

City Announces Single-Stream Recycling Pilot Program

The City of Portage and Republic Services are pleased to announce a Single-Stream Curbside Recycling pilot program in the Muirfield and Heather Ridge neighborhoods in Woodbridge Hills. The pilot program will run through January 2011. Single-stream recycling is aimed at making recycling easier for residents. Instead of separating and sorting recyclables, single-stream recycling will allow residents to mix all recyclable items into one 95-gallon wheeled cart.



The single-stream recycling pilot program will use a 95-gallon blue wheeled cart with a yellow lid for all recyclable materials.

At the end of the pilot period, the City of Portage will carefully study the impact of single-stream recycling on the overall acceptance of the program, cleanliness of materials and recycling participation rate. If the pilot program proves

to be successful in the test neighborhood, single-stream recycling will be implemented city-wide in phases.

What is Single-Stream Recycling?

Single-stream recycling allows residents to place all recyclable materials into one 95-gallon wheeled cart, rather than requiring the materials – mixed paper and commingled containers (plastic, glass, aluminum) – to be sorted. The sorting of the materials will be done by machines at a processing facility.

Why Single Stream?

The advantages of single-stream recycling are many. The added convenience provided by eliminating the need to sort materials may produce higher rates of recycling. Studies have shown that single stream recycling increases recycling and decreases rubbish. As an added benefit, more recyclable materials can be collected with the larger capacity cart, which can be wheeled to the curb rather than carried.

What items will be recyclable?

If implemented city-wide, the single-stream recycling program will include all of the same items collected as part of the current Curbside Recycling Program:

- ◆ **Paper:** Newspaper, office paper (plain or color paper, envelopes, stationery, sticky notes), junk mail (inserts, magazines, catalogs, ad circulars), box board (food box packaging like cereal boxes, flattened to conserve space), corrugated cardboard (flattened and cut down).
- ◆ **Aluminum and Steel:** Food cans (labels OK), soda cans.
- ◆ **Rigid Plastics:** Jugs and bottles with recycle symbol #1, #2, #3, #5 and #7 (rinsed and dried).
- ◆ **Glass:** Bottles or jars – any color (rinsed and dried).

The City of Portage and Republic Services are hopeful that the Single-Stream Curbside Recycling pilot program will be successful. Look for updates about the program on the city website and in future editions of the *Portager*. Please contact Republic Services at 1-877-268-3867 with any questions.

City Snowplow Operators Ready for Winter!

The City of Portage operates a comprehensive snow removal program each winter to ensure the maximum degree of safety to the motoring public. As early as 3:30 a.m., snowplow operators are at work plowing, sanding and salting city streets. In order to maximize benefit to the citizen's of Portage, streets are prioritized according to how heavy the streets are traveled in the following manner:

Priority I:

All major streets (examples include South Westnedge Avenue, Oakland Drive, Milham Avenue, Kilgore Road, Shaver Road, Lovers Lane, etc.)

Priority II:

All primary "feeder" streets leading into various residential neighborhoods, including access streets to all schools.

Priority III

All interior neighborhood streets.

Priority IV:

Cul-de-sac and dead end streets.



When a major snow event is in progress, every effort is made to keep Priority I and II streets clear. Usually, the snowplow operators can complete all Priority I and II streets in four (4) to eight (8) hours. Once the major roads are clear, the snowplow operators begin clearing the Priority III and IV streets, which may require 24 to 48 hours to clear. De-icing materials are applied as needed throughout the duration of a snow event, with major streets, bridges, intersections, hills and curves receiving priority attention.

As a major storm moves through the area, city crews will continue efforts to ensure streets are properly plowed and de-iced. Please keep in mind that the city contains 219 miles of city streets to plow and the plow trucks normally travel through heavy snow at speeds of only 15 to 25 mph. Major thoroughfares receive primary attention and are kept as clear as possible.

To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of City of Portage snowplowing operations, residents are asked to abide by city ordinances and state law:

- ◆ Chapter 78, Article 1, Section 78-2 of the Portage Code of Ordinances prohibits vehicle parking on the city roadways between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. from October 15 to April 15. Vehicles parking on the streets during this time period interfere with snowplowing activities.
- ◆ Chapter 66, Article 1, Section 66-2 of the Portage Code of Ordinances prohibits residents from having basketball stands in the city right-of-way. Likewise, during trash and recycling removal days, citizens are requested to keep their containers on the curbs verses on the actual roadways. These items impede safe snowplowing operations and can damage equipment on the trucks.
- ◆ Michigan State Law (MCL 2577.677a) prohibits residents and private snowplow operators from depositing snow from private driveways, parking lots and sidewalks onto any public roadway.

The Portage snow removal program is designed to keep city streets clear and safe in the most efficient manner possible. Questions about city snow removal operations may be directed to the Department of Streets and Equipment at 329-4444.

City of Portage Damaged Mailbox Replacement Policy

The City of Portage snow removal program is designed to keep city streets clear and safe in the most efficient manner possible. While plow trucks normally travel through heavy snow at speeds of only 15 to 25 mph, the weight of the snow coming off the plow can easily damage mailboxes and/or knock posts and mailboxes completely over.

So what is a resident to do when this happens? Call the City of Portage Streets and Equipment Department at 329-4444 or use the "Report It" tool on the city website (www.portagemi.gov/government/report_it.asp) to report

the damage. City staff will schedule either repair of the damage or replacement of the box and post, as necessary.

Replacements will be in the form of a standard U.S. Postal mailbox and/or post. The standard mailbox is either white or black and measures 6.5 inches in width, 19 inches in length and 8.5 inches in height. The mailbox has a hinged door and flag. Damaged posts will be replaced with a standard 4" x 4" wooden cross-arm U.S. Postal post.

Residents will have the option of receiving the standard replacement mailbox installed by the city or receiving

a payment of \$44 (the cost of a standard box and post and labor). If payment is desired, the resident will be asked to sign and return a release form from the city and will be responsible for purchase and installation of the mailbox of their choosing.

If you have any questions concerning the Mailbox Replacement Program, please contact the Streets & Equipment Department at 329-4444.





Top Ten Tips For Safe Winter Driving

With the unpredictable Michigan winter season fast approaching, the Portage Police Department offers their tips for staying safe on the roadways.

1. Driving **never** mixes with alcohol and drugs. Did you know that a new law went into effect on November 1, 2010 in the State of Michigan making penalties tougher on drivers convicted of Operating While Intoxicated with a bodily alcohol content of 0.17 or higher for a first offense?
2. Slow down and increase the distance between cars. A large number of accidents investigated by the Portage Police Department during the winter months are caused by drivers failing to stop in an assured clear

3. Watch for pedestrians walking in the road.
4. Avoid fatigue. Make sure to get plenty of rest before a driving trip. During long trips, rotate drivers every three hours if possible.
5. Wear seat belts and make sure child safety seats are used properly.
6. Plan your route and check the weather. Allow plenty of time to get to your destination and leave early if necessary. Let someone else know the planned route and your expected time of arrival.
7. Don't allow your car to idle for a long period of time with the windows up or in an enclosed space. If you are stuck and wish to run the vehicle, allow it to run just long enough to stay warm.

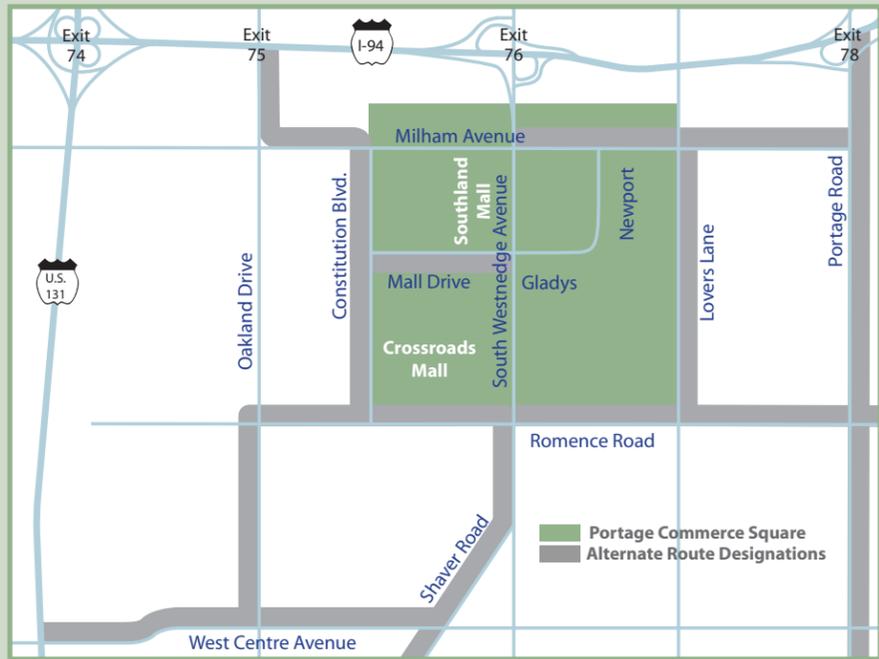
8. Keep safety equipment in your vehicle during the winter, such as a flashlight (with fresh batteries), an ice scraper/snow brush, jumper cables, a shovel and blankets. For longer trips you may want to pack some food and water.
9. Know your vehicle. Do you have anti-locks brakes? Stomp on the brake pedal when skidding. If you do not have anti-lock brakes, pump the brake pedal. Remember – steer into a skid.
10. Maintain your vehicle. Check your battery, tire tread, antifreeze and brakes and ensure that windows are clear of ice and fog.

When you have arrived safely back home in Portage, please remember that City Ordinance (Chapter 78, Article 1, Section 78-2) prohibits vehicle parking on city roadways between the hours of 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. from October 15 through April 15.

Holiday Season Alternate Shopping Routes

The holiday shopping season is in full swing in the Portage Commerce Square area. This area is a major retail center of southwest Michigan and offers The Crossroads, many specialty shops for unique gifts and large department and discount stores to fit every shopping need.

Shoppers can ease the typical holiday stress by shopping early and using routes other than South Westnedge Avenue to travel to and from this busy area. Suggested alternate routes are shown on the map below



2010 Customer Service Awards



The 2010 Customer Service Awards were announced by City Manager Maurice Evans on November 17 at an annual customer service event attended by City of Portage Employees. Nominations for the Outstanding Customer Service Awards were made by fellow employees and Portage residents. The award winners were selected by the City of Portage Customer Service Task Force and City Manager Evans.

Honorable Mention

Mary Beth Block, Administrative Assistant to the City Manager, and Police Officer Joseph Whisman each received an Honorable Mention award.

Outstanding Customer Service Award

Community Development Specialist, Tom McCoy, was presented with the 2010 Outstanding Customer Service Award. A city employee for nearly ten years, Tom is responsible for administering housing assistance programs offered by the City of Portage. Tom provides homeowners assistance with Emergency Repairs grants, low interest deferred loans to complete housing rehabilitation activities and homebuyer assistance. When presenting Tom with the award, City Manager Evans said, "Tom works with these residents with compassion, patience and empathy, consistently taking extra steps while providing exceptional customer service."

The City of Portage congratulates the recipients of the 2010 Customer Service Awards and pledges a continued commitment to providing superior customer service to all residents and customers.



City Manager Evans (left) presents the 2010 Outstanding Customer Service Award to Tom McCoy, Community Development Specialist.

Quarterly Brush Collection Scheduled in January Christmas Trees to be Collected as Part of Program

The Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection Program is scheduled to take place in January. For this program, the city is divided into four quadrants that are collected on the following schedule:

- ◆ Northwest Quadrant of the city collected the first full week of the month.
- ◆ Southwest Quadrant of the city collected the second full week of the month.
- ◆ Southeast Quadrant of the city collected the third full week of the month.
- ◆ Northeast Quadrant of the city collected the fourth full week of the month.

A map showing these four quadrants is available at www.portagemi.gov/government/curbside.asp.

Residents are asked to place brush at the curbside for collection no later than Monday morning at 7 a.m. of their scheduled week but no sooner than three days prior to that day. 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. For the



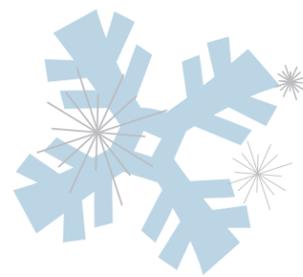
January collection, crews will collect Christmas trees, which do not need to be cut or trimmed but the tree must be free of all decorations. Residents may place the entire Christmas tree at the curb for collection.

The following items will **not** be collected during this program: Branches or brush in excess of 4 feet in length or 3 inches in diameter, lumber, timbers, ornamental shrubs, roots, railroad ties, firewood, building materials, tree stumps, yard waste (grasses, weeds, vines, etc.) and brush generated from large tree removal. Large tree removal is defined as brush generated from trees with trunks greater than 4 inches at the trunk.

Please note that the April 2011 Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection Program will include the collection of bagged leaves. Only leaves bagged in biodegradable paper bags will be collected during the April program.

If you have any questions about the Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection Program, please call the Department of Streets and Equipment at 329-4444.

Winter Recreational Opportunities are Everywhere in Portage!



Annual Tree Lighting & Traditional Holiday Celebration

You are invited to attend the City of Portage annual Tree Lighting and Traditional Holiday Celebration on Saturday, December 4 at 7 p.m. The event will begin at the City Centre, near the Portage District Library where thousands of lights will be illuminated in celebration of the holiday season. Parking is available at the District Library and City Hall.

Participants will follow a horse-drawn wagon, complete with jingle bells and carolers, on the short walk down the Portage Creek Bicentennial Trail to the Celery Flats Historical Area, where the holiday celebration will take place. The Portage Northern Songleaders Chorale will provide entertainment at the Tree Lighting ceremony and during the walk to

Celery Flats. Holiday music at Celery Flats will be performed by *Proclamation Brass*, a local brass ensemble group. Refreshments will be served at the Hayloft Theatre and the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus is sure to put everyone in a festive mood. Hot Cider and Hot Chocolate will be available at a \$1 donation per cup outside the Grain Elevator. Proceeds from the sales will benefit area charities.

Admission is free, however, donations of food, new toys and outer wear will be accepted for the Portage Community Center to assist those in need. Please call 329-4522 with any questions about the event.



The Ice Rink at Millennium Park

280 Romence Road – Just west of South Westnedge Avenue
324-9200 – Call ahead for current ice rink information

The Ice Rink at Millennium Park will open for its eleventh season on Saturday, December 4. This large, outdoor refrigerated ice rink features an excellent skating surface, a warming house, restrooms, skate rental, skate sharpening and food concessions.

Schedule:

December 4	11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
(The Annual Tree Lighting and Traditional Holiday Celebration begins at 7 p.m. in the City Centre.)	
December 5 to December 17	
Sunday	Noon to 9 p.m.
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday	3 to 9 p.m.
Friday	3 to 10 p.m.
Saturday	11 a.m. to 10 p.m.
December 18 to January 1	
Daily	11 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Christmas Day	Closed
December 24, 31 and January 1	11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
January 2 to March 6	
Sunday	Noon to 9 p.m.
Monday and Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday and Thursday (Discount Days*)	3 to 9 p.m.
Friday	3 to 10 p.m.
Saturday	11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

School Holidays: Friday, January 28 and Friday, February 25..... 2 to 10 p.m.

Fees: \$4 per day for open skating
(cash/check only) Discount Card: \$25 for 10 visits
\$.50 per user for locker rental
\$3 per day for skate rental
\$3 for skate sharpening
* Discount Days: \$3 skate fee, \$2 rental fee

Group Discounts: Groups of 10 or more save money by purchasing the 10-skate discount cards for \$25 at the ice rink during regular hours.

Notes: Hockey is prohibited at all times.
Ice resurfacing occurs from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. on weekends and daily during the holiday period from December 18 through January 1.

Kalamazoo Nature Center Camp

Reading the Winter Landscape

Wednesday, December 22, 2010, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Winter is not always a "happily ever after" time of year for animals. We will explore the stories that the animal tracks leave behind and hear stories of survival and adaptation through books and with our discoveries outdoors. Topics of the Day: Animal tracking, predator-prey interactions and snow science. For all area children currently in grades 1, 2, and 3. Register online at www.KNCCamp.org or call 269-381-1574, ext. 0.

Location: Schrier Park, 850 Osterhout between Oakland Drive and South Westnedge Avenue.

Fees: KNC Members and Portage city residents \$40/day
Non-members and non-residents \$45/day

Materials: Bring a sack lunch (with snacks if desired) and a water bottle. Wear weather-appropriate clothing. No electronics or distracting toys, please.

Senior Center Travel Opportunities

Mary Poppins, Detroit Opera House

Wednesday, December 29

\$90 PSC members/\$100 non-members

See the magic of Mary Poppins flying through the air and delight in this enchanting story with children and grandchildren. Also enjoy the beauty of the Detroit Opera House!

Detroit Pistons vs. Dallas Mavericks

Monday, January 17, 2011

\$117 PSC members/\$127 non-members

Enjoy a Monday afternoon of professional basketball as the Pistons shoot it out with the visiting Dallas Mavericks. In a game featuring three All-Star scorers (Ben Gordon, Rip Hamilton and Dirk Nowitzki) you can expect to see lots of offense and exciting play.

Call the PSC Travel Department at 324-9239 for more information.

Celebrate the Holidays with Tea at the Historic Stuart Manor

Start a new tradition by attending a special holiday tea in the professionally designed holiday décor at the Historic Stuart Manor. Spending quality time with family and friends while enjoying a meal in a beautiful, relaxing setting, is a perfect gift for everyone on your list, including you! Décor and other gifts are also available for purchase during all holiday teas. Holiday teas sell out quickly, so be sure to make your reservations today by calling the Portage Parks & Recreation Department at 329-4522.



Tea with Mrs. Claus

Saturday, December 4, 5:30 p.m.

Come dressed to enjoy tea and holiday cheer with Mrs. Claus. Enjoy a full course tea, songs and stories with a special appearance by Santa himself. At the conclusion of the tea, guests can join in the outdoor *Traditional Holiday* festivities at the Celery Flats beginning at 7 p.m. Guests are encouraged to bring warm winter wear if attending Traditional Holiday activities.

Old Fashioned American Girl Christmas Tea

Monday, December 20, 12 Noon

Bring your favorite American Girl and start a new holiday tradition! Guests will have a delightful time together enjoying a tasty tea and creating holiday memories with each other.

Auld Lang Syne Tea

Wednesday, December 29, Noon

Ring out the old and bring in the new! Celebrate the upcoming New Year with friends and family by joining us for a nice, relaxing tea at Stuart Manor.

2010 Winter Property Taxes

City of Portage 2010 winter tax bills were mailed on November 24, 2010. The winter bills are due by 5 p.m. on Monday, February 14, 2011. Property owners who did not receive a winter tax bill are asked to contact the Portage Treasury Office. Failure to receive a tax bill does not relieve the property owner of the responsibility for payment of the tax and applicable fees.

Payments can be made by cash, check or money order at City Hall, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with the exception of Friday, December 24, 2010 and Friday, December 31, 2010. A drop box is available 24 hours per day near the south exit of City Hall. Payments placed in the drop box are processed the next business day. Payment by check authorizes the city to convert the check to an electronic funds transfer, which may result in a debit to your bank account as soon as the same day the city receives your check payment.

Taxpayers can pay by credit card by calling 1-800-272-9829 and following the instructions on the front of the property tax statement. When using this payment method, a convenience fee will be added by the vendor at the end of the transaction. Taxpayers may also use online banking – please use the

parcel number as the account number. Electronic payments should be made no later than February 7, 2011 to ensure timely delivery of funds to the city to avoid late fees.

Mailed payments must be postmarked on or before February 14, 2011 and received by the city no later than February 21, 2011 to avoid late fee. The Portage Treasury Office strongly recommends that taxpayers choosing to mail payments on or after February 10, 2011 hand-deliver payments to the US Post Office and witness a postal clerk postmark the payment. In all late-payment disputes, the city will rely on the postmark applied by the Postmaster. Taxes that remain unpaid on March 1, 2011 will be transferred to the Kalamazoo County Treasurer for collection, where additional fees will be added.

Questions regarding the tax bills may be directed to the Portage Treasury Office at 269-329-4455. Property tax information is available on the city's website at www.portagemi.gov. Click "City Government", then "Parcel Information" and select the "Property Tax and Assessment" link at the beginning of the paragraph. Property tax information is updated daily.

A Friendly Reminder

Please Keep Sidewalks Free of Snow And Ice

The city reminds residents and businesses that City Ordinance (Chapter 66, Article 1, Section 66-4) requires property owners and occupants with public sidewalks adjacent to their properties to clear the sidewalks within 24 hours of a snowfall and within 12 hours when ice has formed on the sidewalks. Enforcement action for those not in compliance with this city ordinance could involve the assessment of fines. Your cooperation in keeping sidewalks on major roadways and neighborhood streets clear for use by pedestrians is appreciated.



The Portage Fire Department asks residents to also clear snow away from any fire hydrants on or adjacent to their property. Should there be a fire nearby, it is imperative that firefighters have clear access to fire hydrants so that fire hoses can be immediately attached and used to fight the fire. Your assistance by clearing snow away from fire hydrants will make a big difference in how quickly a fire can be extinguished.

Dog Licenses Available For Purchase at City Hall



Dog licenses are available at the Treasury Office in Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue) during the months of December, January and February. To purchase a renewal license, simply bring the pre-printed renewal form issued by Kalamazoo County Animal Control. (The City of Portage Treasury Office accepts cash, money orders and checks written to the City of Portage.) To purchase a license (new or renewal), please bring proof that your dog has had a rabies vaccination and has been spayed/neutered. The fees for licenses, set by Kalamazoo County, are \$10 for dogs that are spayed/neutered or less than one year old and \$30 for dogs that are not spayed/neutered. Please call the City of Portage Treasury Office at 329-4455 or Kalamazoo County Animal Control at 383-8775 with any questions.

CITY OF
PORTAGE
A Place for Opportunities to Grow
7900 South Westnedge Avenue
Portage, Michigan 49002-5160

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POSTAL CUSTOMER



City Closings

City offices will be closed in observance of the Christmas and New Year's Day holidays on:

- ◆ Friday, December 24
- ◆ Friday, December 31

Portage City Council



Mayor Peter J. Strazdas
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Mayor Pro Tem Ed Sackley
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Portage City Council 2011 Meeting Schedule

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|
| ◆ January 11 | ◆ May 10 | ◆ September 6 |
| ◆ January 25 | ◆ May 24 | ◆ September 20 |
| ◆ February 8 | ◆ June 14 | ◆ October 4 |
| ◆ February 22 | ◆ June 28 | ◆ October 18 |
| ◆ March 8 | ◆ July 12 | ◆ November 1 |
| ◆ March 22 | ◆ July 26 | ◆ November 15 |
| ◆ April 12 | ◆ August 9 | ◆ December 6 |
| ◆ April 26 | ◆ August 23 | ◆ December 20 |

All City Council meetings are held on Tuesday evenings at Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue) in Council Chambers at 7:30 p.m. and are open to the public.

City of Portage City Council and Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings can be viewed live on channel 21. AT&T U-Verse customers can access the City of Portage government meetings on channel 99 and then follow the prompts to access the various meetings.