

Council Approves Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Budget

The Portage City Council approved the fiscal year 2011-2012 budget at its regular meeting of May 24, 2011. The budget, totalling \$60.3 million, includes a total millage levy of 10.8916 mills. The budget incorporates a 2.9 percent decrease in property tax revenue and a loss of the remaining portion of State Statutory Revenue Sharing. However, maintenance of the Council-prescribed 13 percent fund balance for the General Fund is accomplished and the City of Portage remains in the lower 25 percent of all Michigan cities of greater than 25,000 population in terms of millage level.

Curbside Collection Millage Funds

The Curbside Recycling Fund and the Leaf Pickup / Spring Cleanup Fund, approved by Portage voters in 1990 and 1997 respectively, provide for the widely-used curbside collection programs such as curbside recycling, fall leaf collection, quarterly brush collection and the spring cleanup program. Funds collected through each millage can only be used within each identified fund and only for the specified purposes.

With additional demands placed on the Leaf Pickup / Spring Cleanup Fund due to the city-wide cleanup provided for damage resulting from a July 2010 windstorm and the major ice storm in February 2011, all reserves of the fund have been depleted. Furthermore, a continuing decline in the property tax revenue base necessitated either a millage increase in the Leaf Pickup / Spring Cleanup Fund and the Curbside Recycling Fund or a service reduction in fiscal year 2011-2012. Accordingly, slight millage increases of 0.0893 for the Curbside Recycling Fund and 0.1050 for the Leaf Pickup / Spring Cleanup Fund were implemented in order to maintain the current level of service. These two millage increases, less a 0.0339 millage decrease in the Municipal Street Fund, account for the 0.1604 total millage increase, which equates to an annual increase in city taxes to the average single-family residence of \$10.68.

Average Single Family Residence	2010 Taxable Value \$73,400		2011 Taxable Value \$73,300		2011 Inflation Adjusted Taxes	
	Mills	Taxes	Mills	Taxes	Mills	Taxes
General Fund	7.5000	550.50	7.5000	549.75	7.5000	540.56
Capital Improvement Fund	2.0000	146.80	2.0000	146.60	2.0000	144.15
Curbside Recycling Fund	0.2710	19.89	0.3603	26.40	0.3603	25.96
Leaf Pickup / Spring Cleanup Fund	0.2950	21.65	0.4000	29.32	0.4000	28.83
Municipal Street Fund	0.6652	48.82	0.6313	46.27	0.6313	45.50
Total Millage and Taxes	10.7312	787.66	10.8916	798.34	10.8916	785.00

Declining Revenues and Expenditures

The city continues in a period of declining revenue. For the second consecutive year the city will realize a **decrease** in General Fund property tax revenue. The 4.0 percent decrease in property tax revenue experienced in fiscal year 2010-2011 is being followed with an additional decrease of 2.9 percent in fiscal year 2011-2012. State shared revenue for the City of Portage has been estimated through the State Budget Office as \$2,917,902 for fiscal year 2011-2012, representing a decrease of more than \$500,000 from the fiscal year 2010-2011 budgeted State Revenue Sharing amount.

Resulting from the above-noted revenue reductions, the fiscal year 2011-2012 budget

presents additional cost containment measures that are designed to further reduce operating expense while guarding against substantive impact to core service delivery. Notably, the city continues to reduce the number of full-time employees; continues to implement operating cost reductions; is further altering benefit levels for non-union employees hired after July 1, 2011 and continues for a third year a freeze on merit pay increases for non-union and department head employees. Further, additional cost control measures are being made in Parks and Recreation services. Specifically, funding has been further reduced for many aesthetic related expenditures, including flower plantings and holiday lighting. Funding has also been eliminated for the Livery operation at Portage Creek Bicentennial Park, Apple Fest, the Fall Bicycle Tour, Haunted Forest, the Fun Center program and the Senior Center wellness program. Furthermore, funding support has been minimized for the Summer Entertainment Series, which will impact upon the 2012 program year.

In addition to the expenditure reductions included in the fiscal year 2011-2012 budget, a revised organizational structure is being implemented to adjust for continuing employment level reductions, to respond to key administrator retirements and to focus administrative efforts to gain additional operating efficiencies over time. Specifically, adjustments are planned in the departments of Community Development; Parks, Recreation and Property Management and Streets and Equipment. In addition, the city most recently announced the administrative consolidation of the Police and Fire departments to promote additional efficiencies and reduce future operating costs. The Police and Fire departments will maintain separate operating divisions and share an administrative services division.

Capital Improvement Program

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) contains capital projects that promote the public health, safety and welfare; facilitate growth and development; protect community resources and enhance the quality of life within the city. The 10-year program presents a long-term plan to address infrastructure needs into the future. Revenue is provided to the CIP through the CIP millage, Municipal Street Fund millage, utility funds, federal and state funds, special assessments and through a fund transfer from the General Fund. As a consequence of continuing and projected financial constraints, planned capital projects have been redefined, deferred and rescheduled, as appropriate, and are established to achieve cost control and efficiencies. The fiscal year 2011-2012 CIP Fund supports construction-related projects to be undertaken by the city in the upcoming year totalling \$8.482 million in expense. Of this total, \$2.290 million is directed to street-related improvements. In addition, approximately \$150,000 is directed to utility infrastructure improvements and approximately \$739,000 to public facility, sidewalks/bikeways, police, fire and park and recreation improvements.

Summary

The fiscal year 2011-2012 budget maintains the favorable position of the City of Portage being in the lower 25 percent of all Michigan cities of greater than 25,000 population in terms of millage level, while best positioning the city to address the anticipated financial challenges that lie ahead. This conservative financial plan is a responsible and sound program for addressing community needs at this time. The complete fiscal year 2011-2012 budget can be viewed at www.portagemi.gov.

Portage Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day

The Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste Center will hold a special collection for Portage residents on **Saturday, August 27, 2011**. 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, with no appointment needed.

HHW Center Business Hours:

Tuesday and Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Wednesday: 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.



SUMMER entertainment series

Your journey through summer begins as the Portage Summer Entertainment Series (SES) raises the curtain on high quality, affordable entertainment! **Enclosed is the much anticipated SES season brochure**, filled with exciting, fun activities for everyone to enjoy throughout the summer. Making a triumphant return are teas at historic Stuart Manor, *Taste of Portage*, featuring the Beatles tribute band *Shout*, and the Shakespeare in the Park production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Be sure to check out the new event *Art Encounters of a Worldly Kind*.

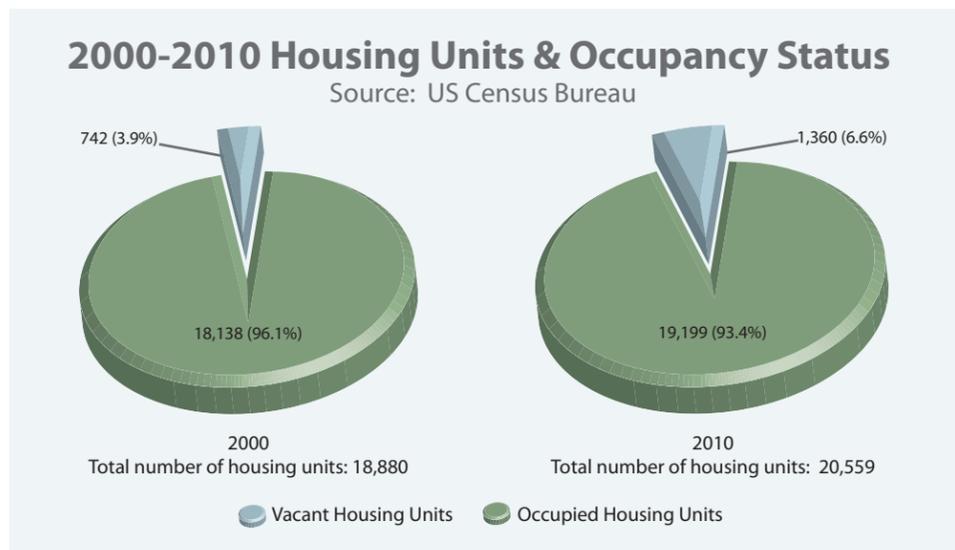
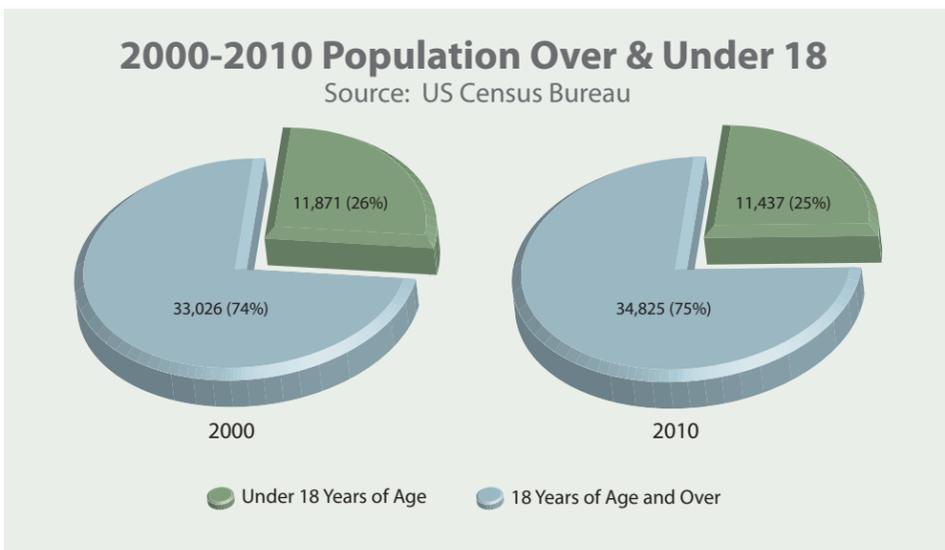
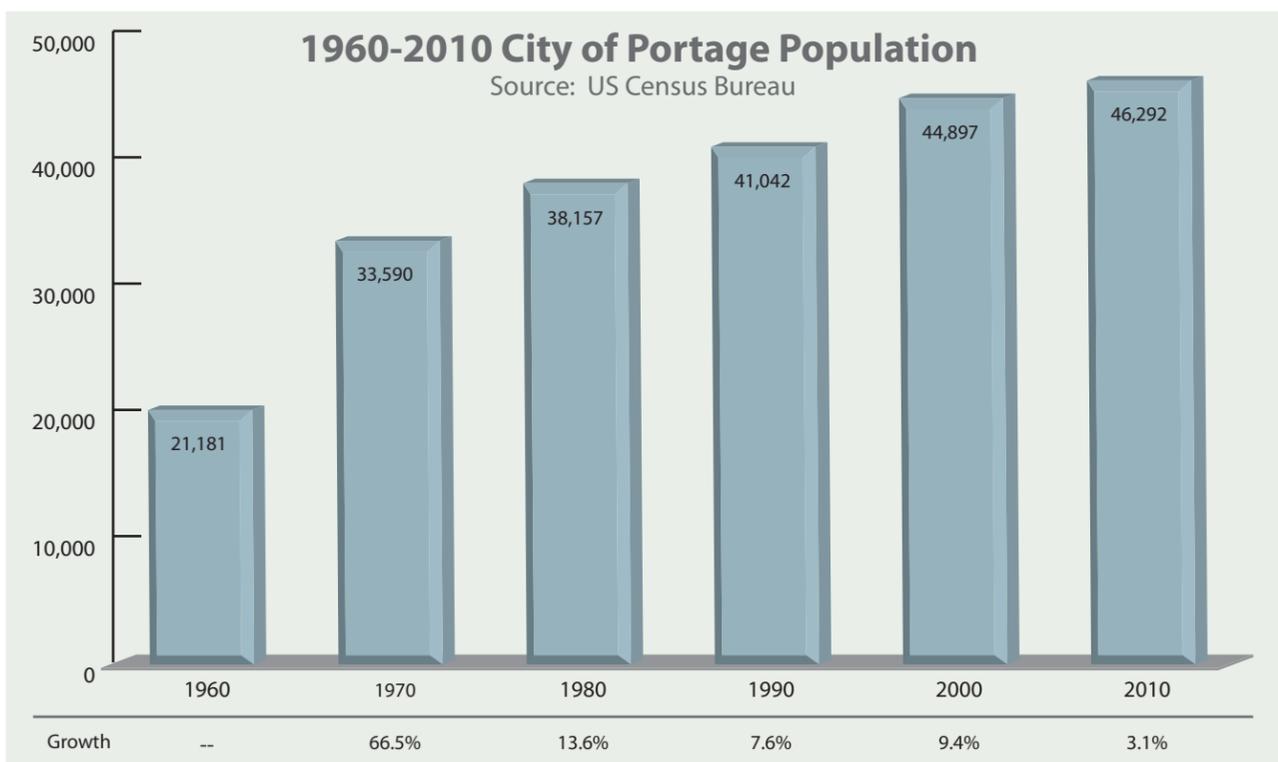
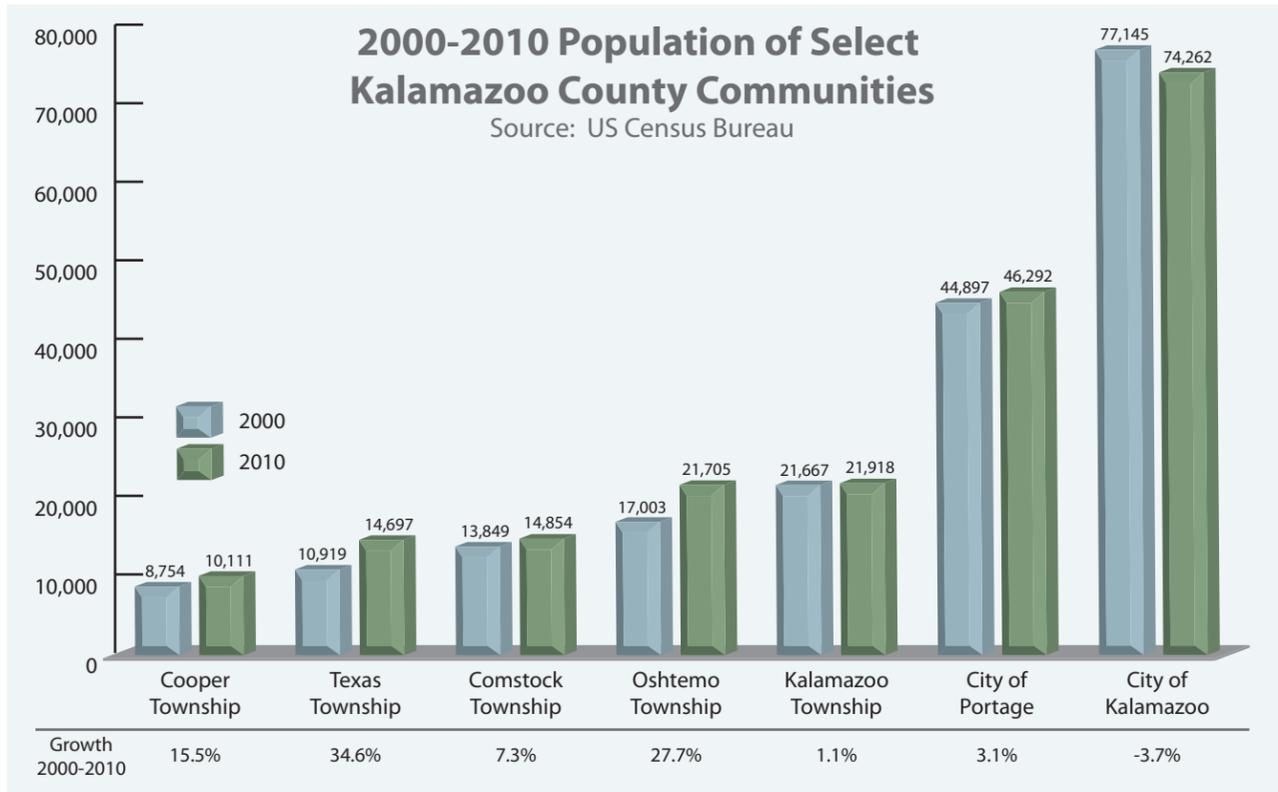
With all there is to do, keep your SES brochure handy and don't miss out on any of the action. Start planning your journey through summer with the many SES events that are right here in your award winning Portage Parks.

2010 Census: Portage On the Grow!

In March 2011, the U.S. Census Bureau released the first population and housing data from the 2010 Decennial Census. As the charts on this page show, Portage has continued population and housing growth over the recent 10-year period. Highlights of the 2010 Census data include:

- ◆ The population of Portage increased from 44,897 in 2000 to 46,292 in 2010, the third highest population increase in the county.
- ◆ The population of the city continues to diversify. In 1990, the minority population was 6 percent of the total population, which increased to 9.2 percent in 2000 and to 13.1 percent in 2010.
- ◆ In 2000, 26 percent of the population in Portage (11,871 people) were under the age of 18. In 2010, this population group dropped slightly to 25 percent of the total population (11,437 people).
- ◆ Housing unit growth continues in the City of Portage. Between 2000 and 2010, the total number of housing units grew by 1,679, the second highest increase in the county.
- ◆ The Portage housing unit vacancy rate increased in this 10-year period. In 2000, the housing unit vacancy rate was 3.9 percent of the total number of units. In 2010, the vacancy rate increased to 6.6 percent, nearly the same as the 6 percent vacancy rate in 1990.
- ◆ For Kalamazoo County the total population increased 4.9 percent to 250,331 people.

The US Census Bureau will release additional details in the coming months. A convenient website to readily access Census information is www.census.gov.



Portage Participates in National Flood Insurance Program

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

The City of Portage Department of Community Development can provide residents with maps and other information that show areas having the potential to flood 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 – or one they are interested in purchasing – 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.

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.

Residents may contact the City of Portage Department of Community Development at 329-4477 for assistance with the National Flood Insurance Program.



Portage Police Operate “Directed Patrols”

Drivers are urged to use left-turn lanes properly

The City of Portage strives to maintain safe and efficient road systems. With that in mind, the Portage Police Department requests that drivers follow and comply with Michigan Traffic Laws. The Department has recently received complaints from citizens concerning the improper use of left-turn lanes. Drivers are reminded that left-turn lanes are for that specific purpose and are not intended to be used as merge lanes or normal driving lanes. Driver cooperation is appreciated and will help keep our roadways safe.

Additionally, it is the practice of the Portage Police Department to establish “Directed Patrols.” Directed patrols are specific locations designated for concentrated enforcement efforts. These areas are determined as

a result of citizen concerns and complaints, as well as traffic crash data reports. Currently, the Portage Police Department is operating four directed patrols.

1. **West Centre Avenue near Brookwood.** The primary purpose is to enforce left turn violations.
2. **East Shore Drive.** The primary purpose is speed violation enforcement. This area is being used as a detour route for construction on South Sprinkle Road.
3. **Idaho and Oregon Avenues.** The primary purpose is speed violation enforcement.
4. **West Milham Avenue between Oakland Drive and South Westnedge Avenue.** The primary purpose is traffic light violation enforcement.



Please note that patrol officers will enforce all traffic violations in the designated areas, as well as all areas of the city.

Citizens are encouraged to contact the Portage Police Department at 329-4567 with areas of traffic safety concerns. Working together, we can make Portage a safer place to live, work and visit.

Bicycle Safety Camp

The Portage Police Department is pleased to announce the **Third Annual Bicycle Safety Camp** hosted by Safe Kids of Kalamazoo County, the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety, the Kalamazoo County Sheriff’s Department, Target Stores and the Portage Police and Parks Departments. The event will be held on **Tuesday, August 2 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** at the Loy Norrix High School parking lot, located at 606 East Kilgore Road, and on a portion of the Portage Bikeway trail system.



Participants should bring their own bike and helmet. Please note that helmets are required to participate. Safe Kids will provide **FREE** helmets and T-Shirts to the first 100 child participants.

Participant’s bicycles will be inspected for fit, safety and brake functions. Safety inspections will be provided by specialists from area bicycle shops. Rules of the road will be emphasized and participants will have the opportunity to ride a safety course. More information can be obtained online at www.safekidskalamazoo.org.

Get Active Portage! 2011

The City of Portage will host “Get Active Portage! 2011” on **Saturday, July 9**. The event is sponsored by the Portage Park Board, TriKiva and Lee’s Adventure Sports. “Get Active Portage! 2011” is a celebration of health and wellness in our community and will take place in Ramona Park, located at 8645 South Sprinkle Road.

The event begins with the **Ramona Park Youth Triathlon** at 8:30 a.m. for ages 7-9 and 10-13. This event challenges young athletes in swimming, biking and running.

The third annual **Paddle Fest** will occur on Long Lake. On-site registration begins at 10 a.m. and the first race will launch at 10:30 a.m. These races are geared for all abilities. The registration fee is \$10 per race participant. Trophies will be awarded to the top finishers in race categories of 12 years and under and 13 years and over.



The **Ramona Park Health Fair** will run from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., providing opportunities for interaction with area health and wellness vendors to promote healthy lifestyles. Participants can find out about the numerous opportunities provided in the Portage area.

Ramona Park is home to public swimming, beach volleyball, a fully accessible playground structure and many other family facilities. For additional information and to print a free vehicle parking permit for “Get Active Portage! 2011,” visit the city web site at www.portagemi.gov/Departments/ParksRecreation/SeasonalRecreation.aspx and click on the Get Active Portage link.

Come and enjoy the fun! Volunteers are needed! Please contact the City of Portage Department of Parks and Recreation at 329-4522.

City Recognizes Volunteer Efforts



The Portage Parks system has benefitted from a variety of groups providing volunteer services to clean parks and control invasive vegetation on city properties. As financial resources continue to decline, 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:

- ◆ Kathy Bates with WMU group “Spring into the Streets” – Millennium Trail, Northwest Bikeway Cleanup
- ◆ City of Portage Employees – Lovers Lane Trail, Shaver Road Bike Trail and Romence Road Cleanup
- ◆ Church of Latter Day Saints – Celery Flats Cleanup
- ◆ First Church of the Nazarene – Oakland Drive and West Milham Avenue Cleanup
- ◆ Red Lobster Employees – Garlic Mustard Pulling
- ◆ American Woodmen of America – Tree Planting at Schrier Park
- ◆ Kalamazoo Area Geocachers – West Lake Nature Preserve Garlic Mustard Pulling
- ◆ American Woodmen of America – Tree Mulching at Schrier Park
- ◆ Lake Center Bible Church – Tree Mulching at Schrier Park
- ◆ Girl Scout Troop 80852 – Tree Mulching at Schrier Park
- ◆ Summit Energy – Flower Planting at City Centre
- ◆ Community Living Options – Flower Planting at City Centre
- ◆ Master Gardeners – Flower Planting at City Centre

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

Historic District Commission Gives Preservation Award

The Portage Historic District Commission (HDC) presented its annual Preservation Award to John and Beverly Pike, owners of the historic home at 704 Bacon Avenue. The award was presented at a Historic Homeowners Gathering held at the Portage District Library on May 26, 2011. The Pikes were selected based on their positive impact on historic preservation in Portage and the continued attractiveness and landscaping of their historic home.

The Historic Homeowners Gathering also included a presentation by Nelson Breech Nave AIA, licensed architect and current member of the Kalamazoo Historic District Commission. Mr. Nave discussed his recent preservation building projects within the area and current preservation goals.

For anyone interested in becoming a member of the Portage HDC or attending meetings, the HDC meets the first Wednesday of every month at 8:15 a.m. at Portage City Hall.



Celery City Showcase VI Talent Competition

Directed By Mark Liermann

Show Times:

Wednesday, June 15, 7 p.m. (Doors open at 6:30)
 Thursday, June 16, 4 p.m. (Doors open at 3:30)
 Friday, June 17, 7 p.m. (Doors open at 6:30)

Held over three days at Portage Northern High School Auditorium, the Celery City Showcase (CCS) features over forty different acts of all ages. Audience members will enjoy singing, dancing, skilled instrumentalists, skits and more! The level of talent displayed by local performers in this event has been incredible over the years and the CCS VI promises more of the same.

All of the revenue from the CCS directly supports older adult programs and services at the Portage Senior Center (PSC). Not only is it a great time, this event helps raise funds 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 for family and Show Paks are available. Tickets can be purchased at the PSC or at the door. Check out our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/portageseniorcenter to see photos from previous shows or call 329-4555 for more information.



Portage Rotary to Sponsor Fourth of July Fireworks



The Portage Rotary Club will once again sponsor 4th of July Fireworks at McCamley Field on Monday, July 4, 2011. Gates will open at 6 p.m. with the fireworks show beginning at dusk. There is no cost for admittance; however, the Portage Rotary Club will accept donations at the gates and concessions will be available.

Money raised through gate donations and concession sales will help defray the cost of the fireworks. Any proceeds will benefit the Portage Rotary Club Scholarships program. Each year, the Portage Rotary Club awards scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$3,000 to Portage area students to assist with higher education expenses. Visit the Portage Rotary website at www.clubrunner.ca/portage for more information about the scholarship program. Questions about the 4th of July Fireworks can be directed to Elizabeth Campbell at campbell4portage@yahoo.com or by phone at 377-7911.

City to Conduct 2011 Community Survey

The City of Portage will conduct a 2011 Community Survey to determine the perception of certain city services and identify areas of need in city government. The survey will be sent to a sampling of approximately 2,000 Portage residents who will have the opportunity to complete the written survey. An advanced announcement will be mailed to these 2,000 households in mid-August, with the survey going out in early September.

Questions in the 2011 survey cover a broad range of subjects from Parks and Recreation activities to city services to environmental issues. Citizens are encouraged to complete the survey, which is submitted in a confidential manner so that the name of the respondent is not known. It is an opportunity to participate in local government and give valuable opinions to city leaders. The annual survey results are utilized by the City Council in setting goals and priorities for the upcoming budget year and are also used by the City Administration to improve services currently offered. Final results will be available in October.

CITY OF PORTAGE
A Place for Opportunities to Grow
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City Hall Closings

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

- Independence Day**
Monday, July 4, 2011
- Labor Day**
Monday, September 5, 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.



Mayor Peter J. Strazdas
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Mayor Pro Tem Ed Sackley
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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.

Month	Date	Time	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
July	7	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting
	11	7:00 p.m.	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
	12	7:30 p.m.	City Council Meeting
	21	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting
	26	7:30 p.m.	City Council Meeting
August	4	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting
	8	7:00 p.m.	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
	9	7:30 p.m.	City Council Meeting
	18	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting
	23	7:30 p.m.	City Council Meeting