

Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Budget Includes Revenue and Expenditure Decreases

At its regular meeting of May 25, 2010, the Portage City Council approved the city budget for fiscal year 2010-2011, totaling \$61.8 million, down from \$66.3 million in fiscal year 2009-2010. The budget includes an overall reduction in General Fund expenditures of approximately \$2.1 million from fiscal year 2009-2010. A slight increase in the overall city tax rate from 10.6598 mills in fiscal year 2009-2010 to 10.7312 mills in fiscal year 2010-2011 is a result of a 0.0714 mill increase to the Municipal Street Fund. The City of Portage, however, remains in the lower 25 percent of all Michigan cities of greater than 25,000 population in terms of millage level.

Continuing Revenue Decline

The city continues in a period of declining revenue. As opposed to more historical revenue increases in the range of 5 percent experienced by the city for a number of years, for the first time, the city will realize an estimated 4 percent **decrease** in General Fund property tax revenue between fiscal year 2009-2010 and fiscal year 2010-2011. State Revenue Sharing for the City of Portage has been estimated through the State Budget Office as \$3,423,884 for 2010-2011 – a **decrease** of more than \$400,000 from the 2009-2010 budgeted State Revenue Sharing amount.

A cost containment strategy embarked upon a number of years ago has enabled the city to address the continuing revenue declines while guarding against substantial impact to core service delivery. This strategy includes:

- ◆ Total full-time staffing has been reduced from 215 to 188 positions – nearly 13 percent – since fiscal year

2005-2006. The reductions have been concentrated in non-public safety related areas, with only 5 full-time positions eliminated collectively in the Police and Fire Departments. All other city departments have absorbed the remaining 22 position reductions.

- ◆ Vendor contracts have been reviewed and where possible, reduced.
- ◆ Non-union benefit levels have been altered and pay increases eliminated for non-union, department head and Portage Police Officer Association employees, as well as the City Manager for 2009. (Continuing wage freezes are planned as part of the fiscal year 2010-2011 budget.)
- ◆ Reduction of many aesthetic-related expenditures, (flower plantings, Christmas lighting, certain roadside mowing and operation of various public fountains) have been implemented.
- ◆ The *Portager* publication has been reduced from monthly to six times per year.
- ◆ The 2010 Community Survey will not be conducted.

Additional Measures May Be Necessary

Cost controls noted above, as well as others, have substantially reduced the level of city expenditures. Nevertheless, should additional revenue reductions materialize, more aggressive action will be needed. Further decline in State Revenue Sharing or property tax receipts will prompt initiation of a further reduction of employment levels. Continuing decreases to the local property tax base beyond 2010 will also necessitate a decision to increase the millage levy for curbside recycling and spring cleanup / leaf pickup programs, or a decision to

reduce the frequency of service being provided.

Finally, the impact of current and future property tax revenue reductions will necessitate General Fund support of the Capital Improvement Program in the coming years. The most immediate impact will be the need for a projected General Fund contribution of between \$400,000 and \$500,000 to the Capital Improvement Program in fiscal year 2011-2012.

Capital Improvement Program

The continuing recession and the extremely weakened State of Michigan economic situation have dramatically affected the capacity for the City of Portage to finance and pay for essential government services – particularly capital improvements to maintain community assets and foster new growth. As a result, the fiscal year 2010-2011 capital budget, as well as the overall 2010-2020 Capital Improvement Program, is limited and only focused on the most essential capital projects. With continuing financial concerns, capital projects have been redefined, deferred or rescheduled, as appropriate, as a measure of cost control and maximizing efficiency in the use of available funding.

The fiscal year 2010-2011 budget supports continuation of service delivery and capital investments considered most important to ensuring the public health, safety and welfare. The city has been able to adjust to significant revenue reductions over the past several years with limited impact on service levels. However, fiscal year 2010-2011 will potentially be a pivotal financial period and mark a point in time where service level impacts are unavoidable during 2011 and, perhaps, beyond.

Portage Cable Access Services to be Provided By Public Media Network

The Portage City Council recently approved a resolution to join the Public Media Network (PMN) for the provision of public, education and government (PEG) cable access services to the Portage community currently provided by the Portage Cable Access Center. PMN currently serves the City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Township, Comstock Township, Oshtemo Township and the City of Parchment.

Channel Lineup and Programming: As a result of joining PMN, Portage residents will enjoy expanded programming and additional cable access channels as follows (Charter customers):

- ◆ Channel 19: Public
- ◆ Channel 20: Public
- ◆ Channel 21: Government (Portage City Council, Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals)
- ◆ Channel 95: Special Programming
- ◆ Channel 99: Education*

* According to Charter Communications, on June 22, channel 22 (currently educational access) will be relocated to channel 99).

Plans are underway to expand the number of cable access channels offered to AT&T U-Verse customers as well. Details will be posted on the City of Portage website homepage as they become available.

Creation of a New Government Production Services Unit:

PMN will create a new Government Production Services Unit (GPSU) to be located in the City of Portage for the exclusive production of informational media content for each member public agency. This content will generally include, but not be limited to, regular and special meeting coverage, special "Town Hall" meetings, election and candidate forums, news

and information content about municipal services, public safety and emergency management information and electronic bulletin board announcements.

City of Portage Representation:

PMN is governed by a Board of Directors with representatives from each member public agency. The number of representatives is based on the number of cable subscribers in each member public agency. The Portage City Council recently approved four Portage representatives to serve on the PMN Board beginning July 1, 2010 – Mayor Pro-tem Ed Sackley, Councilwoman Claudette Reid and Portage residents Don Ramlow and Jeremy Vryhof.

The City of Portage Cable Access Committee was formed in 2008 to review and improve cable access services in the City of Portage. The Committee developed the following public access goals and objectives:

- ◆ Enhanced opportunities for citizen participation.
- ◆ Enhanced services to support City of Portage activities.
- ◆ Expand revenue sources.
- ◆ Expand quality and range of programming options for Portage citizens.

After a multi-year examination and evaluation process, PMN was chosen as the best resource capable of achieving these goals and objectives. For more information about the history of this initiative, please visit www.portagemi.gov.



New Cable Access Facility Location: On July 1, 2010, cable access services will be available at the PMN facility located on the 3rd Floor of the Epic Center in downtown Kalamazoo. Please visit the PMN website at www.publicmedianet.org or call 343-2211 for hours of operation, programming schedules, available equipment, services provided, internships and other important information.

City Recognizes Volunteer Efforts

The Portage Parks system has benefitted from a variety of groups providing volunteer services to clean and rehabilitate city parks. As financial resources continue to tighten, these volunteer efforts are critical and provide opportunities to enhance the park system for all to enjoy. The city would like to recognize and thank the following groups:

- ◆ Tri-State Coca-Cola Bottling Company – Lakeview Park Cleanup
- ◆ First Reformed Church of Portage – Senior Center Woodlot Cleanup
- ◆ Cub Scout Wolf Den of Pack 235 – Garlic Mustard Pull at West Lake Nature Preserve
- ◆ Southridge Reformed Church – Northwest Portage Bikeway Cleanup
- ◆ Home Builders Association of Greater Kalamazoo – Bicentennial Park Playground Renovation
- ◆ American Foresters – Tree Planting and Garlic Mustard Pull at Schrier Park
- ◆ Summit Energy – Cleanup and Garlic Mustard Pull along Bicentennial Park Trail
- ◆ Best Buy – Millennium Park and Consolidated Drain Cleanup
- ◆ Kalamazoo Area Geocachers – Garlic Mustard Pull at West Lake Nature Preserve
- ◆ Daisy Troop 80300 – Flower Planting at Celery Flats

If your organization would like to volunteer services to the Portage parks system, please contact the Parks Department at 329-4522.



Members of the Home Builders Association of Greater Kalamazoo make renovations to the playground at Bicentennial Park in May.

Portage Named a “Bicycle Friendly Community”

The League of American Bicyclists announced its Spring 2010 Bicycle Friendly Communities in April. The City of Portage received the League’s Bronze designation, along with two other Michigan cities (Lansing and Marquette).

The Bicycle Friendly Communities Program demonstrates how communities across the country see the importance of promoting bicycling to improve public health, improve quality of life, protect the environment and provide better transportation choices. The League of American Bicyclists promotes bicycling for fun, fitness and transportation and works through advocacy and education for a bicycle-friendly America. For more information about the League, visit www.bikeleague.org.

The City of Portage bikeway system was inaugurated in 1989 and has grown to nearly 60 miles of bikeways and trails throughout the city and parks system. The bikeway system connects neighborhoods, shopping areas, city parks, schools, businesses and other points of interest. For more information about the City of Portage bikeway system, visit www.portagemi.gov.

Residential Building Permits

The City of Portage has safeguards to protect the health, safety and welfare of residents in neighborhoods. Through the assistance of property owners and contractors who obtain the necessary residential building permits, essential City of Portage and State of Michigan building and construction regulations can be met. Construction of a project will be authorized when the project is submitted and approved and the necessary construction permits are issued to the resident property owner if they are performing the work or to a properly licensed State of Michigan contractor.

Residential construction permits are necessary to begin work on the following items:

- ◆ New homes
- ◆ Additions or structural alterations to homes
- ◆ Remodel work (including basement finish)
- ◆ Accessory buildings or structures (such as garages, sheds, decks, etc.)
- ◆ Swimming pools capable of holding more than two feet of water
- ◆ Fences over six-feet in height

Trade permits (electrical, plumbing and mechanical) for

work such as the installation/ replacement of furnaces, air-conditioning units, new electrical wiring and plumbing fixtures also requires the issuance of permits.



Property owners and contractors who need assistance or have questions in obtaining residential building permits should contact the Department of Community Development at 269-329-4477 for additional information, application materials and related assistance.

Healthy Neighborhoods – Building Blocks of “World Class” Communities

Striving to become and remain a “World Class” community was an important outcome of the Portage 2025 Vision Project. Healthy, vibrant neighborhoods help create a positive quality of life for Portage residents. The City of Portage has established community quality, housing and property maintenance standards to achieve and continue the livability and appearance of the community. Neighborhood quality can be reinforced by residents – by being a good neighbor – with rewarding and positive results.

With the 2010 summer season here, help maintain and improve neighborhoods, and make Portage a “World Class” community for living, working and learning:

- ◆ Say hello and get to know your neighbors.
- ◆ Join or form a Neighborhood Watch group.
- ◆ Continually maintain lawns, swimming pools and other yard areas.
- ◆ Regularly maintain painted building surfaces such as walls, windows and trim, repair siding and roofing and clean rain gutters.
- ◆ Remove or properly store trash and debris.

- ◆ Remove inoperable vehicles or store them in a garage. Park all other vehicles on an improved driveway surface.
- ◆ Be careful and do not block driveways, sidewalks or mailboxes with motor vehicles, recreational or yard/landscaping equipment.
- ◆ If your neighborhood has public sidewalks, keep them clear of dirt and debris.
- ◆ Family pets are fun, but keep them on a leash or within secured yard areas, avoid excessive dog barking and clean-up after your pets.
- ◆ Avoid loud noise-generating activities like playing loud music or operating domestic power tools, especially during early morning or late night hours.
- ◆ Lend a helping hand to assist neighbors, when you can...the assistance will be appreciated.

A “World Class” community is visionary and very possible. Portage residents are already doing a great job! If you have a neighborhood issue or concern that you wish to report, contact the Department of Community Development at 329-4466 or 329-4477 for assistance.

City Participates in National Flood Insurance Program



The City of Portage is one of 20,400 communities across the country that participates in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The NFIP is a federal insurance program that assists individuals with acquiring flood insurance through private insurance companies for properties located in flood hazard areas. The City of Portage partnership with the NFIP benefits homeowners and businesses within our community by reducing the vulnerability to costly flooding events through flood insurance.

The City of Portage Department of Community Development has maps and other information that show areas which have the potential of or are subject to flooding. The information and maps are also available at the Portage District Library. This information is provided to assist property owners in determining if their property is located in or near a flood hazard area. Assistance can also be provided by the Department of Community Development to property owners seeking flood hazard area map changes, when appropriate, by verifying that their property and/or structures are not located in a flood hazard area. The Department of Community Development also keeps

elevation certificates and letters of map amendments applicable to properties in the City of Portage.

The Department of Community Development is prepared to offer assistance to Portage property owners. Please feel free to contact the Department of Community Development at 329-4477. Useful information can also be found at the following website Floodplain Management in Michigan Quick Guide link: www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/lwm-quickguide_202673_7.pdf

Portage Summer Recreation Programs

Kalamazoo Kids on Stage

Kalamazoo Kids on Stage features three 3-week Camps directed by David Ortega and experienced staff members. These camps are designed for youngsters in grades K-10 interested in musical theater and drama. Whether you want a lead part or a small role, this camp is for you! Learn drama skills such as voice projection, theater makeup, stage movement, pantomime and improvisation.

Primary Camp (Completed Grades K-2)

Portage West Middle School

Session 1: June 28 - July 16 Willy Wonka Kids
 Fees: \$190 for half day from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.
 \$370 for full day from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Elementary Camp (Completed Grades 2-5)

8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. – Portage West Middle School

Session 1: June 28 - July 16 Willy Wonka Jr.
 Session 2: July 19 - August 6 Fiddler on the Roof Jr.

Middle School Camp (Completed Grades 5-10)

8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. – Portage West Middle School

Session 1: June 28 - July 16 *Guys and Dolls Jr.*
 Session 2: July 19 - August 6 *Fiddler on the Roof Jr.*

Fees: \$405 for one session or \$760 for both sessions plus voluntary expenditures for T-shirts and videotapes.

Please note: No camps held on July 5.

A printable registration form is available online at www.portagemi.gov/living/seasonal_recreation.asp. A limited number of need-based scholarships are available. See registration forms for details.

Summer Fun Center

Monday through Friday
 June 21 - August 6
 8:45 a.m. - 3 p.m.
 12th Street Elementary School

New Location!

All area elementary youth, ages 6 to 11 years old (grades 1-5), regardless of which school they regularly attend, are invited to participate in the new 12th Street Elementary Summer Fun Center located at 6501 South 12th Street. This site will be staffed with competent instructors offering programs on arts and crafts, group sports and games, special events and Friday field trips.

The Kalamazoo Nature Center visits the Fun Center every week to help children explore the outdoors and discover the wonderful world of nature. No pre-registration is required for these drop-in centers. However, parents register children on the first day of participation. A \$12 per child daily fee will be charged.

Good Clean Fun at the Summer Fun Center!

Call 329-4522 to receive an information packet. More detailed information is available on the city website at www.portagemi.gov/living/seasonal_recreation.asp.



Portage Parks Paddle Fest 2010

If you are into kayaking, this is the event for you! The Portage Park Board will host the 2nd Annual Paddle Fest at Ramona Park on Long Lake (8645 Sprinkle Road) on **Saturday, July 17 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.** Kayak races and demonstrations will be the focus of entertainment for spectators and kayak enthusiasts.

Kayak races are open to paddlers of all ages and abilities. Age groups include adult racers age 13 years and up and kid racers age 12 years and younger. These timed races are reserved for single kayak boats only. Race participants can expect to hit the open water at 11 a.m. The registration fee is \$10 for race participants and pre-registration will begin June 7 at the Department of Parks and Recreation at 329-4522 or at www.portagemi.gov. Race participants may also register on-site beginning at 10 a.m. All race registrants should park and unload at the south end of Edgewater Drive located off Zylman Avenue at Long Lake.

Boat and land spectators are welcome on Long Lake and paddle spectators can launch from Ramona Park beach. Lee's Sporting Goods will host paddle and boating demonstrations open to all park patrons and will have rental kayaks available for racers.

Volunteers welcome! If you are interested in volunteering for Paddle Fest, please contact the Department of Parks and Recreation at 329-4522.

Portage Police To Hold Bike Safety Event

The Portage Police Department is teaming up with Safe Kids of Kalamazoo County and the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety to hold a bicycle safety event on



Tuesday, August 3, 2010, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The event will take place in the parking lot of Loy Norrix High School and will include instruction on how to properly wear a bicycle helmet, bicycle maintenance, giveaways (including bike helmets) and refreshments.

Police officers will be on hand to provide instructions on how to safely ride your bike and explain the laws pertaining to bicycles. The event will include a short ride on the Bicentennial Trail in Portage with an officer. Participants will also have the opportunity to complete an obstacle course set up in the parking lot of the high school.

Participants are asked to bring their bikes and spend some time learning about bicycle safety. Anyone is welcome to attend, although the event will be geared toward children, with other activities for kids. Helmets are required at this event. Safe Kids will distribute a limited number of helmets to kids in need free of charge.



August 3, 2010 is also National Night Out. The bike event will be a "kick-off" for activities that will be occurring in neighborhoods throughout Portage celebrating National Night Out later in the day. National Night Out is celebrated throughout the country

by neighborhoods coming together to show their commitment to eliminate crime in their area. This is done through block parties, cook-outs or by simply turning on your porch light to show your commitment to this cause.

If you have any questions about the bicycle safety event or National Night Out, please contact the Portage Police Department Crime Prevention Officer at 324-9255.

Return of the "Big Trucks"

The Portage District Library and the City of Portage Department of Streets and Equipment will host a "Play it Safe" event on Tuesday, July 20 at the Portage District Library (300 Library Lane).

- 10:00 - 10:30 a.m. Meet Big Truck Driver Mike and Friends
- 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Hands-on experience with dump trucks, front-end loaders and more!

This program is for kids of all ages and will teach children the hazards of playing around construction sites. In addition, the kids will also have a chance to see and touch large equipment. There will be hand-outs and construction hats for everyone! No registration is necessary. Come join the fun!

Freedom Fest & Fireworks July 3 at McCamley Field

Six Portage area churches, in a collaborative effort with The Portage Rotary Club, are planning Freedom Fest on July 3 (rain date: July 4), culminating with the annual Rotary Club Fireworks celebration at McCamley Field at dusk.

A **Community Yard Sale** will begin at 2 p.m. with all proceeds benefitting the Portage Community Center (PCC) and Haiti relief projects. The Yard Sale includes household items, clothes, toys, books, tools and baby furniture. Come early for the best selection!

Freedom Fest continues at 6 p.m. with the addition of musical entertainment on center stage and other family friendly activities including:

- ◆ Bands, crafts, food, drama, games, inflatables and more!
- ◆ Guests will be encouraged to make care packages for local service men and women who are currently deployed with items donated for this purpose by area businesses and churches.

Host churches include Portage Free Methodist, First Reformed of Portage, Portage United Methodist Church, The Bridge, Oakland Drive Christian Church and Saint Michael Lutheran Church and School.

The climax of the event will be the **Rotary Club Fireworks** at dusk. Admission to this event is free but the Rotary Club will accept donations to offset the cost of the fireworks and for PCC and Haiti relief projects.

Parking will be available in and around McCamley Field.

Celery City Showcase V Talent Competition

Directed By Mark Liermann

Wednesday, June 23 - 7 p.m. (Doors open at 6:30 p.m.)

Thursday, June 24 - 4 p.m. (Doors open at 3:30 p.m.)

Friday, June 25 - 7 p.m. (Doors open at 6:30 p.m.)

Now in its fifth year, the Celery City Showcase (CCS) has become a summer tradition for the City of Portage and surrounding communities. Held over three days at the Portage Northern High School Auditorium, the CCS features over forty different acts of all ages! Audience members will enjoy singing, dancing, skilled instrumentalists, skits and more!

The CCS draws some of our community's most talented entertainers. Performers from previous shows have gone on to:

- ◆ Make the Finals at national contests in Las Vegas (Alan Smola, Magician and First Place Winner of the Youth Division, CCS 2007)
- ◆ Provide feature performances in a variety of local musical productions (Les Roberts, Vocalist and First Place Winner of the Senior Division, CCS 2008)
- ◆ Be named "West Michigan Idol 2009" by FOX 17 News (Cassandra Weekley, singer/dancer and Honorable Mention winner, CCS 2009)

All of the revenue from the Celery City Showcase directly supports older adult programs and services at the Portage Senior Center (PSC), so not only is this event



a great time, it helps raise money for a good cause right here in the Portage community!

Ticket prices are \$8 for adults and \$5 for seniors, students and children 12 and under. Special pricing is available for Family and Show Paks. Please call the Portage Senior Center at 329-4555 for more information.

Water Week Contest a Huge Success!

Water Week was May 3-8 and to celebrate, United Water sponsored a coloring contest for elementary students and a writing contest for middle and high school students as a way to encourage students to think about the world's most precious resource – **water!** The submitted drawings and writings were judged by United Water and city officials. The winner of the coloring contest was Ryan Ferguson, a fifth-grader from Moorsbridge Elementary. Dalton Kokmeyer, a sixth-grader from North Middle School, was the winner of the writing contest. Please visit the Portage Public Schools website at www.portageps.org for a complete list of contest winners. United Water thanks each student who participated in Water Week activities!

Quarterly Brush Pickup in July

The Quarterly Brush Pickup Program is scheduled for July 2010. Citizens are asked to place brush at the curbside for collection no later than Monday morning at 7 a.m. of the week scheduled for each neighborhood. For a printable map of the collection zones, visit www.portagemi.gov/government/curbside.asp. Brush and branches must be cut to lengths of 4 feet or less, no greater than 3 inches in diameter and stacked in neat piles along the street. Branches or brush in excess of 4 feet in length or 3 inches in diameter, leaves (bagged or loose), lumber, timbers, ornamental shrubs, roots, railroad ties, firewood, brush generated from large tree removal (trunks greater than 4 inches), building materials or tree stumps will not be collected. If you have questions about the Quarterly Brush Pickup Program, please call the Department of Streets and Equipment at 329-4444.

Household Hazardous Waste Special Collection Day

The Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste Center (1301 Lamont Street in Kalamazoo) will hold a special collection for Portage residents on **Saturday, August 28 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** to collect unwanted hazardous waste. No drop-off fees will be charged for Portage residents. The Center accepts aerosols, batteries, cleaners, computers and monitors, TV's and stereos, anti-freeze, gasoline, motor oil, oil-based paint (no latex paint) and pesticides. Other hazardous wastes are also accepted. Call 373-5211, or go online at www.kalcounty.com/hhw for more information.

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SES Brochure Enclosed



Your journey through summer begins in your own backyard as the Portage Summer Entertainment Series (SES) raises the curtain on high quality, affordable entertainment!

Enclosed is the much anticipated SES season brochure. Each month is filled with exciting, fun activities for everyone to enjoy throughout the summer. Making a triumphant return are the popular Teas at Historic Stuart Manor, Taste of Portage- featuring the Kalamazoo Concert Band, Shakespeare in the Park and the popular Portage Party in the Park. With all there is to do, you'll want to be sure to keep your SES brochure so you won't miss out on any of the action. Start planning your journey through summer with the many SES events that are right here in your award winning Portage Parks.

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Televised City Meeting Schedule

The following City of Portage meetings can be seen live and rebroadcast one week later on Portage Cable Access Channel 19. All meetings are held in the City Council Chambers at City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue and are open to the public.

June 2010

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|----|-----------|-------------------------|
| 3 | 7 p.m. | Planning Commission |
| 8 | 7:30 p.m. | City Council |
| 14 | 7 p.m. | Zoning Board of Appeals |
| 17 | 7 p.m. | Planning Commission |
| 22 | 7:30 p.m. | City Council |



Cable Access channel 19 is available as a live video stream on the Portage Cable Access home page (www.portagecableaccess.org) and the City of Portage Community Learning Resources page (www.portagemi.gov/learning).

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