

Friends of the Portage Senior Center to Host *Shindig at the Hayloft*

The Friends of the Portage Senior Center and area independent musicians are coming together to raise \$3,000 for the Portage Senior Center. The Friends of the Portage Senior Center has been raising funds to support programs and services of the PSC for years. Now, they are venturing into new fundraising territory by hosting the first ever *Shindig at the Hayloft*.

This fundraising effort is happening as senior centers throughout the state are working with other organizations to combine efforts to raise funds as the aging population grows. At the same time, there is a greater emphasis on inter-generational programs and aging baby boomers are looking for pursuits different than bingo and cards. "When we were approached by city employee Tom McCoy to stage the concert, we thought this is just the kind of new fundraising effort we need to engage younger seniors from a generation with different expectations," said Deputy Director of Recreation & Senior Citizen Services, Jill Hess.

The *Shindig at the Hayloft* will be held on Saturday, October 13 at 7 p.m. at the Hayloft Theatre located at the Celery Flats Historical Area. The first half of the concert will consist of four of the best folk/rock acts in Southwest Michigan. Each act will play three or four songs warming up the audience for the second half of the concert featuring one of the most sought after folk artists, Carrie McFerrin. As well as being a popular local favorite, Carrie's résumé includes performances all across the State of Michigan and throughout the Midwest.

In addition to an evening of great music, concessions and adult beverages will be available for sale. Tickets are \$12 for general admission and \$15 for VIP seating in the first three rows. Tickets for the event will go on sale on September 6 at 8 a.m. at the Portage Senior Center (329-4555) and the Portage Parks, Recreation and Public Services Department (329-4522). With only 160 seats available, patrons are advised to purchase tickets early. Don't miss the opportunity to get your Shindig on at the Hayloft!



Carrie McFerrin is headlining the *Shindig at the Hayloft* on Saturday, October 13 at 7 p.m.

Back to School Safety Tips

The Portage Department of Public Safety reminds parents and students to stay safe as a new school year begins. Parents, please consider the following tips:

- ◆ Have students secure their property while at school.
- ◆ Discourage your children from taking high value electronics to school.
- ◆ Encourage your child to report crimes and suspicious activity to the school or Silent Observer.
- ◆ Update your child's school regarding any personal contact information that may have changed.

While commuting, it is important to remember that school zones and designated crossing areas have a high volume of young, inexperienced pedestrians. Take extra caution to ensure student safety in these areas. Some school zone speed limits are lower during the school day, as indicated by the yellow flashing lights. Penalties for traffic violations in school zones are more severe due to the increased danger.

School buses will be on the streets with the start of school as well. Flashing yellow lights on a bus notify drivers to be cautious and that the bus will be stopping. Red flashing lights require traffic to stop a minimum of 20 feet away from the bus. Drivers should remain stopped until the bus proceeds or the bus driver signals that traffic may proceed.



Home Improvement Funds Available

Are you thinking about home improvement projects located either inside or outside your home? Are they projects that need to be completed before the arrival of old man winter? If so, you still have time. If you own and occupy a home located in the City of Portage, no-interest and low-interest home improvement loans are available to income-eligible families. For more information, please call the City of Portage Department of Community Development at 329-4477 or visit www.portagemi.gov. Funding is limited, so call today.

Household Hazardous Waste Special Collection Day

The Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Center will hold a special collection for Portage residents on Saturday, September 22, 2012. The HHW Center will be open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. to collect unwanted household chemicals and hazardous waste materials. The Kalamazoo County HHW Center is located at 1301 Lamont Street (next to the fairgrounds).

The following materials are accepted at the HHW 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. Call 373-5211, or go online at www.kalcounty.com/hhw for more information.

Please note the HHW Center is open year-round and Portage residents may drop off unwanted materials for **FREE** during regular HHW Center hours as noted below:

Tuesdays and Fridays, 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.

National Flood Insurance Program



The City of Portage is one of many 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 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 has information and maps that show areas that have the potential for or are subject to flooding. The information and maps are also available at the Portage District Library. This material is provided in an effort

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. 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 be found at the following website Floodplain Management in Michigan Quick Guide link:

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/lwm-quickguide_202673_7.pdf

Please contact the Department of Community Development at 329-4477 for assistance with the National Flood Insurance Program.

Local Drought Conditions Improving Fire Division Still Urges Caution to Prevent Fires

The National Integrated Drought Information System (www.drought.gov) recently upgraded Southwest Michigan from the *Severe Drought* category to the *Moderate Drought* category. The organization also predicts that drought conditions are likely to continue to improve in the near term. Still, the Portage Department of Public Safety – Fire Division encourages residents to be cautious to assist in preventing fires.

Typical autumn weather includes dry, breezy weather conditions. Combined with autumn leaves covering the ground, these conditions will be favorable for fire ignition and rapid growth of fires. Therefore, residents are asked to use caution before, during and after enjoying a recreational

fire. Before kindling a fire, make sure the surrounding area is clear of dry leaves, grass, shrubs and any other material that can be easily ignited. A recreational fire must always be attended by a responsible adult. Once finished, make sure the fire is completely extinguished. **Remember, only those residents who have obtained a Recreational Fire Permit from the Fire Division may kindle a recreational fire.**

The Fire Division offers the following tips with regard to fire prevention safety:

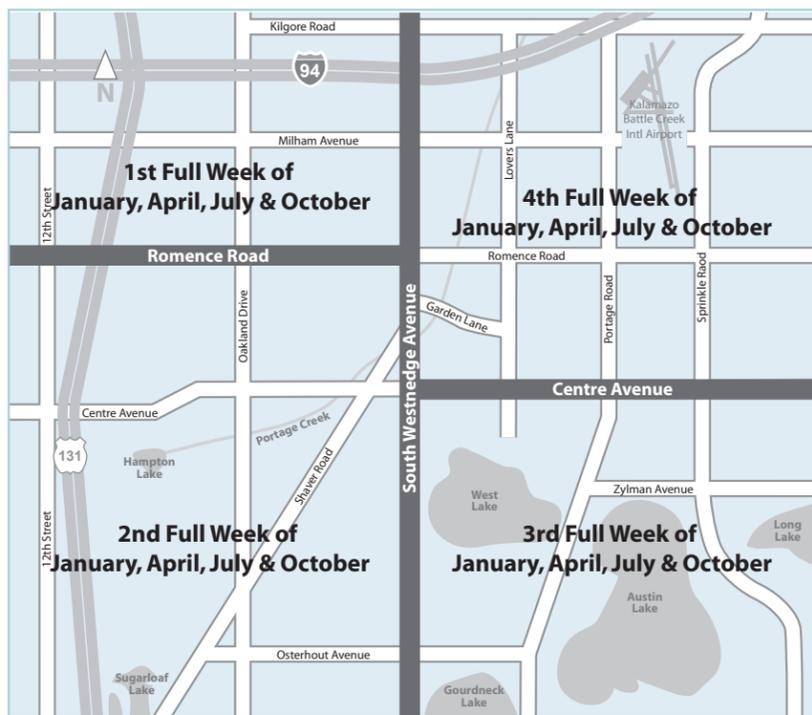
- ◆ Dispose of smoking materials in proper containers. **Never throw cigarettes or other smoking products from a vehicle.**

- ◆ Grills and other outdoor cooking appliances should be used at least ten feet from any combustible products or vegetation.
- ◆ Be aware of surroundings and fire hazards when using fireworks or sparklers.
- ◆ Keep shrubs, landscaping and other vegetation clear from contact with combustible construction.
- ◆ Furnaces and chimneys should be inspected and cleaned before the heating season.

Prevention is the best strategy to avoid injury or property loss from fire. For questions about fire prevention concerns or to apply for a *Recreational Fire Permit*, please call the Portage Department of Public Safety – Fire Division at 329-4487.

Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection

The next Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection takes place during October 2012. The map below indicates the week designated for each collection zone. Residents are asked to place brush at the curbside by 7 a.m. on Monday of the designated week.



Brush and branches of any length will be collected. Residents who are cutting longer branches are asked to cut them to a **minimum** length of four feet. Keep in mind, however, that the diameter must remain three inches or less. Residents are reminded that a small amount of debris may remain at the curb following brush removal and property owners are asked to assist with the final cleanup.

No bagged materials will be collected during the Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection program in October. For a list of other items that are not collected during the program, visit www.portagemi.gov > Departments > Streets Maintenance Division > Brush Pickup.

If you have any questions about the Quarterly Brush Pickup Program, please contact the Parks, Recreation & Public Services Department at 329-4444.

Summer Tax Payments Due September 14, 2012

The summer tax bills for the City of Portage have been issued and are due by 5 p.m. on September 14, 2012. Payment for property taxes can be made at the Treasury Office in City Hall in the form of cash, check or money order. The Treasury Office is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with the exception of Labor Day on September 3, 2012. Please be aware that payment by check authorizes the city to convert the check to an electronic funds transfer and the bank account may be debited as soon as the same day the city received the check payment.

To pay by credit card, property owners may call 1-800-272-9829 and follow the instructions printed on the front of the tax bill. A convenience fee for paying by credit card is charged by the vendor.

All tax payments received or postmarked after September 14, 2012 will be charged a 3 percent late fee on the outstanding amount. To avoid the late fee, mailed payments must be postmarked by the post office on or before September 14, 2012 and received before September 21, 2012. Those choosing to mail payments on or after September 10 are strongly encouraged to take the payment to a Post Office and ask a postal clerk to postmark the envelope. The Treasury Office must rely on the postmark applied by the Postmaster and the only way to guarantee a timely postmark is for a postal clerk to postmark the payment.

Questions regarding tax bills may be directed to the Portage Treasury Office at 329-4455. Taxes that remain unpaid on March 1, 2013 will be turned over to the Kalamazoo County Treasurer for collection, where additional fees will be added.

Nominate a City Employee for the Outstanding Customer Service Award

Have you received superior customer service from a City of Portage employee? Do you have frequent interaction with a city employee who consistently delivers outstanding customer service? If so, the City of Portage would like to hear from you! Nominate a City of Portage employee for the annual Outstanding Customer Service Award. To be selected, an employee must deliver superior customer service on a consistent basis, which can be demonstrated in a number of ways. The manner in which an employee converses with a customer, the delivery of accurate and complete information and exceeding customer expectations are examples. The award can also be given to an employee based, in part, on a one-time event that is very unique, complicated or significant.

Nominations can be made at www.portagemi.gov by clicking on the Customer Service icon or by calling 329-4533 to request a nomination form. Nominations are due by October 3. The recipient of the Outstanding Customer Service Award, along with up to three honorable mention award winners, will be selected by the City Manager. The awards will be announced in mid-November.

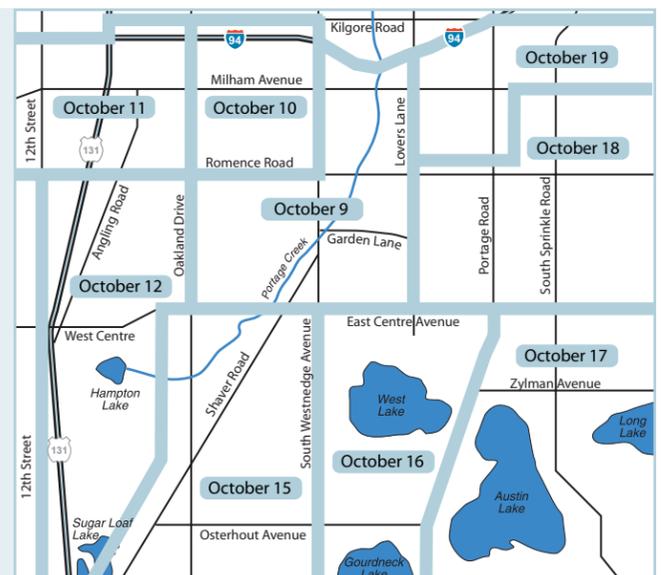
Hydrant Flushing Schedule

The City of Portage utility contractor United Water will conduct fire hydrant flushing from Tuesday, October 9 through Friday, October 19. The accompanying map indicates the dates hydrant flushing will take place in each area of the city. Most hydrants will be flushed between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7:30 a.m. so as to avoid high-traffic periods.

Hydrant flushing accomplishes important objectives for the water system. It improves water quality by removing sediment that accumulates in the water system between flushings and provides the opportunity to test proper operation of the fire hydrants and the water pumping system.

Some water discoloration will occur during the flushing process and residents are encouraged to check for discoloration prior to using water for laundry or cleaning. Even though water may be somewhat discolored, it is safe to drink.

During the flushing process, large quantities of water are discharged from the hydrants. Motorists are urged to watch for vehicles and workers engaged in this work and reduce speeds accordingly. Please call the Department of Transportation and Utilities with any questions or concerns at 324-9235.



2012 Neighborhood Fall Leaf Pickup Schedule

October 22 through November 29, 2012

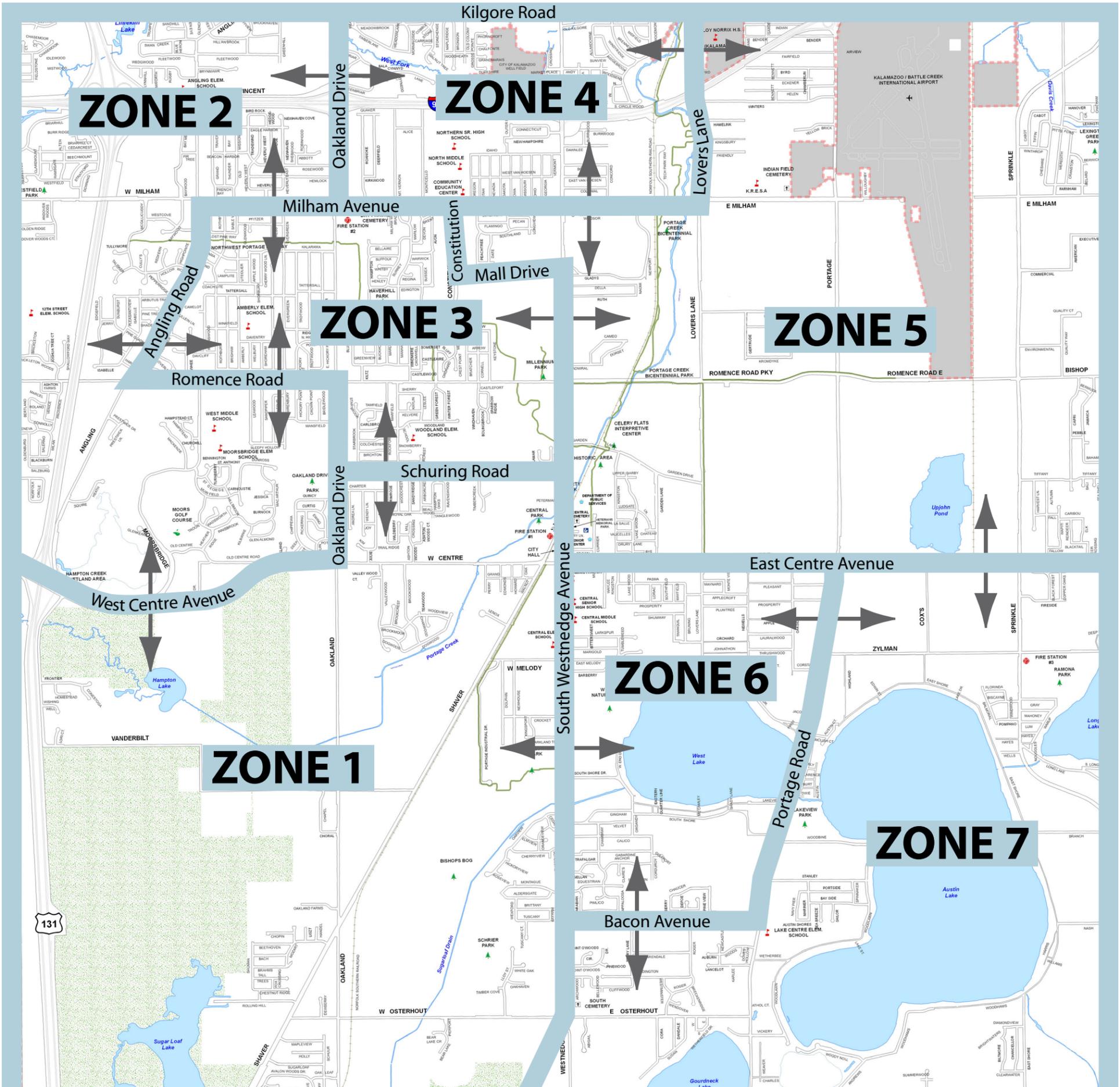
Please review these program requirements carefully and save this information for future reference. Information is also available on the city website at www.portagemi.gov – click on the fall leaf pickup icon.

ONLY loose leaves or leaves bagged in biodegradable paper yard waste bags will be collected.

- ◆ Leaf collection will occur three times in each neighborhood zone until prohibited by weather. Residents are asked to place leaves at the curb by 7 a.m. on each of the three collection dates shown to the right.
- ◆ For public safety, do not put leaves in the street more than three days prior to your scheduled collection.
- ◆ Leaves should be raked off the grass and into the street or bagged in biodegradable paper yard waste bags and placed next to the curb as close to the street edge as possible so as not to obstruct traffic. Equipment may damage lawns if leaves are left in grass areas or ditches.
- ◆ Leaves in plastic bags (including biodegradable plastic bags) **will not** be collected.
- ◆ Streets will be swept following each neighborhood collection, weather permitting.
- ◆ The Fall Leaf Pickup Program is **separate** from the Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection Program (see page 2 for details). Please ensure that brush and leaf piles are placed in separate locations at the curb.
- ◆ Leaf collection is **not** performed on private streets or for commercial establishments, churches or schools. The Fall Leaf Pickup Program is only provided at residential properties on public streets.

- ◆ The Portage Code of Ordinances (Chapter 66, Article 1, Section 66-2) 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 curb verses on the actual roadway. These items impede safe leaf collection operations and can result in damage to city equipment and personal property.
- ◆ If weather prohibits raking of leaves, the city offers a spring bagged leaf pickup in April 2013 along with the scheduled brush pickup.

Zone	1st Collection	2nd Collection	3rd Collection
1	Monday, October 22	Monday, November 5	Monday, November 19
2	Tuesday, October 23	Tuesday, November 6	Tuesday, November 20
3	Wednesday, October 24	Wednesday, November 7	Wednesday, November 21
4	Thursday, October 25	Thursday, November 8	Monday, November 26
5	Friday, October 26	Friday, November 9	Tuesday, November 27
6	Monday, October 29	Monday, November 12	Wednesday, November 28
7	Tuesday, October 30	Tuesday, November 13	Thursday, November 29



Burning of leaves and brush is banned in the City of Portage! There is NO burn period.

Questions? Call the Department of Parks, Recreation and Public Services at 329-4444 or go online at www.portagemi.gov.

Volunteer to Serve on a City Board or Commission

Do you have some great ideas? Can you commit time each month to your community? The Portage City Council relies on community volunteers for a variety of services and periodically asks Advisory Boards and Commissions to review programs developed by the City Administration and make recommendations.



The Portage City Council will interview applicants for the following Advisory Boards and Commissions on Tuesday, October 9, 2012, beginning at 5:15 p.m.

- ◆ Economic Development Corporation/Tax Increment Finance Authority and Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
- ◆ Environmental Board
- ◆ Historic District Commission
- ◆ Human Services Board
- ◆ Park Board
- ◆ Planning Commission
- ◆ Senior Citizens Advisory Board

Meeting times and responsibilities of each of the Boards and Commissions vary. Additional information and applications to serve can be obtained by visiting the city website at www.portagemi.gov > Boards & Commissions or by contacting the Office of the City Clerk by mail (7900 South Westnedge Avenue), in person at City Hall or by phone at 329-4412. Applications should be submitted to the Office of the City Clerk by September 14, 2012.

Take this opportunity to learn about your city, serve the residents and make a positive contribution to the Portage community.

November Election Information and Absentee Voting Guidelines

The City of Portage processes thousands of absentee ballots during every election and anticipates a record number of voters requesting absentee ballots for the November Presidential Election. In order to vote absentee, a voter must meet one of the following criteria:

- ◆ You are 60 years of age or older.
- ◆ You expect to be absent from the community the entire time polls are open on election day.
- ◆ You are physically unable to attend the polls without assistance from another.
- ◆ You are unable to attend the polls because of the tenets of your religion.
- ◆ You are confined to jail awaiting arraignment or trial.
- ◆ You have been appointed an election inspector in a precinct other than the precinct in which you reside.

have never voted in Michigan and registered to vote by mail or as part of a voter registration drive such as those sponsored by a political campaign or private organization, you must appear in person to vote in the first election in which you wish to participate. This requirement does not apply if (1) you personally hand deliver the mail registration form to your county, city or township clerk's office instead of mailing the form, (2) you are 60 years of age or more, (3) you have a recognized disability or (4) you are eligible to vote under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act. If you have any questions regarding these requirements please contact the Office of the City Clerk.

Looking for Election Workers!

Interested in serving your community? The City of Portage is currently taking applications from those individuals interested in serving as election workers. **Persons with computer experience are strongly encouraged to apply.** All election workers receive training in advance of the election and are compensated \$15 for each training session and \$120 for working Election Day. Assistant Precinct Chairs and Precinct Chairs are compensated \$130 and \$145, respectively, for working Election Day. If you are interested in becoming an election worker, please contact the Department of Employee Development at 329-4533.

Absentee ballot applications may be downloaded from the Michigan Secretary of State at www.michigan.gov/vote or contact the Portage Office of the City Clerk at 329-4511 to have one mailed to you.

Special Information for First Time Voters

With numerous voter registration drives occurring across Michigan and the nation, the Office of the City Clerk is experiencing an increase in the number of registrations for first time voters. If you

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 Portage, Michigan 49002-5160

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In December 1963, Portage Township incorporated as the City of Portage and 2013 marks the 50th anniversary of the city's incorporation. The Portage City Council intends to establish a year-long program of activities and events to commemorate the 50th anniversary as a city and is seeking ideas for appropriate celebratory events or activities that could be planned. The Council will consider submitted suggestions during the planning process.

Please visit www.portagemi.gov to submit 50th anniversary celebration suggestions. Your participation is appreciated!

City Closings

Non-emergency city offices will be closed in observance of the following holiday:

Thanksgiving
 Thursday, November 22 and
 Friday, November 23

The next edition of the Portager will be published in December 2012.

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.

The City Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city. Citizens are encouraged to contact the City Administration with concerns or complaints about city services by calling Complaint Resolution at (269) 329-4404 or by visiting www.portagemi.gov > Report It!



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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 98. 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
September	6	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting
	10	7:00 p.m.	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
	11	7:30 p.m.	City Council Meeting
	20	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting
	25	7:30 p.m.	City Council Meeting
October	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
November	1	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting
	6	7:30 p.m.	City Council Meeting
	12	7:00 p.m.	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
	15	7:00 p.m.	Planning Commission Meeting
	20	7:30 p.m.	City Council Meeting