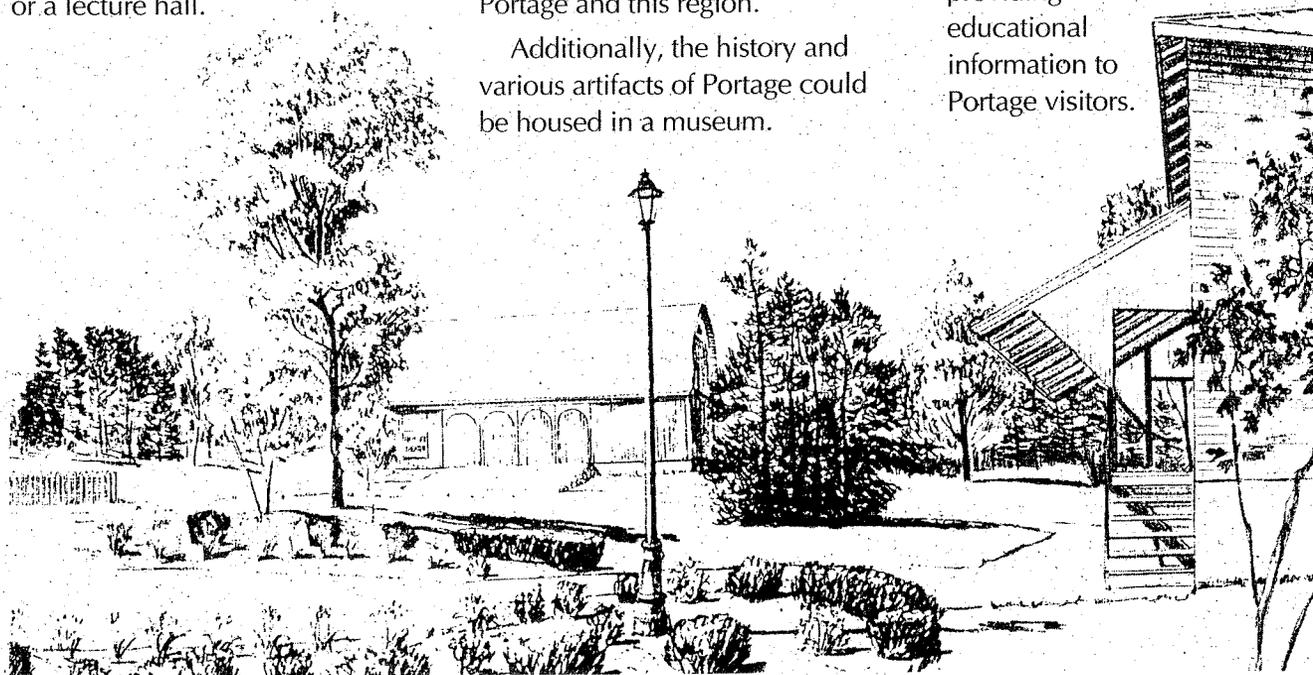
An oral and written history of Portage and southwest Michigan should be developed for school presentations. The history would include the geography, people and events that have shaped Portage and this region.

Additionally, the history and various artifacts of Portage could be housed in a museum.

This museum would either be built, or the Roberts home could be moved to Celery Flats for this use.

The business community could be showcased by developing a high-tech fair that displays its products and services. This fair will not only give the businesses visibility, it will serve as an educational forum on technology.

Further educational efforts could be directed at local travel agencies to assist them in providing educational information to Portage visitors.



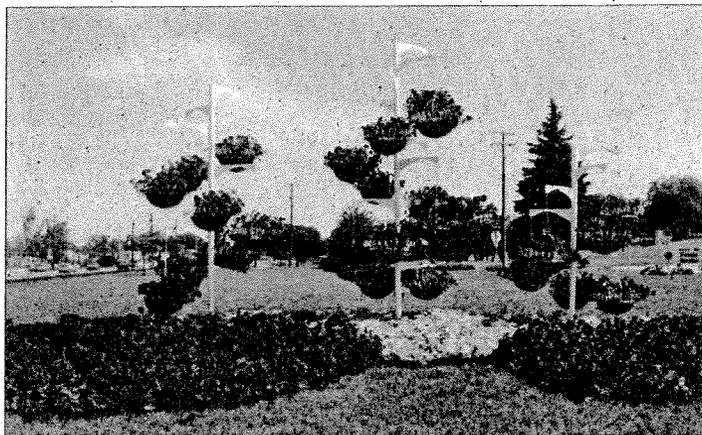


## FESTIVALS

In Kalamazoo County festivals attract visitors, residents and dollars while creating goodwill for the area. The City of Portage could establish festivals, such as a New Year's Fest and/or a Mardi Gras Festival to be held in the city with the participation of various churches, community and social organizations.

Celebrating Portage as the greenhouse capital of the world is another festival idea.

Portage's many lakes make a sand sculpture festival in the summer and a snow festival in the winter a natural venue. The bandshell area should remain a popular location for music, visual and performing arts festivals.



## Conclusions

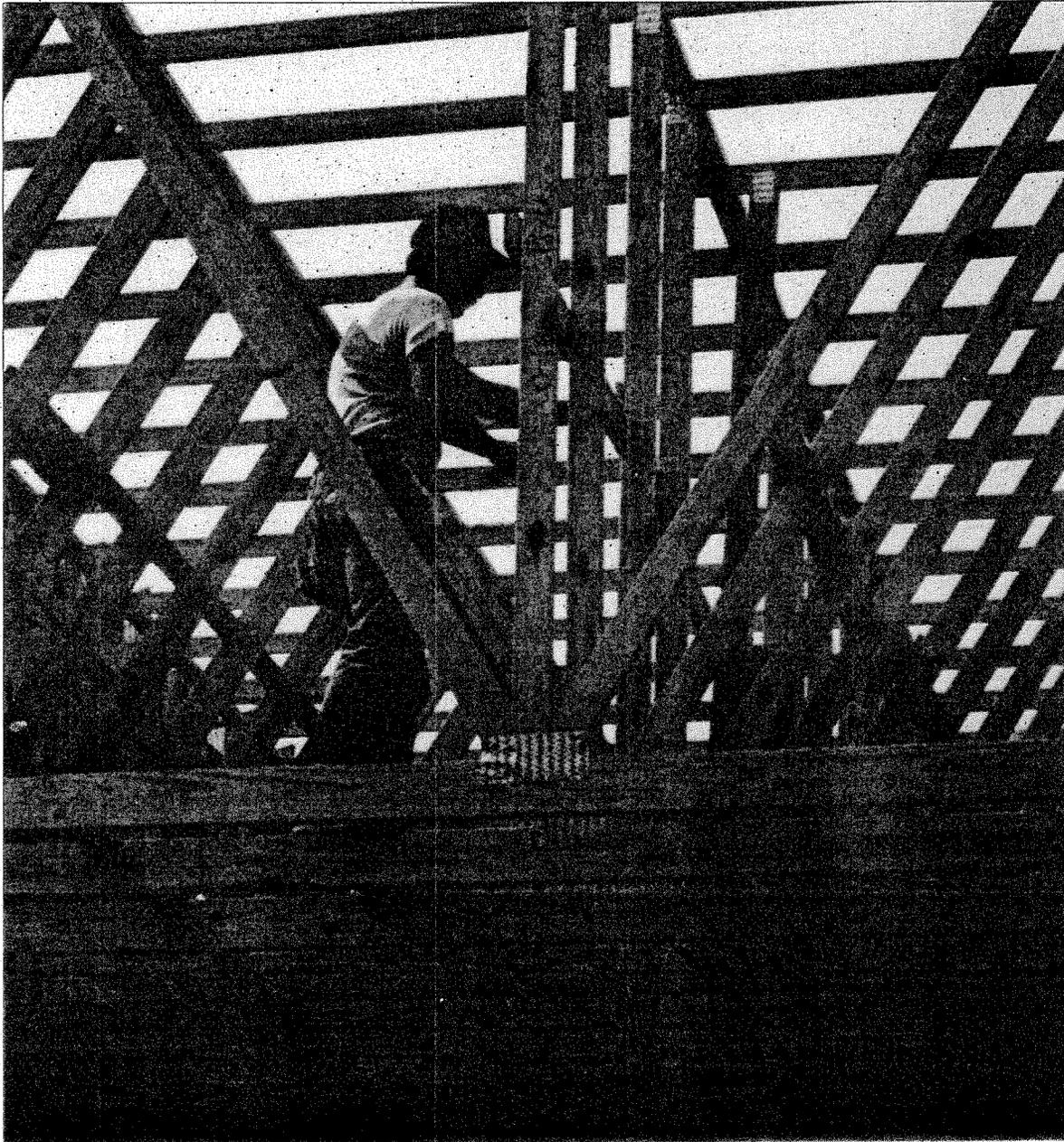
Portage, as a regional center for the greater Kalamazoo County area and southern southwestern Michigan, will become a "magnet" city for culture and art.

The community cultural center will become self-supporting through the rental fees collected from non-profit local groups and profit generated by professional visiting performing artists.

The City should form an organization called the Portage Foundation. This organization will allow residents, organizations and businesses to contribute tax-free donations to the upkeep and growth of the center.

A Museum Foundation is also recommended. The museum will be self-sustaining through membership opportunities and the sale of memorial "bricks."

Portage will continue to be a City on the Grow, especially in culture and the arts. It is envisioned that Portage will become a model for other communities that wish to develop a strong core of cultural activities.



### *Vision Statement*

*Economic growth is essential to the maintenance and further improvement of the city's quality of life.*

*To that end elected officials, government staff, advisory board members, educational administrators, community and business leaders and the general citizenry should strive to work together in the City and in the region to foster economic growth.*

*To remain competitive and to continue a high quality of life in 2020, it is recommended that the City of Portage adopt the following mission statement for its strategic direction: To ensure economic growth in Portage.*

ECONOMY



### *Situation Analysis*

The residents of the City of Portage live within a worldwide environment, where standards in many ways are now being set for economic expansion in other countries, as well as in other regions of the United States.

This directly contrasts with the post-World War II era up to the 1970s when the business environment in the United States was considered the driving force of the world economy.

The U.S. is now in competition with wage rates, quality standards and other factors from all over the world.

### *Property Valuations*

Portage is no longer primarily a residential community. Since its establishment as a city, Portage has grown rapidly in population and development.

Property valuations (SEV) are now balanced approximately 50/50 between residential/agricultural and commercial/industrial and have grown from slightly more than \$386 million in 1980 to almost \$816 million in 1990 — a gain of more than 110 percent over ten years. The Upjohn Company, a dominant property holder, has consistently represented 25 percent of the property valuations (SEV) in Portage.

Some of this gain is due to inflation, but much of it is a measure of real growth—an average of 6.2 percent per year. Nevertheless, this has taken place in a countywide context of a slowdown in the expansion of property values—3.5 percent per year over ten years, which is below the national average.

The future economic growth of the city is based upon the success of the region. Growth and employment opportunities locally and regionally must continue to expand. Even though Portage is a political and economic entity, it is really a part of an interrelated region where there is little distinction among economic, cultural and social boundaries.

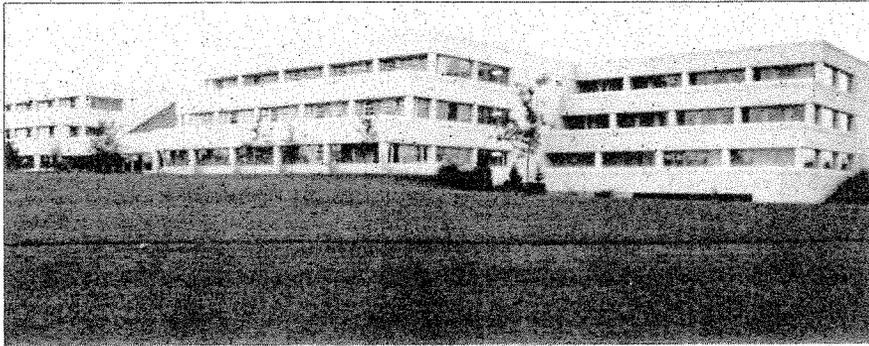
### *Personal Income*

Historically, the Kalamazoo area income levels remain considerably above the national average. The hourly wage figure for 1987 indicates that 40 percent of the work force earned more than \$10.75 per hour compared to the national average of 29 percent. These income levels have helped provide an above-average quality of life:

In the county, manufacturing workers represented 52 percent of the total payroll while only 35 percent of total employees. The significance of the manufacturing jobs is that they have helped to maintain the higher living standard of this area and to form the basis upon which most of the county is dependent.

To continue the expansion of its economic base, Portage must continue to seek the type of business development that naturally includes a majority of higher-paying jobs.





## Employment

Kalamazoo County possesses one of the most diversified manufacturing environments in the state of Michigan. The more than 450 manufacturing firms located within the county represent nearly every aspect of the manufacturing field.

Prominent industries include pharmaceuticals, automotive, paper products, plastics, medical equipment, fabricated metals, industrial robots, aircraft controls, chemicals and bedding plants.

The average labor force in 1989 was 120,330 with an unemployment rate of 5 percent. In 1986 trades made up less than 15 percent of the county payroll and services only 20 percent, while manufacturing contributed more than half.

A majority of the county's manufacturing establishments (60 percent) have 10 or more employees; 178 establishments have fewer than 100 employees.

The county's recent net loss of manufacturing jobs may be due in part to the lack of economic competitiveness of the state of Michigan, where the cost of doing business is high.

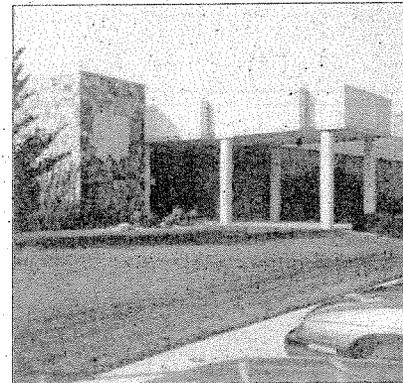
The state has been ranked near the bottom of the list for states in terms of desirability for new plant locations. This low ranking is attributed to the high cost of real estate, business taxes and labor costs, as well as strong environmental laws, high unemployment and workers' compensation expenses and a perceived high rate of labor force unionization.

## Education

The Kalamazoo Valley Intermediate School District (KVISD) is a regional body which serves as a link between the local school districts and the State Board of Education.

Encompassing nearly all of Kalamazoo County, KVISD furnishes materials and services which the school districts could not provide independently.

The county is also serviced by the Kalamazoo Area Mathematics and Science Center. The county has 79 schools with a total enrollment of more than 33,000 students. Five institutions of higher learning with more than 40,000 students taking college programs and skills training are also in the area. These students



and schools have a positive economic impact on the county.

The state and county offer specific programs such as the Michigan Business and Industrial Training Program, the Michigan Job Opportunity Bank-Upgrade, and the Kalamazoo County Job Training Partnership Act to encourage new industries to locate within the area.

The mission of many of the programs is to prepare individuals for long-term employment and to focus existing resources to retain and encourage new employment through economic expansion.

## Infrastructure

The infrastructure is very important to the continued economic expansion within Portage. The continued development of modern transportation, communications systems, water and electrical services must be examined.

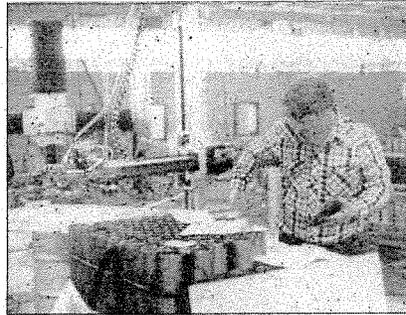
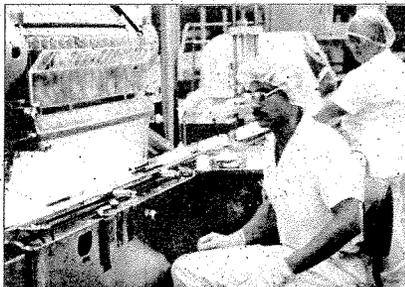


### Manufacturing Sector

The region's economic health has long been dependent upon the strength and diversity of its manufacturing base.

In recent times the loss of manufacturing plants due to the non-competitiveness of this area has created concern about retaining and attracting new plants. As an example, the recent loss of Petersen Springs and Fabri-Kal plants, plus the downsizing at the James River Corp., Prab Robot, Inc., National Water Lift and The Upjohn Company have decreased 1,500 high-paying manufacturing positions. These losses have a significant impact on Portage and the region's economy.

A greater competitive environment is the apparent cause of the



decrease in high-paying manufacturing positions.

The continued development of the retailing sector in Portage cannot replace the personal buying power that is lost with the higher-paying jobs of manufacturing.

Between 1989 and 1991, the county had a net loss of 2,000 manufacturing jobs and a net gain of 5,000 service and governmental positions. The service sector jobs are lower-paying positions with minimal benefits.

Then, there is the hypothesis: What would happen if The Upjohn Company was absorbed by another company, or if the General Motors plant in Comstock was closed?

The potential loss of these and associated jobs in the community would have a major impact on the total region.

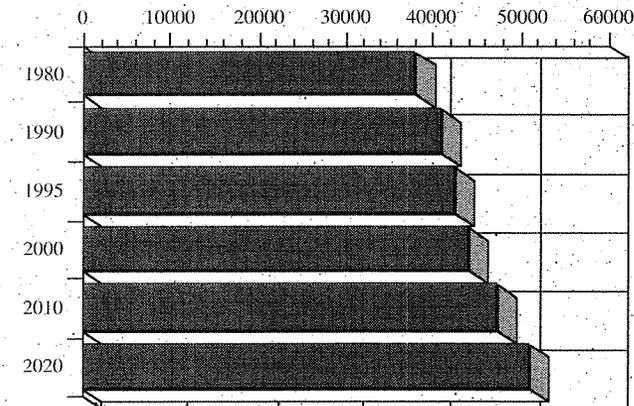
### Population

Kalamazoo County's 1990 population was about 221,000. The City of Portage represented about 41,000 or 19 percent of the total.

The county's projection in 2000 is 235,000 or a gain of about 6 percent. If Portage equals this gain, its population will be approximately 43,500.

Based on the current growth to the south of Kalamazoo, the population will more than likely exceed 50,000 by 2020. (See chart below.)

City of Portage Population (1995-2020 projected)



### Government

The City of Portage has enjoyed an equally divided tax base between residential and industrial/commercial valuations.

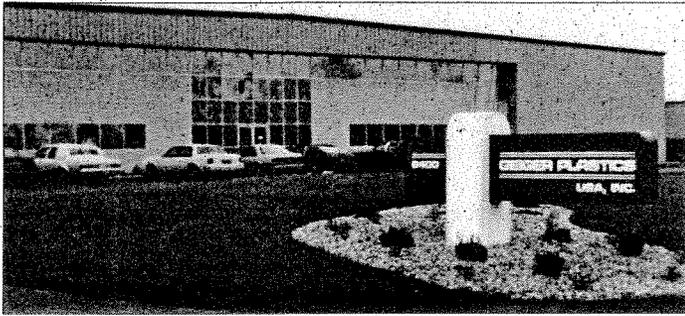
This base and its growth has allowed the city to grow and expand at a rate greater than that of other regional governments.

In the last ten years, the total SEV (\$816 million) has grown significantly, while the city SEV rate (\$10.84/1000) has only increased slightly.

When comparing the 1990 municipal tax rates with other cities, the City of Portage rated eighth out of twenty-five.

To encourage growth the City has a tax abatement program and funding programs to assist in the

business location decision-making process.



## Technology

Current rapid technological changes will have the greatest impact on how business and governmental affairs are conducted in 2020. The local government must be prepared to adapt and respond to these rapid changes.

Technology will lead to increased productivity, which will continue to result in industry outproducing the population's ability to consume.

And, technological demands will increase the cost of doing business and managing local government.

Another major concern is that computer advancement will continue to remove personal privacy and confidentiality, and increase the already fast paced economy.

## Threats/Weaknesses

- Greater resistance to new taxes and additional governmental expansion by residents.
- Limited governmental revenues with increasing costs of operating city government.
- Increasing number of senior citizens who will require multiple services.
- More women in the workforce resulting in the need for additional day care centers and different services for single parents.
- More minorities and immigrants who will need more specialized services.
- Current perception of government as having a desire to stop growth.
- Deteriorating infrastructure.
- Greater urban and retailing

sprawl along major transportation corridors which creates congestion.

- Decreased state and federally funded grant programs to continue the development of city services.
- More user fees and charges for city services.
- Community perception that city officials lack a strategic vision, may impair lifestyles in the future.
- Eroding manufacturing base in the region that threatens the quality of life in Portage.
- Too many residents have a "not in my backyard" attitude that prevents city expansion.

## Opportunities/Strengths

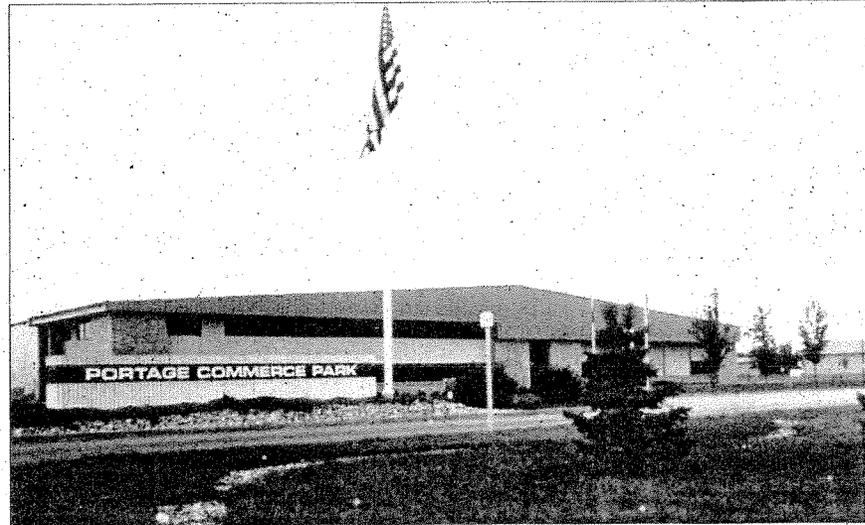
- The city's retailing sector draws consumer spending from surrounding counties.
- The residential tax base is balanced in the City with an approximate 50 percent ratio of industrial/commercial. This balanced ratio is more favorable than that of other areas.
- A quality environment with higher standards will lead to less environmental issues.
- Greater accountability and productivity on the part of the local government will lead to a more efficient government as demanded by the residents.
- The manufacturing sector regionally represents a large portion of the total business sector compared to other regions in the state.
- The city tax was the eighth lowest of selected cities in the state of Michigan.
- The availability of sewer and water facilities here is greater than in other regions.
- Citizen involvement in economic committees/groups have added to the city's growth.
- Quality of life in the city has led to the desire to sustain or improve upon the lifestyle.
- The per capita income within the city is greater than the average in the region.
- The educational level of the residents is high and will continue to remain above the average, due to the industries and institutions of higher learning located within the region.



## A Regional Approach Strategic Direction

Intensify a regional approach to economic development to stimulate industrial and business growth in Portage and the region by 1995. This can be accomplished by:

- Developing a plan and working with each government within the region to encourage cooperative development before 1 January 1995.
- Taking a proactive lead with the private sector to promote the expansion of the tax base and employment opportunities (local major businesses, Chamber of Commerce, CEO Council) before 1 January 1994.
- Developing an aggressive policy to better compete with municipalities in other areas to attract more business to the region by 1 January 1993.
- Revamping city zoning and fire codes that are socially and economically responsible; yet encourage the development of acceptable facilities for manufacturing by 1 January 1993.



- Increasing local governmental participation and incentives to attract more businesses to the region, plus encouraging existing businesses to remain and expand in the area.
- Creating specialized industrial parks, existing and new, for heavy industry, corporate offices, high technology and small to medium-sized enterprises within an effective land use plan.
- Targeting specialized industries to locate within the region, such as corporate and regional office centers, recycling industries, small start-up businesses, research-driven industries, foreign companies and others.
- Co-developing a large industrial park in conjunction with an adjacent township, the county or the City of Kalamazoo.
- Soliciting foreign companies to locate subsidiary operations in Portage or in the region.
- Re-evaluating the possible relocation of the airport and use the land for an industrial park.
- Appointing a councilperson as a liaison with the business community by 1 January 1992.

- Utilizing existing state programs with funds to clean up contaminated industrial sites.
- Participating in a regional development corporation, such as a venture capital or equity capital fund for the development and location of industrial concerns in the region.

## A Comprehensive Plan

Develop a dependable, yet flexible, comprehensive plan that can be used by developers and industries to plan their future activities and meet the rapidly changing conditions. This can be accomplished by:

- Conducting a comprehensive evaluation of all existing and new areas that can be used for industrial development and follow the plan before 1 January 1993.
- Seeking the assistance of all area governments to participate in the development of a regionally driven economic expansion plan.



## Regional Management

Work toward a participatory local and/or regional body to effectively manage available resources within the region with a target date of 1 January 1996. This can be accomplished by:

- Working with state government to develop an equitable taxation system to generate required revenues for economic development.
- Encouraging the local banking institutions to continue to invest in the region to insure their own future.
- Developing a creative industrial incentive plan (which does not necessarily eliminate needed tax revenues) to entice manufacturing firms to the region.
- Establishing an advisory council composed of governmental, industrial, retailing, residential and banking representatives to develop and manage the comprehensive plan as directed by the City Council.

- Enticing investors and developers to participate in the development plan as they can be the key to financial resources.
- Providing financial support for agencies or organizations which assist business with management issues, such as SBDC, CGA, CEO and Chamber of Commerce.

## A Community Affairs Program

Establish a Community Affairs Program to retain existing retail and industrial companies by 31

December 1991. This can be accomplished by:

- Evaluating current city staff and appointing an existing high level employee to be director of the Community Affairs Program by 31 December 1991.
- Developing an action plan to retain current businesses and implementing plan by 31 December 1992.
- Training all current and future city employees to be responsive to the needs of the customer—residential, retailing and industry.



## Educational and Business Liaison

Pursue the educational needs that can proactively affect the changing world and develop an employable population by requesting the school system appoint a business liaison from each secondary school and university. This can be accomplished by:

- Encouraging educators in the region to understand the needs of a changing business community and to react effectively.
- Assessing the resource needs of the educational system and planning more acceptable methods to finance education.
- Working with industry and the educational systems to establish and periodically update rotation programs for selected business topics to develop instructors with practical experience.
- Establishing additional vocational and retraining programs as a regular part of the existing educational system.

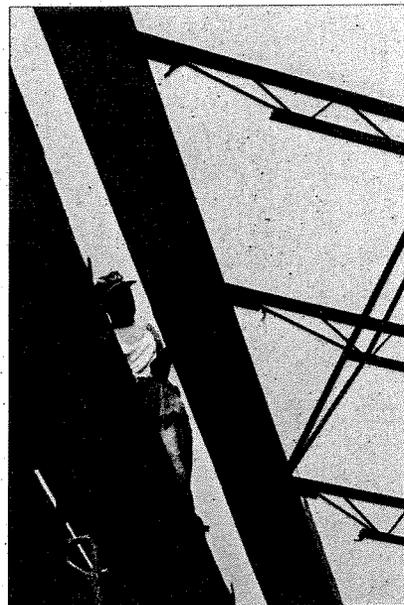


- Coordinating the educational system within the region and continuing to develop specialty centers, such as the math and science center, foreign language center, technical trades center and others.
- Assessing educational needs based on expected future changes in technology.
- Lobbying with the state and federal governments to change pension laws to allow flexible movement of employees/educators so they are not penalized on retirement programs in proportion to what they currently have vested.

### *Infrastructure*

Upgrade and advance the infrastructure to meet the needs of economic expansion. This can be accomplished by:

- Developing a comprehensive regional transit plan to move the population whether it be mass transit, roads or some other type of "people movers."
- Pursuing the local utilities to create a workable plan to provide affordable energy and communications systems to serve residential, retail and industrial customers.

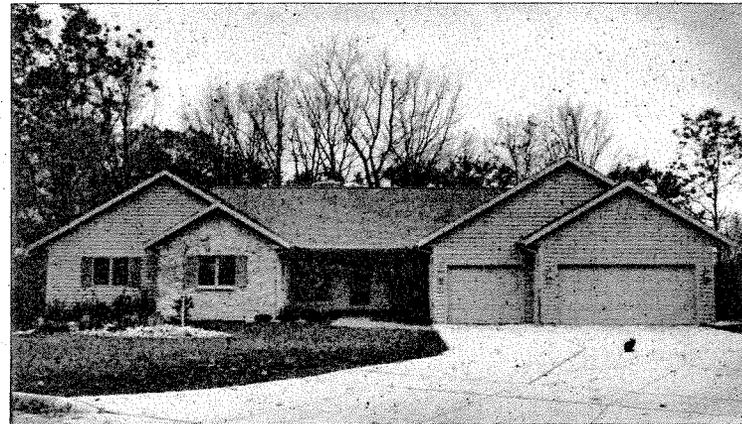
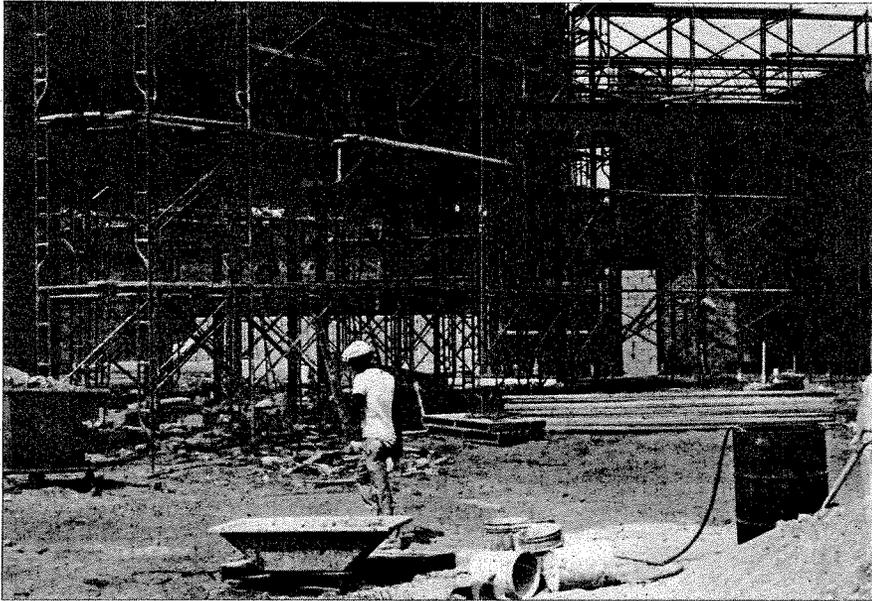


- Managing the growth of the infrastructure within available resources by establishing a regional development fund to plan and develop the infrastructure with funds generated by both taxation and business contributions.
- Participating with the local medical community to create affordable health care services in the region and avoiding duplication of facilities and services.
- Encouraging local industry to establish co-generation plants to convert waste to energy—government and industry should be partners in developing technology to accomplish economically and environmentally sound co-generation from waste.
- Developing a regional plan to handle waste disposal within the region and recycle where feasible.

### *An Employable Population Base*

Develop an employable population base. This can be accomplished by:

- Educating the population on the need to support an environmentally responsible business community that creates jobs to maintain the region's quality of life.
- Establishing skill assessment centers to match employees with job requirements supported by industry.
- Promoting industry/business using more job-sharing for people who are interested in part-time positions.
- Assisting minorities to upgrade skills and seek gainful employment.



### *Conclusions*

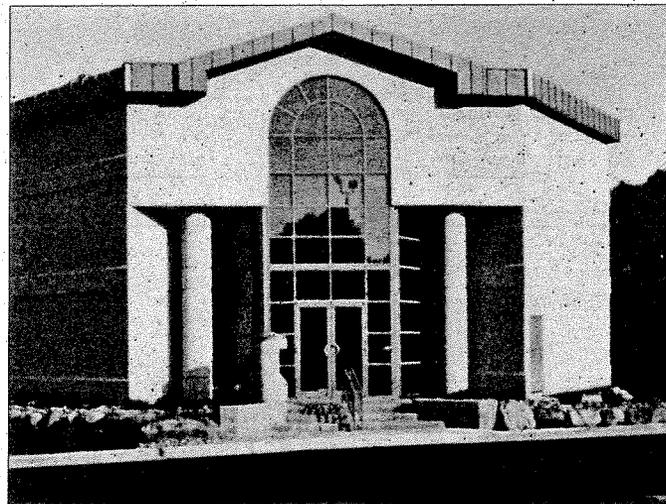
Since a healthy and dynamic economic sector is the foundation for all aspects of a community's quality of life, and since that sector is always in a process of change, the mission statement, "To ensure economic growth in Portage," is recommended.

A healthy and dynamic economic sector encompasses many parts of the community, including education, infrastructure, government, environment,

labor force, housing, utilities, technology, retailing, manufacturing, services and more.

Elected officials, community and business leaders and the general citizenry need to realize that economic growth is essential to the continuation of the quality of life.

To that end everyone should strive to work in the city and in the region to cooperatively foster that growth.





### *Vision Statement*

*The future environmental health of the City of Portage depends on our stewardship and ability to manage the abundant water, air and land resources with which we have been blessed.*

*The City of Portage must protect and enhance its natural resources and promote optimum standards of environmental ethics in its residents to ensure a high quality of life for current and future Portage residents.*

ENVIRONMENT



### Situation Analysis

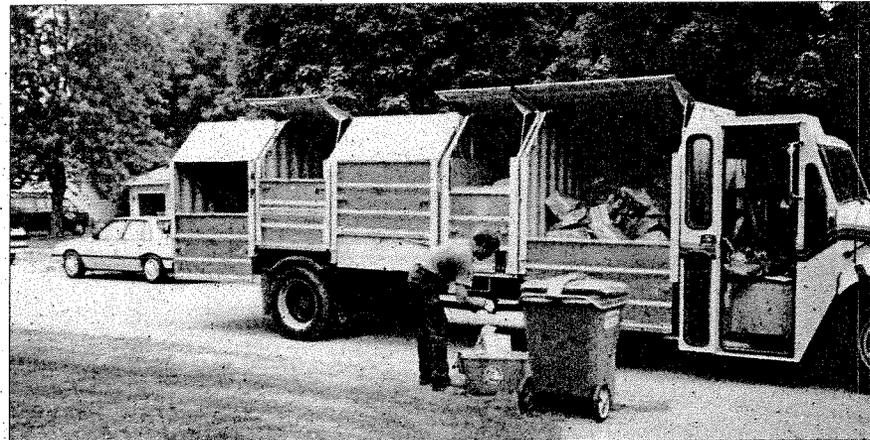
Pro-active efforts are required to protect and enhance the essential resources which provide the quality of life in the City of Portage. Regulation after the fact will not work. Decisive action is needed to develop plans which lead to sound policy decisions, forward-looking management measures and increased public awareness of the need to manage air, water and land resources.

### Strategic Direction

Toward these ends the civic leaders and residents must find the courage and the stamina to manage their environmental resources and consider these basic tenets when dealing with the environment:

- Residents and governmental leaders must be sensitive to an environmental culture which protects and enhances its natural and man-made resources.
- The public must be educated to heighten its environmental knowledge.
- Environmental questions must be answered, and hard choices must be made.

- Answers to environmental questions require a difficult balance of values, costs and benefits.
- City staff must set an example by demonstrating a special environmental responsibility.
- Environmental protection never relies on one solution as the final one but instead explores all options.
- Environmental activities should be encouraged rather than mandated.
- Energy conservation, waste reduction and recycling efforts should be aggressively promoted.
- Residents should be encouraged to recycle at work and at home.
- Employers should include an environmental goal in their employee incentive programs.
- Portage should formalize environmental policies (put them in writing, measure city activities against them and communicate written policies internally and externally).
- Maximum protection to open spaces, green areas and natural resources should be provided.
- Solutions may have environmental consequences as important as the problems.
- Environmental protection must come first to satisfy residents' needs and expectations in this area.



## ETHICS AND EDUCATION

### Situation Analysis

Portage, like communities throughout the United States, is coming of age environmentally as its residents acknowledge that maintaining a high standard of environmental quality is essential to maintaining a high standard of living. Old and new environmental challenges will continue to face Portage as the year 2020 approaches, requiring that educational opportunities dealing with environmental ethics and concerns begin in the schools and continue for a lifetime.



## Ethics

### Strategic Direction

#### Objective

*Promote environmental ethics within the community and businesses of Portage.*

- Coordinate programs to encourage businesses and residents to adopt an Environmental Code of Ethics.
- Publicize actions of businesses and individuals who demonstrate the implementation of the Environmental Code of Ethics.
- Adopt and promote an environmental logo, motto and flag.
- Support and celebrate such activities as Earth Day, Arbor Day and significant environmental events.
- Issue awards from city to businesses and individuals who positively impact on the environment.
- Coordinate ongoing task forces representing different areas of the city to keep abreast of ongoing and future environmental issues.

- Create an Environmental Projects Committee to encourage voluntary environmental projects.
- Encourage businesses to adapt management practices to reduce environmental impacts.

## Education

#### Objective

*Educate citizens regarding local, regional, national and world environmental issues and environmental lifestyles including, but not limited to:*

- Disposing properly of household and hazardous wastes.
- Composting leaves and other organic materials.
- Buying recycled products.
- Volunteering for environmental projects.
- Using alternative transportation regularly.
- Gardening and landscaping organically.
- Supporting environmental millages, taxes and legislation.
- Supporting existing environmental programs.

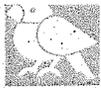
- Creating a proactive and heightened state of "Environmental Awareness"

#### Tactics

- Issue an environmental newsletter regularly from the city.
- Support environmental learning activities within the county and region.
- Encourage schools to incorporate city environmental standards into any environmental curriculum that is developed.
- Develop incentive programs for involvement in environmental projects.
- Encourage and support environmental education at each grade (K-12).
- Coordinate a competition among local developers to design and build "earth friendly" homes and neighborhoods.
- Provide common background knowledge on key environmental issues as defined by the previous points through a public relations campaign coordinated by Portage Public Library, local radio and Cable Access.

### The Cycle in Recycle

- Devise and publish strategies for homes and businesses to become "earth friendly" one step at a time.
- Continue to cooperate with regional pro-environment efforts.
- Educate residents and businesses about the importance of the natural areas within Portage.
- Establish a pro-environment effort that involves local and regional cooperation.
- Develop educational programs to promote energy conservation.
- Encourage and monitor right-to-know programs within the city.



## AIR QUALITY CONTROL

### Situation Analysis

From the fires of the prehistoric era to the smokestacks of the industrial revolution, we have been diminishing the quality of the air that we breathe. In today's technological era society realizes the adverse effects that past and present practices have had on our atmosphere. A poisoned atmosphere presents several problems: adverse health complications, the possible extinction of non-adaptable biological inhabitants and the possible termination of life as we know it.

The City of Portage is presented with several atmospheric problems: business emissions, ozone transport and several unacceptable practices which have a direct correlation with the quality of the air. The City of Portage, industries and the general populace need to take action to not harm the air (atmosphere) that we breathe, but to enhance the quality of our air.

## Quality of Air Strategic Direction

### Objective

*Improve enforcement of Clean Air Act to assure high quality of air.*

### Tactics

- Create inventory of pollutants.
- Identify those pollutants not in the Federal Clean Air Act and lobby to have them added through legislation.
- Enact and support a strong local "Clean Air Act."
- Involve the public in realizing the value of air quality.
- Encourage energy conservation and efficiency to reduce air pollution.
- Continue to promote citywide tree planting and establish a program to protect existing trees from diseases and insects.
- Review and comment on DNR and EPA issued air emissions permits.
- Implement program that encourages developers to replace trees that are torn down during construction.
- Enact measures to ensure prompt and quality minded



cleanup of hazardous or contaminated sites.

- Monitor hazardous wastes generated throughout the city by:
  - a. Facilitating proper collection and disposal of household toxic wastes
  - b. Ensuring that industries are recycling CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons)
- Consider controlling emissions on woodstoves and fireplaces via the use of catalytic converters.
- Review business operations not currently issued permits and enforce compliance.
- Monitor ozone levels and develop a policy to deal with ozone transport.

## Ordinances

### Objective

*Review ordinances for enhanced emissions control.*

### Tactics

Increase monitoring of business and private sector emissions, and involve area colleges in the testing of local air quality.

## Emissions

### Objective

*Improve air quality through decreased vehicle emissions.*

### Tactics

- Create a network of pedestrian ways, such as sidewalks and bike paths.
- Survey residents as to what major paths are needed to make this alternative form of transportation more attractive.
- Encourage the use of public transportation.
- Provide security for bikes via bike racks or other various forms of secure storage.
- Encourage vehicle tune-ups.
- Encourage creation of ordinance that will require periodic emissions monitoring.



- Enhance and insure traffic flow through better coordination of timing and traffic sensing lights, thus decreasing vehicle idle time.
- Encourage ride-sharing to and from work.

### Alternatives

#### Objective

Use alternate energy, non-polluting sources.

#### Tactics

- Encourage use of alternate, non-polluting energy sources, such as solar, biomass and others.
- Provide tax incentives for businesses or individuals choosing to use alternate forms of energy.
- Control known greenhouse gases and their precursors which are air pollutants.
- Increase forest greenhouse gas sinks (new growth forest and marshlands).

## LAND USE AND MANAGEMENT

### Situation Analysis

Portage benefits from an unusual diversity of habitats within its borders. Woodlots, marshes, old fields and bogs provide balance for plats, malls and industrial developments, enhancing residents' quality of life. These natural features will endure continuous development pressures as 2020 approaches, making the loss of some natural areas inevitable.

Currently no inventory of natural areas or wildlife exists to guide future preservation efforts, nor are there criteria for determining which areas may be reasonably sacrificed to development and which areas should be protected. Consequently, unusual and important natural areas may be destroyed or irreparably damaged by development.

### Protecting Species Diversity

#### Strategic Direction

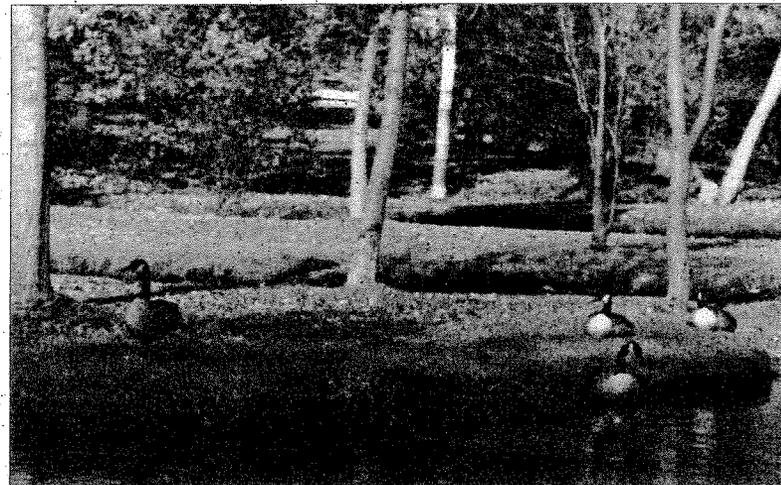
##### Objective

Take steps to ensure that Portage in the year 2020 contains as much diversity of wildlife habitat as it does currently on as many undisturbed acres as possible.

##### Tactics

- Map and catalog the variety of habitats within the city.
- Identify the plant and animal species within these habitats.
- Conduct a baseline analysis to evaluate the quality of each habitat.

- Identify and catalog the most sensitive and rare habitats. The City should purchase these, along with adjacent buffer areas, and implement stringent controls to protect them from further development.
- Identify any threatened and/or endangered species and develop policies to protect and preserve them.
- Determine whether there are any habitats, such as prairies, now missing within the city which might be re-established.
- Establish preserves for the exclusive use of wildlife.
- Reserve space in city parks for the exclusive use of wildlife.





## Habitats

### Objective

Take steps to ensure that the City maintains habitats diversity through the year 2020 and beyond.

### Tactics

- Enforce existing laws regarding wetlands protection.
- Establish nature preserves, where needed and feasible, for the exclusive use of wildlife.
- Work with the state of Michigan to acquire the Gourneck Lake hunting preserve should the state ever decide to sell.
- Consult the environmental, groundwater and parks and recreation boards when contemplating activities that will affect these natural areas.
- Develop the proper ordinances that establish significant fines and/or penalties for vandalism, littering, using off-road vehicles, such as dirt bikes and snowmobiles in sensitive natural areas.
- Establish rewards and methods of recognition for residents and businesses that maintain a portion of their property in a

natural state. A possible incentive would be tax reduction on the portion of the property maintained in a native state.

- Attempt to determine the rate of succession in natural areas of the city.
- Develop a long-term management plan to maintain the quality of these habitats and protect them from undesirable development. The plan should also take into account successional forces and ways to counteract them.



## Education

### Objective

Ongoing educational efforts dealing with the importance of preserving a diversity of habitats must occur.

### Tactics

- Educate landowners about the importance of maintaining these habitats.
- Conduct seminars with builders on techniques to minimize the environmental impact of their activities on land which will not be developed.

## Balance

### Objective

Maintain an appropriate balance of residential, industrial and commercial land use in Portage in the face of projected changing needs, demographics and lifestyles.

### Tactics

- Establish procedures for regular, systematic review and revision of land needs and use in Portage to ensure the desired balance of residential, industrial and commercial development.
- Establish strict zoning restrictions to control the balance of residential, industrial and commercial development in the city.
- Liberalize the restrictions on the number of floors a structure is allowed, especially in industrial areas of the city.
- Identify land within the city that is eligible for redevelopment.
- Start a program to encourage businesses that are looking to establish facilities in Portage to locate their facilities on land that can be redeveloped rather than destroying existing habitat.



## Monitoring

### Objective

Monitor deteriorating areas in Portage and provide effective programs for their rehabilitation.

### Tactics

- Identify deteriorated or deteriorating areas in Portage.
- Monitor regularly transitional properties or areas to determine if changes in land use would be appropriate.
- Create a program of tax incentives for residential upgrading of properties owned by low-income families.
- Create volunteer programs to assist senior citizens and handicapped citizens with home repair/improvement projects.



## Separation

### Objective

Design and implement a program for maintaining optimum separation between industrial/commercial development and environmentally sensitive areas.

### Tactics

- Use strict zoning to restrict industry only to those areas in the city that would have the least impact on the environment.
- Grant tax abatements only to "clean industries" (those using "closed loop" technology for recovery of wastes, etc.) that do not pollute.
- Use zoning restrictions to limit commercial development only to major corridors such as Westnedge Avenue and Portage Road.
- Identify specific criteria to designate sensitive areas, such as depth to water table, species diversity, presence of endangered species.
- Develop a zoning classification for parkland.



## PARKS AND RECREATION

### Strategic Direction

#### Objective

Maintain existing parks and create new parks designed to serve local residential areas.

#### Tactics

- Establish parks scattered around the city within convenient walking distance of residential areas.
- Require developers of multiple unit residential areas to include park and recreational areas as part of their development.

## Wetlands

### Strategic Direction

#### Objective

Control further development of the wetlands, streams, ponds, springs and buffer areas.

#### Tactics

- Inventory all areas of the city to determine the location of wetlands, streams, ponds and springs.
- Enforce existing laws regarding wetlands protection.
- Develop a city ordinance for the further protection of wetlands, which ensures that violators are prosecuted.
- Utilize, where feasible, wetlands and other natural areas in the city as nature preserves accessible to the public.



### Green Spaces

#### Objective

Protect and preserve important remaining green spaces.

#### Tactics

- Restrict development in any remaining natural areas that are heavily wooded.
- Require that all developers have a plan for site beautification, and do not allow occupancy until this requirement is completed.
- Require site plan development which incorporates maximum allotment of green space.



### WATER RESOURCES

#### Situation Analysis

Creating the Portage Environmental Board and the Groundwater Commission was an important first step in understanding and protecting the surface and groundwater resources. Plans and policies recommended by such citizen leadership have resulted in many important actions already taken by the city to enhance and protect these essential resources.

Society now realizes that discharging by-products or waste has a negative impact on the environment, but much work remains to be done to protect, preserve and enhance water quality.

### Basic Water Management Practices

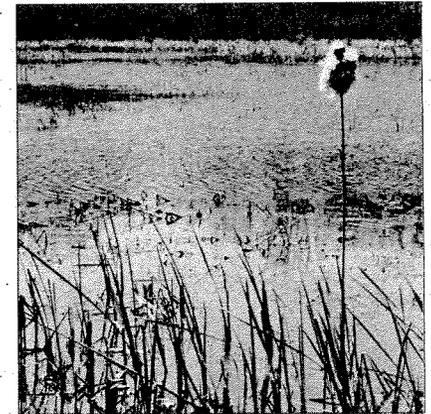
#### Strategic Direction

#### Objective

Improve enforcement of existing surface and groundwater regulations and develop new water management practices as needed.

#### Tactics

- Ensure adequate staffing so that existing laws and rules can be adequately enforced, and any noted lack of enforcement should be addressed by increasing staff and funding.
- Develop regulations to cover underground storage tanks exempted by state and federal law.
- Form a wetlands task force to develop a city wetlands policy and management plan.
- Develop a wellhead protection plan to cover both existing and proposed well fields, which will be developed by 2020.



### Protection

#### Objective

Develop new programs to enhance the protection and management of surface and groundwater resources.

#### Tactics

- Develop programs to protect groundwater from leaking or inadequate storage of chemicals and hazardous materials.
- Enact ordinance to require improved pollution incident prevention plans when deemed necessary.
- Develop a strategy to address water degradation from toxic wastes, chemical applications or pesticide use.



## LAKE AND WATERWAY PRESERVATION

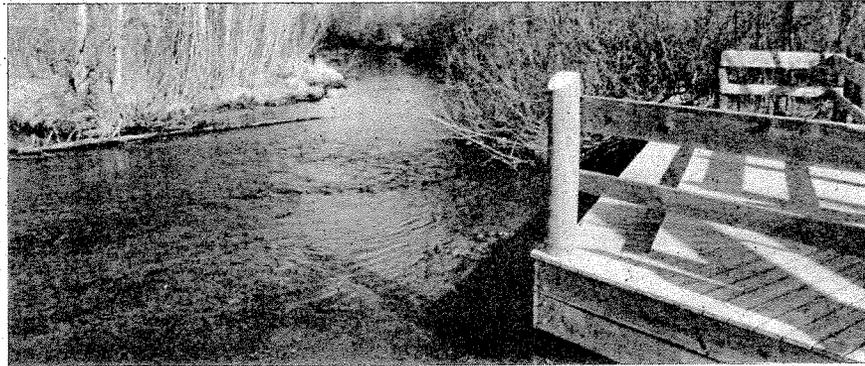
### Strategic Direction

#### Objective

Maintain and protect lake and waterway resources for maximum benefit and enjoyment.

#### Tactics

- Establish a proactive program using an equitable combination of property owner assessments and public funds to maintain clean and weed-controlled lakes and waterways in Portage.
- Provide and maintain convenient public access to all lakes in the city.
- Devise effective methods for eliminating introduction of pollutants (road salt and fertilizers, for example) into lakes, waterways and groundwater.
- Work to control lawn fertilizers in or near environmentally-sensitive areas of the city.
- Extend sewer mains as rapidly as possible to maximize service to all residents.



## WATER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Strategic Direction

#### Objective

Portage must manage its surface and groundwater resources to integrate both economic and environmental objectives while sustaining these resources for future uses.

#### Tactics

- Select economic development activities which support expanding or attracting clean and responsible commerce and industry that are in harmony with reasonable environmental restraints.
- Market to attract jobs which support the quality of life and

desire to improve the city's environmental resources.

- Do not give incentives or abatements to business and industry which locate buildings or plants in environmentally sensitive (wetlands, recreation, open space, wellhead protection) areas.
- Encourage water conservation efforts and programs which reward lower usage of water.
- Make it economically feasible to fund water conservation efforts and measures.
- Develop and institute land use restrictions to protect surface and groundwater supplies, and use environmental review board when proposals are made regarding the development or use of watershed lands.

## Land Management

### Objective

Develop programs to reduce soil erosion and improve crop production through improved land management practices.

### Tactics

- Establish "grassed waterways," contour farming, diversions and erosion control structures on land with potential erosion problems.
- Encourage farmers to support conservation tillage, crop rotations and other management practices that will prevent future erosion problems.
- Help control erosion and the resulting sedimentation through practices for managing irrigation, such as irrigation pipelines, land leveling, drip irrigation and irrigation scheduling to conserve water and protect water quality.
- Control wind erosion in open areas with vegetative cover, wind barriers, stripcropping and crop rotations.