

Portager

CITY OF
PORTAGE
A Place for Opportunities to Grow

May 2011

LIVING • WORKING • LEARNING

www.portagemi.gov

Department of Parks & Recreation is Moving! City Financial Challenges Being Met with Organizational Changes

As a result of ongoing financial challenges facing the City of Portage, the organization continues to adapt so as to best maintain the delivery of quality services. In an effort to gain operational efficiencies, the city continues to take advantage of position vacancies or retirements as they materialize and reassign city personnel as conditions warrant. As a result, full-time staffing has been reduced to 184 in the Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Proposed Budget from 188 positions in fiscal year 2010-2011 (and from 215 positions in fiscal year 2005-2006).

In addition to these and other cost control measures, on June 1, 2011, the Department of Parks, Recreation & Property Management (Parks Department) will be

co-located with the Streets & Equipment Department at the Public Services Complex at 7719 South Westnedge Avenue (see map at right). This action is in preparation for a complete consolidation of these departments in anticipation of key retirements. The planned co-location will provide for a more structured transition to a combined operation over the next year.

Current Parks Department services will be provided at the new location. All Parks Department phone numbers and internet addresses will remain the same. City staff are hard at work making preparations in advance of the move to ensure a smooth transition.



Household Hazardous Waste Special Portage Collection Day

Saturday, May 21
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste Center will be holding a special collection for Portage residents on Saturday, May 21. The Center will be open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. to collect unwanted hazardous waste. The Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste Center is located at 1301 Lamont Street (next to the fairgrounds). No drop-off fees will be charged for Portage residents.



The following materials are accepted at the Center:

- ◆ Aerosols
- ◆ Batteries
- ◆ Cleaners
- ◆ Computers and monitors
- ◆ TV's and stereos
- ◆ Anti-freeze
- ◆ Gasoline
- ◆ Motor oil
- ◆ Oil-based paint (no latex paint)
- ◆ Pesticides

Other hazardous wastes are also accepted. Please note the Household Hazardous Waste Center is open year-round and always FREE for Portage residents. Regular hours are:

Tuesdays and Fridays: 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Wednesdays: 12 Noon to 6 p.m.

2nd Saturday of every month: 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Call 373-5211, or go online at www.kalcounty.com/hhw for more information.

United Water Celebrates Water Week with Coloring Contest

May 1 - 7 is Water Week and United Water is spreading the word to all elementary students. The 2011 theme for Water Week is *The Wonders of Water*. The goal of Water Week is to promote the importance of Water and Water conservation.

Not only is it a week to celebrate, but time for students to share ideas about water. During Water Week, United Water will hold a coloring contest for all elementary students. Show us what you think about the different uses of water and how important water is!

United Water, the utility contractor for the City of Portage water and sewer systems, is looking forward to working with the Portage Public Schools students again this year. Students may drop off coloring entries at the City of Portage Public Services Complex (see map above) located at 7701 South Westnedge by Friday, May 6. Judging will begin the following week. Call 324-4896 for more information.

Volunteer Planting Day

Friday, May 20
8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The Portage City Centre annually transforms into a mass of colorful floral displays during the summer months. Show your community spirit by helping to plant the annual flowers that are a key factor in our local economy. Volunteers are needed to plant on Friday, May 20 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Each volunteer will receive pizza and soft drinks at noon. Volunteers are asked to bring gloves and a hand-trowel, but don't worry, plenty of each will be available. Although drop-in participants are welcome, if you plan on attending please contact the Department of Parks and Recreation at 329-4522 in advance to assist with lunch planning.

Planting Day is an excellent opportunity to become part of the quality of life enhancements that help make Portage a special place for residents and visitors.



Identity Theft On the Rise

With more and more people conducting business both on the telephone and online, cases of identity theft will continue to rise and is considered one of the fastest growing crimes in the United States. The Portage Police Department offers the following tips to minimize the risk of becoming a victim of identity theft:

- ◆ Never leave your purse or wallet unattended no matter where you are. It takes only seconds for someone to steal it.
- ◆ Shred financial documents and paperwork with personal information before you discard them, such as account statements, unused checks from a closed checking account, etc.
- ◆ Don't give out personal information on the phone or over the Internet unless 100% confident of the legitimacy of the request. Avoid disclosing personal financial information when using public wireless connections.
- ◆ Store personal identification numbers (PIN) in a secure place at home. Never give out PIN numbers.
- ◆ Review credit card and bank account statements carefully. Immediately notify the appropriate financial institution when fraudulent activities are noted to minimize the loss.

- ◆ Minimize the exposure of Social Security and credit card / bank card numbers. Most businesses do not ask for Social Security numbers as a form of identification. Firms often ask for only the last four digits of a Social Security number or credit card / bank card number to confirm identity.

- ◆ Immediately report the theft or loss of credit or bank cards to the appropriate financial institution and request closure of the affected accounts. Also report theft or loss of credit or bank cards to all three major credit reporting agencies:

Equifax

P.O. Box 740256
Atlanta, GA 30374
Phone: (800) 525-6285
Fax: (770) 612-2518

TransUnion

P.O. Box 6790
Fullerton, CA 92634
Phone: (800) 680-7289
Fax: (714) 447-6034

Experian

P.O. Box 1017
Allen, TX 75013
Phone: (888) 397-3742
Fax: (214) 390-3527

Victims of identity theft are encouraged to immediately report the crime to law enforcement to help correct credit reports and deal with creditors who may want proof of the crime. The use of your Social Security number by someone else to obtain credit, loans, telephone accounts or other goods and services should be reported to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at 1-877-IDTHEFT (1-877-438-4338) or online at www.ftc.gov/idtheft.

Portage Police Offer On-line Emergency Contact Information Registration

A new feature to the City of Portage website offers residents and business owners the opportunity to provide the Portage Police Department with emergency contact and key holder information. Submission of the information will provide emergency responders with contact phone numbers and addresses that will aid in rendering assistance in the event of an emergency.



Interested residents and business owners are encouraged to visit the City of Portage website at www.portagemi.gov, navigate to the Police Department page and select the appropriate link under *Emergency Contact Information Forms*. Please contact the Portage Police Department at 329-4567 with any questions concerning this new feature.

Spring Cleanup Reminder

The City of Portage Annual Spring Cleanup continues through May 26. Residents are reminded to place materials to be disposed at the curb by 7 a.m. on the scheduled collection date, but not earlier than three days prior.

Visit the city website at www.portagemi.gov to view the program brochure and verify collection dates. Questions concerning the Spring Cleanup program can be directed to the Department of Streets and Equipment at 329-4444, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Become an On-Call Firefighter!

The City of Portage is seeking qualified candidates to fill the part-time position of On-Call Firefighter. Qualified candidates must be at least 18 years old and presently hold State of Michigan certifications of Firefighter I, Firefighter II and Medical First Responder. Qualified candidates will have a High School Diploma or equivalent, have a valid Michigan Driver License with a good record and meet residency requirements.

Individuals interested in serving the community while receiving pay may contact the Employee Development Department for additional information. Call 329-4533 or visit the city website at: www.portagemi.gov/Departments/EmployeeDevelopment/Employment.aspx

The City of Portage is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



Recreational Fires in the City of Portage

Spring is the season when thoughts turn to backyard fires, cookouts and yard cleanup. Residents are reminded that a permit is required for all recreational fires except those kindled in commercially manufactured fire containers such as grills or outdoor fireplaces. Permits can be obtained by contacting the Portage Fire Department at 329-4487.

Fires are permitted for recreational or cooking purposes only. Burning of leaves, brush or other yard waste or construction waste is expressly prohibited.

The Portage Fire Department offers these tips and reminders concerning outside fires:

- ◆ Fire pits must be constructed at least 25 feet from all structures and should be 25 feet from property lines.
- ◆ Fire pits must have a diameter of no greater than three feet.
- ◆ The fire pit must be lined with a non-combustible material such as brick or rock and must have bare earth inside the liner.
- ◆ Fire pits cannot be built under low-hanging branches or other combustible materials.

Even when a recreational fire permit has been issued, certain guidelines must be followed to insure safety:

- ◆ A recreational fire shall be constantly attended by a competent adult of 18 years or older until such fire is

extinguished.

- ◆ Materials to be burned must be in a pile no larger than 3 feet in diameter and 2 feet high.
- ◆ A garden hose connected to a water supply must be readily available any time a fire is kindled in addition to any other fire extinguishing equipment that may be present.
- ◆ No fire for which a permit has been issued may be kindled when the wind speed is 10 mph or greater. If wind speed increases to in excess of 10 mph the fire must immediately be extinguished.
- ◆ All fires must be extinguished prior to midnight.

The permit holder must conform to all ordinance provisions, rules and regulations and will be responsible for the abatement of conditions that cause complaints from others. This includes heavy smoke, noxious odors, floating debris, etc. All complaints received by the Fire Department will be investigated. Any fire found to be in violation of provisions in the Portage Code of Ordinances and rules promulgated under the code will be extinguished and a civil citation *may* be issued at the discretion of the responding firefighters.

For more information on recreational fires in the City of Portage, please call the Portage Fire Department at 329-4487 or visit the city website at www.portagemi.gov/Departments/Fire/RecreationalFires.aspx.



City of Portage Family Fishing Fair!

Saturday, May 21, 2011

9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Ramona Park

8600 South Sprinkle Road

(one-half mile south of Centre Avenue)



TAKE ME FISHING™
takemefishing.org

The Portage Parks Department invites you to the **2011 Family Fishing Fair** at Ramona Park on Saturday, May 21. Start your weekend with fishing activities for the whole family and time spent learning techniques from Kevin Van Dam, six-time Bassmaster Angler of the Year and four-time Champion of the Bassmaster Classic. Kevin will be on-site to sign autographs and share valuable fishing tips. Come out and experience fishing, boating and conservation activities. The Family Fishing Fair is sure to bring smiles and good times to every member of the family!

Local fishing guides and organizations will share their expertise. Fishing equipment will be on hand for those hoping to reel in their first (or next) catch of the day! Some of the planned activities services include:

- ◆ Casting skills and techniques
- ◆ Boating safety and trip preparation
- ◆ Rigging your rod
- ◆ Conservation education
- ◆ Kayak / Paddle demonstrations
- ◆ Fun activities and games
- ◆ Shoreline and dockside fishing
- ◆ Kids casting contest

This free community event is brought to you by the City of Portage Department of Parks and Recreation and is partially funded through a grant awarded to the Parks Department in an effort to engage youth in the lifetime benefits of fishing, boating and conservation activities. The grant was provided courtesy of the National Recreation and Park Association as well as the Take Me Fishing initiative. For more information or to volunteer for this event, contact the Portage Department of Parks and Recreation at 329-4522.

100 hundred youth will receive their own fishing rod, courtesy of United Water!

Many prizes to giveaway including a 4-person Charter Fishing Trip!

Summer Teas at Historic Stuart Manor



Tea is served at the historic Stuart Manor located at 7340 Garden Lane in the Celery Flats Historical Area in Portage.

Cost is \$20 for adults and \$15 for youth 5-12, including a four-course tea, tax and gratuity. Pre-paid reservations are required as seating is limited.

Paris in Picture and Story

Wednesday, June 15, Noon

Bonjour! Enjoy an ooh-la-la so good tea as renowned photographer and entertainer Chuck Bentley shares his photographs and brings to life the sights, sounds and beauty of Paris, France.

Jane Austen

Wednesday, June 29, Noon

Join us as Susan B. Ramsey, local poet, women's literature and creative writing instructor provides glimpses into Austen's life and work and reveals reasons for her enduring appeal.

To make reservations, please call the Portage Department of Parks and Recreation at 329-4522.

Ramona Beach Set to Open for the Season

Enjoy the only public park swimming area in Kalamazoo County staffed by professionally trained lifeguards. Monitored swimming and beach activities are available from 10:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., May 28, 29 and 30 and then seven days a week from June 4 through September 5.

A vehicle permit is required for entry into Ramona Park and can be purchased at the contact station near the park entrance during regular beach hours.

City Resident Daily Permit.....	\$5
Non-Resident Daily Permit.....	\$10
City Resident Annual Permit	\$25
Non-Resident Annual Permit	\$45
Group Bus Permit (15 or more people).....	\$50

Ramona Park is located at 8600 South Sprinkle Road, one-half mile south of Centre Avenue.

Are You Ready for SES 2011?

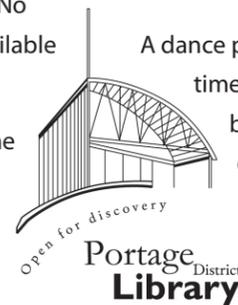
Keep an eye out for the exciting 2011 Summer Entertainment Series Season Brochure in the June edition of *The Portager!* We're sizzling into summer with a brand new events and a long standing traditional favorites.

Kicking off the season on June 3 (the last day of school) will be a **School's Out for Summer Party** for middle school students only from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Celery Flats Historical Area. DJ Orphus will keep the music playing while you try your luck on the obstacle course, scavenger hunt, water balloon toss and many other activities to kick your summer off right. No need to pack a lunch – concessions will be available for purchase.

Later in the day on June 3, everyone is welcome at the **Kids Summer Kick-off Movie Night** beginning at 7 p.m. at the Celery Flats Historical Area. Enjoy magic & fun with magician Brian Penny and stop by various interactive booths and displays, as well as a bouncer!



A dance party will take place until dusk, when movie time will begin! Be sure to bring bug spray and blankets to sit on for your movie-viewing enjoyment.



These events are joint ventures with the Portage District Library. For more information about these and other SES events, visit the city website at www.portagemi.gov.

Celery City Showcase VI

Registration for the Portage Senior Center Talent Competition Underway

The City of Portage Celery City Showcase (CCS) is a multi-generational talent competition that is open to performers of all ages. Cash prizes of up to \$300 are awarded to the top three acts in each age bracket:

1. Youth (12-18)
2. Adult (19-50)
3. Senior (51+)

The competition will be held at the Portage Northern High School Auditorium the evenings of Wednesday, June 15, Thursday, June 16 and Friday, June 17. There is no fee

to audition or perform in the Showcase, but interested performers must complete a registration form, which is available at the Portage Senior Center (320 Library Lane) or online at: www.Facebook.com/PortageSeniorCenter. Auditions will be held on Wednesday, May 26, Sunday, June 5 and Wednesday, June 8.

Directed by Mark Liermann, Professor of Theatre at Western Michigan University, the CCS has established itself as the premier southwest Michigan talent competition. Performers of all types – vocalist, dancers,

musicians, comedians, variety acts, etc., are invited to audition. All proceeds from the Showcase directly support older adult programs and services offered at the Portage Senior Center.

Local performers have the opportunity to compete for cash prizes, work with a talented, experienced Director in Mark Liermann and help raise money for a good cause!

For more information on the Celery City Showcase VI, please visit the Facebook page or call the Portage Senior Center at 329-4555.

Dollars and Sense: How the City of Portage Spends Your Money

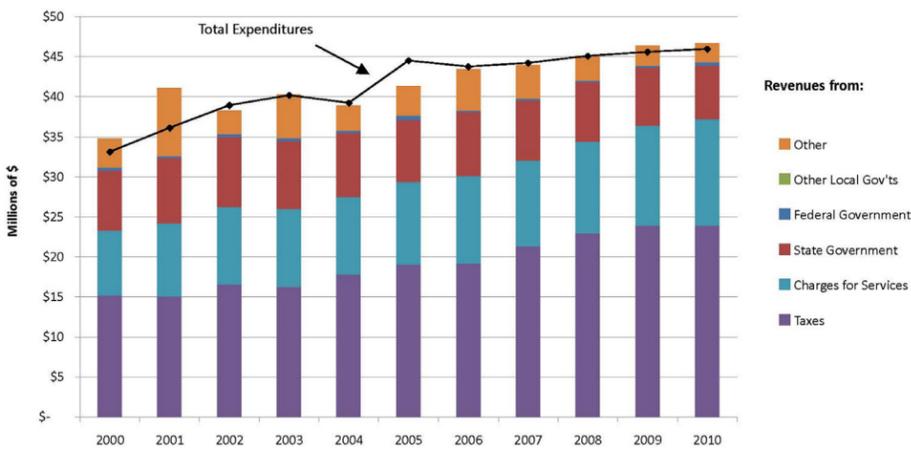
The City of Portage recently prepared the *2011 Citizen's Guide to the Financial Health of the City of Portage*, which can be found on the city website at www.portagemi.gov. The goal of the report is to improve the transparency of Portage government by providing the public with as much information as possible on the revenues, expenditures and other financial activities of the City of Portage.

Information contained in the report includes:

- ◆ Where Citizen Dollars Go
- ◆ Services that the City of Portage Provides
- ◆ City of Portage Budget - Revenues and Expenditures
- ◆ Number of Government Employees
- ◆ Difference in Public and Private Sector Compensation
- ◆ Reserves and Major Fund Balances
- ◆ Debt Levels
- ◆ Pension and Other Retiree Benefits
- ◆ Public Budget Gap



Portage Revenues and Expenditures, 2000 to Current Year



Friendly Reminders

As the spring and summer months approach, the City of Portage reminds residents of the importance of property maintenance activities.

Keep Sidewalks Clear of Debris

Property owners and occupants with sidewalks adjacent to their properties are reminded to keep sidewalks clear. The sidewalk must be free of debris and rubbish including broken bottles and glass, sand, gravel, obstructions such as overhanging branches, brush or other articles. These listed items may not remain on sidewalks for longer than 24 hours.

Keep Grass and Weeds Mowed

Please take time to properly maintain your property by controlling weeds and keeping lawns mowed on a regular basis. Growth in excess of eight inches is prohibited.

Perform Needed Building Maintenance Projects

Spring is a great time to tackle those important maintenance projects such as painting, window repairs, gutter maintenance and roof repairs.

Desirable, high-quality neighborhoods are key to Portage remaining *A Place for Opportunities to Grow!* To view the complete City of Portage Code of Ordinances to learn more about these and other community quality matters, visit the *Quick Links* section of the city website at www.portagemi.gov.

For more information, or to report a community quality concern, please contact the Department of Community Development at 329-4477 or use the on-line *Report It!* tool on the city website.

Introducing Direct Payment for City Vendors

The City of Portage recently implemented a direct payment option for accounts payable as an alternative to traditional payment by check. Direct payment is simple to set up and easy to use. By selecting the direct payment option, city vendors will receive payments in their bank accounts electronically through the Automated Clearing House (ACH), reducing the time it takes to receive payment. City vendors wishing to receive payments electronically may contact William Furry, Accounting/Payables Supervisor, at furryw@portagemi.gov or 324-9267.

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City Hall Closings

All non-emergency city offices will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

Memorial Day

Monday, May 30, 2011

Independence Day

Monday, July 4, 2011



Portage City Council

Portage 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.

Televised City Meetings

All City of Portage City Council, 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.



May

5	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting
9	7:00 p.m.	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
10	7:30 p.m.	City Council Meeting
19	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting
24	7:30 p.m.	City Council Meeting

June

2	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting
13	7:00 p.m.	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
14	7:30 p.m.	City Council Meeting
16	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting
28	7:30 p.m.	City Council Meeting

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