

# Portager

July 2015



7900 South Westnedge Avenue  
Portage, Michigan 49002  
www.portagemi.gov  
(269) 329-4400

## Portage is the Place to Be Entertained in July!

The City of Portage Parks & Recreation Division, along with several community sponsors, will bring you an abundance of entertainment opportunities during the month of July. Enjoy the patriotic sounds of the United States Army Field Band & Soldier's Chorus at Overlander Bandshell on Tuesday, July 7. Be entertained by the Bluegrass and American music at the Celery Flats Musical Festival on Sunday, July 12. Get your grub on at the

Taste of Portage at the Overlander Bandshell on Saturday, July 18. End the month with the soulful, positive, pop sounds of Blake Whyte Music at the newest addition to the Portage parks system, the Eliason Nature Reserve on Saturday, July 25. For a complete list of summer Parks & Recreation opportunities, visit [www.portagemi.gov](http://www.portagemi.gov) and click on the Seasonal Recreation icon.



### United States Army Field Band & Soldier's Chorus Making a Stop in Portage

The internationally-acclaimed United States Army Field Band & Soldier's Chorus of Washington, DC will present a free public performance at the Overlander Bandshell (7800 South Westnedge Avenue) on **Tuesday, July 7 at 7 p.m.** The Army Field Band will be hosted by the City of Portage Parks & Recreation Division, along with a number of community sponsors, including the Western Michigan University Office of Military & Veterans Affairs.



**The United States Army Field Band**

*The Musical Ambassadors of the Army Washington, DC*

The Concert Band & Soldiers' Chorus are the oldest and largest of The U.S. Army Field Band's performing components. These two ensembles combine to present joint concerts on national tours and have performed in all 50 states and 30 foreign countries for audiences totaling hundreds of millions.

The 65-member Concert Band and 29-member Soldiers' Chorus perform regularly in some of the most famous concert halls in the world, and just as often in the humblest auditoriums in the smallest of communities. The joining of these two ensembles allows them to offer unparalleled versatility of programming, ranging from orchestral masterworks and operatic arias to Sousa marches, jazz classics and Broadway musicals. The band and chorus also perform independently and have recently shared the stage with such ensembles as the Boston Pops, the Cincinnati Pops, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and the National Symphony Orchestra.

In addition to national tours, formal concerts, chamber recitals and educational outreach, members of the Concert Band & Soldiers' Chorus frequently represent the Army at formal and ceremonial functions, including the Presidential Inaugural Parade, presidential funerals, the Army All-American Bowl and diplomatic efforts overseas. More than six decades as the military's most traveled musicians have earned them the title, "The Musical Ambassadors of the Army."

This free event will promote civic pride, support the Armed Forces, instill a renewed patriotism and provide world-class entertainment. It is a bring your lawn chairs, bring your blankets and bring your family type of concert.



Parking will be available at Portage Central High School at the Mustang Drive entrance. For your convenience, the Holly Jolly Trolley will assist with transportation to and from the bandshell starting at 6 p.m.

For additional information about the Army Field Band's performance, please contact the Portage Parks & Recreation Division at 329-4522. Operational and sponsorship inquiries may be directed to The Experiential Learning Center at 388-2830.

### Grab Your Trail Maps – There's a Concert in the Woods!

Grab your trail maps and head into the Eliason Nature Reserve for this unique nature and live music experience. The Eliason Nature Reserve will become the unconventional site of a live performance by Blake Whyte Music on **Saturday, July 25 at 3 p.m.**

Blake Whyte and his band will perform a complimentary outdoor concert at the conclusion of the hike. A proud native of Portage, Blake was named NY-1's Pick of the Week for his hit show at Joe's Pub in New York City and has headlined over 45 shows at venues across NYC, including Lincoln Center's Josie Robertson Plaza, Rockwood Music Hall and The Cutting Room. Most recently, Blake released his newest single *Let Me Fly*. Take a listen to this and more Blake Whyte Music songs at [www.blakewhyte.com](http://www.blakewhyte.com)

**BLAKE WHYTE**  
music



Enjoy the sights and sounds of Mother Nature as you journey into the depth of the Eliason Nature Reserve starting at 3 p.m. Experience a unique immersion of mind, body and spirit with a choice between a 20-minute hike or a 40-minute hike. Head to a clearing in the heart of the Eliason Nature Reserve for the free 60-minute performance, which begins at 4 p.m.

To gain access to the trail for the 20-minute hike, head down Portage Industrial Drive. Parking is made available by our friends at BASIC (9246 Portage Industrial Drive). The entrance for the 40-minute hike is located within South Westnedge Park (9010 South Westnedge Avenue).

Help promote the stewardship of the land at this "Leave No Trace" event – take what you bring! Hikers should come prepared with their own lawn chairs or blankets for seating and water bottles. A water re-filling station will be available on-site.

None of this would be possible without the support of our sponsors at Meyer C. Weiner, Rathco Safety Supply, Inc. and SignArt. For additional information, please contact the Parks & Recreation Division at 329-4522.

### Taste of Portage

**Saturday, July 18**

**12 noon – 10 p.m. at Overlander Bandshell, 7800 Shaver Road**  
**FREE from 12 noon – 4 p.m. • \$5 admission after 4 p.m.**

A variety of great food, beverages (including beer & wine) and entertainment will be showcased. Entertainment at this family friendly event includes the popular Kids Zone during the day, followed by a variety of dance and musical performances such as the featured act, the Spazmatics. Parking is available at City Hall and the Portage Public Library.

### Celery Flats Music Festival

**Sunday, July 12**

**12 noon – 4:30 p.m. at Celery Flats Historical Area, 7366 Garden Lane**

**Admission: Donation to the Friends of the Parks - [www.friendsoftheparksportage.com](http://www.friendsoftheparksportage.com)**

Enjoy an afternoon of Bluegrass and Americana music in a natural setting. Sponsored by the Portage Park Board and the K'zoo Folklife Organization, the event will benefit the Portage Friends of the Parks. Well known local and regional groups and performers will entertain the crowd in an outdoor concert setting – bring a chair or blanket. Food concessions will be available.

# Portage Economy Gains Strength

Economic development activity in Portage has rebounded and continues to remain strong since the peak of the recent recessionary period. As shown in the chart below, only \$18.1 million in new construction value occurred in Fiscal Year 2009-2010 (FY10). During FY11 through FY15, construction value increased significantly to a five year average of \$61.5 million. Since FY11, the data shows residential neighborhoods and housing choices are increasing, commercial businesses are expanding and industrial diversification and growth is continuing.

**New Construction Value Six-Year Trend**



Based on the most recent construction value data for FY15, which concluded on June 30, 2015, investment in the community by the private sector has been significant. Major residential, commercial and industrial development projects that have occurred in the city during FY15 are noted to the right.

## Residential

- ◆ Pinefield Townhomes Phase 3, 6291 South 12th Street – 30 new multi-family residential units
- ◆ Greenspire Apartments Phase 4, 8380 Greenspire Drive – 36 new multi-family residential units
- ◆ Copperleaf Phase 1, 3800 West Milham Avenue – 39 new single-family residential lots.



Greenspire Apartments Phase 4

## Commercial

- ◆ Hilton Homeward Suites, 500 Trade Center Way – new 97 room hotel
- ◆ Earth Fare, 5070 South Westnedge Avenue – new 24,000 sq. ft. organic grocery store
- ◆ Zhang Financial, 5931 Oakland Drive – new 9,300 sq. ft. office building
- ◆ Jared Jewelers, 6307 South Westnedge Avenue – new 5,000 sq. ft. retail building
- ◆ Flagstar Bank, 475 Romence Road – new 4,000 sq. ft. bank building



Earth Fare



Flagstar Bank

## Industrial

- ◆ Kenco Logistics, 6501 Portage Road – new 303,000 sq. ft. distribution facility
- ◆ Stryker Corporation, 1901 Romence Road – 100,000 sq. ft. interior office remodel
- ◆ Pfizer Corporation, 7000 Portage Road – multi-million dollar investment in several facilities
- ◆ Mann+Hummel, 6400 Sprinkle Road – 15,000 sq. ft. addition and expansion into a vacant manufacturing building located at 6700 Sprinkle Road



Kenco Logistics

## Assistance Available for Home Improvement Projects

In partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the City of Portage offers homeowners assistance with improvement projects such as a new roof, furnace, water heater, windows, connection to city sewer and/or water, electrical upgrades and more. Homeowners who meet program income eligibility requirements may be eligible for a no interest or 3% interest loan up to \$15,000 to complete home improvements. Maximum annual household income limits are shown in the table below.

Household Size	Maximum Annual Income to Qualify for a 0% Interest Loan	Maximum Annual Income to Qualify for a 3% Interest Loan
1 Person	\$21,100	\$33,750
2 Person	\$24,100	\$38,550
3 Person	\$27,100	\$43,350
4 Person	\$30,100	\$48,150
5 Person	\$32,550	\$52,050
6 Person	\$34,950	\$55,900
7 Person	\$37,350	\$59,750
8 Person	\$39,750	\$63,600

For those who qualify, no monthly loan payments are required as long as you continue to live in your home and it remains your principal place of residence. For additional information or an application, please contact the Department of Community Development at 329-4477.

## Wanted: Home Improvement Contractors!

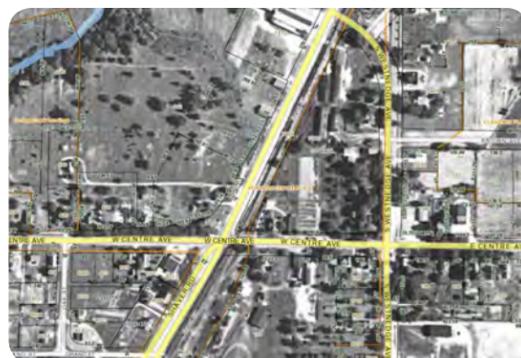
The City of Portage is seeking licensed contractors to participate in the Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program. This program is funded by a Community Development Block Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In an effort to improve housing and neighborhoods, the city facilitates the completion of home improvements between homeowners and contractors. Licensed contractors interested in participating are encouraged to contact the Department of Community Development at 329-4477 for more information and a Contractor Registration form.

## On the Web – GIS Mapping

The City of Portage has been a leader among Michigan municipalities in providing online geographic information and mapping through the city website. Available since 2003, this website has garnered awards and is one of the most frequently visited sections of the city website. Public and private agencies, realtors, engineering firms, architects and many others use this tool to expedite the information collection process.

### What Can I Learn from the City of Portage GIS Mapping Website?

- ◆ How is my property zoned?
- ◆ What are my property lot dimensions?
- ◆ In what plat is my property located?
- ◆ Is my property in a 100 year flood plain?
- ◆ What is the future land use designation for my property?
- ◆ I need a map of my property. Can I create one?
- ◆ What did my neighborhood look like in 1950?



An aerial view of the City Centre from 1950...



... and from 2013.

Additional website links available at this site include the State of Michigan Subdivision Plat Search tool, access to the City Portage Code of Ordinances and City of Portage Land Development Regulations.

City of Portage mapping website customers are encouraged to use this expanded and improved mapping tool. While the mapping website contains a great deal of property location information, it is not a replacement for a property boundary survey and should not be used as such.

The mapping website can be found at <http://www.portagemi.gov/Departments/Community-Development/GISCityMaps.aspx>

Questions about the City of Portage GIS mapping website can be directed to the Department of Community Development at 329-4429.

## Have You Signed Up?

**PORTAGEALERT** allows the city to send urgent voice and/or text messages to home phones, businesses, local agencies and mobile phones in just minutes during emergencies or other urgent situations. **PORTAGEALERT** is also a great way for the city to remind you of upcoming service dates in your neighborhood, like leaf pickup or brush collection.

Visit [www.portagemi.gov](http://www.portagemi.gov) or scan the QR Code to register your contact information. Those without internet access are encouraged to call 329-4405 to provide current contact information.



# More Parks and Recreation Opportunities!

Portage residents don't need to look far for opportunities to enjoy the outdoors this summer. With 17 park sites located throughout the city, the Parks & Recreation Division offers year-round seasonal recreation opportunities. The 2015 Summer Programs and Event Brochure (delivered with your May *Portager* and viewable at [www.portagemi.gov](http://www.portagemi.gov)) provides all the details for a summer packed full of recreation opportunities, summer camps and special events. See below for a sampling of Parks & Recreation opportunities in July.

## Ramona Park Beach

Open seven days a week, Ramona Park Beach offers a sandy swim area monitored by lifeguards, beach volleyball courts, picnic areas, a fishing dock and one of Portage's most loved playgrounds!



## Workouts in the Park at Celery Flats

Family Fit Trek July 9  
FREE 6 – 7 p.m.

Get the whole family moving! Meet at the playground structure at Celery Flats for fun fitness.

Dance Fitness Party July 22  
FREE 6 – 7 p.m.

Let the music move you! Join in on the around the world and through the decades fun dance fitness.

## Lunch & Learn Discovery Program

Live Birds of Prey at Celery Flats July 9  
FREE 11 a.m. – 12 noon

Explore the adaptations of some live birds of prey and how they survive in the wild

## Out in the Park Discovery Program

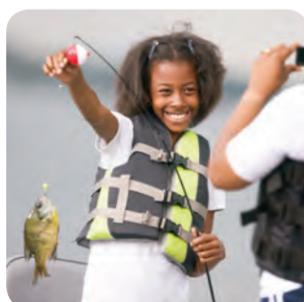
Amazing Animal Homes at Lakeview Park July 13  
FREE 7 – 8:30 p.m.

Join a Kalamazoo Nature Center naturalist at Lakeview Park and investigate the amazing animal homes found in the woods and water.

## School of Fish Day Camp at Ramona Park

Registration Deadline: July 27, 2015  
Advanced Anglers (ages 9 – 14) August 10 – 13  
\$85 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Intermediate and experienced young anglers will learn a variety of skills such as jigging, advanced knots, artificial lures, introduction to fly fishing and much more.



Saturday, August 8 at Ramona Park  
8600 South Sprinkle Road

**Youth Triathlon** 8:30 a.m.  
**Presented by Spirit Racing, LLC** (Check in begins at 7 a.m.)

Young triathletes will be timed and awards will be presented for top finishers in each age group (6-9 years and 10-13 years) but participation is the primary goal. Race courses are within Ramona Park and closed to vehicle traffic for the race duration, ensuring a very safe and controlled environment. Download complete course maps from the event web site and practice the courses in advance of the event. All athletes must be pre-registered online at [www.kidsgetactive.us](http://www.kidsgetactive.us).

**Ramona Park Health Fair** 9 a.m.  
**Presented by Spirit Racing, LLC**

Learn how to live a healthier lifestyle. Participate in activities provided by local health and wellness vendors. Try out a kayak or stand up paddle board, courtesy of **Lee's Adventure Sports**, or try out an outdoor workout with expert instruction from **Just Move Fitness & More!**



# Free Summer Movie Night in the Park Returns!

The City of Portage Youth Advisory Committee and the Breakfast Optimist Club of Kalamazoo have teamed up to bring back **Summer Movie Night in the Park** at Celery Flats in Portage on Friday, August 7, 2015. The evening will begin with Respect for Law displays from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., where local public safety personnel will be available for children, teens and adults to visit, including displays of public safety equipment, police vehicles, fire apparatus and ambulances. The movie **Big Hero 6** (rated PG) will begin at 9:30 p.m. The event is free of charge and popcorn will be provided. The movie will be viewed from the lawn at Celery Flats so bring a blanket or chairs.



# Friendly Reminder

Portage residents are reminded of the importance of property maintenance activities. Desirable, high-quality neighborhoods are key to Portage remaining *A Natural Place to Move!*

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 by city ordinance. To view the complete City of Portage Code of Ordinances and learn more about these and other community quality matters, visit the Quick Links section of the city website at [www.portagemi.gov](http://www.portagemi.gov). 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.



# Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection – July 2015

The next Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection will begin July 6, 2015. To ensure the collection of items, residents are asked to have brush placed at the curb by 7 a.m. on the Monday of the designated collection week. Materials may be placed at curbside up to, but not more than, 72 hours prior to the designated Monday. Please note that a small amount of debris may remain after the brush is removed. Citizens are asked to assist with clean up of the leftover debris. The map at right indicates the pickup schedule of each brush collection zone.

- ◆ Brush and branches may be any length.
- ◆ Branches must be less than 3 inches in diameter.
- ◆ Please stack brush/branches in neat piles at curbside by 7 a.m. on the designated Monday; each zone will be cleared of materials by the end of the week.

Complete details regarding the Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection Program can be located on the city website at [www.portagemi.gov](http://www.portagemi.gov) or by contacting the Department of Public Services at 329-4444.

Note: The Quarterly Curbside Brush Collection Program is not performed for commercial establishments, churches or schools. Collection takes place on private streets where every property owner has signed an indemnification form. Contact the Department of Public Services at 329-4444 regarding collection on private streets.



# 2015 Summer Property Tax Bills

The 2015 summer tax bills for the City of Portage will be mailed on Friday, July 10, 2015 and are due by 5 p.m. on September 14, 2015.

Payment for property taxes can be made at the Treasury Office in City Hall in the form of cash, check, credit / debit card 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 7, 2015. To pay by credit card via telephone, call 1-866-270-5701. To pay by credit card online, visit [www.portagemi.gov](http://www.portagemi.gov) > Quick Links > Online Payments.

Payment by check authorizes the city to convert the check to an electronic funds transfer and your bank account may be debited as soon as the same day the city receives the check payment. A 3% convenience fee is charged for all credit / debit card payments, which is collected by the city's third-party

payment processing partner, Point & Pay.

All tax payments received or postmarked after September 14, 2015 will be charged a 3% 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, 2015 and received by the Treasury Office before September 21, 2015. If you choose to mail your payment on or after September 10, the Treasury Office strongly recommends that citizens to take the payment into the Post Office and ask a clerk to postmark the envelope.

Questions regarding the tax bills may be directed to the City of Portage Treasury Office at 329-4455. Taxes that remain unpaid on March 1, 2016 will be transferred to the Kalamazoo County Treasurer for collection where additional fees will be added.

## Watch Televised City Meetings Via Live Web Streaming

Just in time for summer vacation, City of Portage televised meetings can be viewed live from anywhere in the world! City Council meetings, Planning Commission meetings and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings are all televised live by our Cable Access partner, Public Media Network on cable channel 190 (AT&T U-Verse channel 99). Recently, PMN announced the addition of a new Live Web Streaming function, allowing Portage residents to view televised city meetings via the web.

Visit the city website homepage ([www.portagemi.gov](http://www.portagemi.gov)) and click on the Watch City Meetings Live icon.



Please contact PMN at 343-2111 with questions about PMN live web streaming, or visit [www.publicmedianet.org](http://www.publicmedianet.org).

## Leave Porch Lights On for National Night Out™

National Night Out is an annual community-building event aimed at promoting neighborhood camaraderie and positive interactions with law enforcement, while promoting a true sense of community. National Night Out provides an opportunity to bring police and neighbors together under positive circumstances and is an effort to "take back the night" from would-be criminals in the neighborhoods.



National Night Out 2015 will be held on Tuesday, August 4, 2015. A traditional part of the National Night Out campaign has been for residents to keep their front porch lights on for the night.

In Portage, National Night Out events are organized by each Neighborhood Watch individually for a more personal experience. Neighborhood Watch groups are encouraged to plan block parties, festivals or cook-outs – activities that promote getting outside and visiting with neighbors. National Night Out events can also include safety demonstrations, youth events and visits from Portage Department of Public Safety personnel. Neighborhood Watch members can contact the Portage Crime Prevention desk at 324-9245 to request participation by PDPS. All Portage residents are encouraged to attend and participate in their neighborhood for National Night Out.



7900 South Westnedge Avenue  
Portage, Michigan 49002-5160

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## City Council Meeting Time Change

The start time for the **July 7, 2015 City Council Meeting has been moved to 5 p.m.** The meeting will be aired live at 5 p.m. on channel 190 and via live streaming. A rebroadcast will be aired at 7:30 p.m.

## City Closings

Non-emergency city offices will be closed in observance of the following holiday:  
**Independence Day**  
Friday, July 3 (observed)

## 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 always 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](http://www.portagemi.gov) > Report It!



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**Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson**  
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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 190 and via live streaming at <http://www.publicmedianet.org/watch-live>.

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.

### July

- 7 5:00 p.m. City Council Meeting**
- 13 7:00 p.m. Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
- 16 7:00 p.m. Planning Commission Meeting
- 21 7:30 p.m. City Council Meeting

