



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

Portage Police Division Welcomes Rocco to the Force

In November, Canine Officer Rocco, a two-year-old German Shepherd born in the Netherlands, joined the Portage Department of Public Safety – Police Division. Rocco, a dual-purpose canine, specializes in drug detection and patrol work, including tracking, handler protection, building searches, criminal apprehension and evidence searches.

Prior to hitting the streets in Portage, Rocco and his handler, Officer Jordan Wentworth, completed an intensive five-week handler school through Blue Line Police K-9, where they learned the skills required to perform their duties and to work together as a



team. Continuous training is essential in maintaining an effective canine program. Officer Wentworth and Rocco train roughly 16 hours bimonthly with the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety and Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office canine units, in addition to weekly maintenance training.

Rocco assists all Portage Department of Public Safety officers and surrounding agencies upon request. Specific tasks performed by Rocco include drug detection, tracking suspects who have fled from police, searching for missing or endangered persons, building searches

for suspects involved in certain high-risk crimes, area searches for evidence, handler protection and criminal apprehension. The duo also attend special public relations and educational demonstrations throughout the city.

The Portage Department of Public Safety is thrilled to welcome Rocco to the team! "I am pleased that we have been able to add this valuable resource to our patrol efforts knowing that our citizens will receive the many benefits that Rocco brings to us," said Public Safety Director, Richard White. "He is a valuable asset to the Police Division and the greater community."

Severe Weather Can Strike at Any Time: Are You Prepared?

Severe weather comes in many forms in Michigan: heavy snow and ice, thunderstorms and heavy rain that can lead to flooding, strong winds and tornadoes causing power outages, property damage and even injuries or loss of life. Being prepared for what ever Mother Nature brings is key to making it through a storm safely.

Make a Plan: Together with your family, develop an action plan for severe weather.

- ◆ Designate a place to meet if you get separated or can't return to your home.
- ◆ Identify escape routes from your home in the event of significant damage.
- ◆ Consider taking a first-aid training course.
- ◆ Sign up for **PORTAGE ALERT**, which allows the city to send urgent voice and/or text messages to home phones, businesses, local agencies and mobile phones in just minutes during local emergencies or other urgent situations.

Make a Disaster Supply Kit: Make an emergency preparedness kit with supplies for every family member to last three full days.

- ◆ Include one gallon of water per person, per day; non-perishable, easy-to-prepare food (don't forget the can opener); flashlights/lanterns (candles should not be used during power outages due to the risk of fire); extra batteries; seven-day supply of medications; tool kit; sanitation and hygiene products; battery-powered radio and charged cell phones. Consider adding a corded, land-line phone to your kit. It may work during a power outage, whereas a wireless phone will not.
- ◆ If you own a generator, keep it filled with gas. Keep the gas tank in your vehicle full in case you need to leave the area.
- ◆ Check and update your emergency supplies and equipment regularly and make sure everyone in your family knows where the kit is stored.



the trees more resistant to high winds.

- ◆ Identify outdoor objects that need to be secured or moved inside when bad weather approaches.
- ◆ Protect your outdoor pets - bring them indoors or ensure that they have a secure shelter.

Make Your Move: Being prepared is just the first step. Know what to do when a storm is expected.

- ◆ When severe weather approaches, move to a safe place inside a building, away from windows, glass doors and skylights that can be broken by high winds or hail.
- ◆ Do not go outside in severe weather; lightning can strike even if it is not raining. Where there is thunder, there is lightning. Wait 30 minutes after the last thunder clap before going outside.
- ◆ Do not use electrical appliances during thunderstorms; battery-powered devices are best.
- ◆ Refrigerators can keep food cold for up to four hours if kept closed; freezers can last up to 48 hours if full and kept closed. Use the perishable foods in your refrigerator first, then your freezer. A cooler with ice will keep perishable foods longer during a power outage.
- ◆ Do not use generators, camp stoves or grills indoors or in partially enclosed areas. These generate carbon monoxide, which is odorless and can kill.

Make Your Property Safe: Think about everyday objects that can be picked up by strong winds.

- ◆ Trim trees - remove dead limbs and brush to make

Environmental Board to Host Open Forum to Discuss Deer Management Options

The Portage Environmental Board has been studying the impact of the local deer population in Portage. The board has completed several online surveys and has conferred with the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) on deer management issues. Deer have long been present in the city limits, and the increased population of both humans and deer make the interaction between the two more frequent. Many cities throughout the United States have implemented deer management programs and the Environmental Board is considering future options for Portage.

The board will sponsor a Deer Management Open Forum on April 14, at 7 p.m. at Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue). The meeting will feature a presentation by MDNR staff and the results of the recent deer surveys. Citizens with an interest in the deer population are cordially invited to attend and share input on the deer issues and concerns in Portage.

Public Hearing on the 2016-2020 Consolidated Plan Update – April 7 at 6:30 p.m.

An update of the five-year Consolidated Plan for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program is nearing completion. The Consolidated Plan is designed to help the city assess affordable housing, community development needs and market conditions, and to make data-driven, place-based investment decisions with regard to the use of CDBG entitlement grant funds and other resources available within the community. The Human Services Board will conduct a public hearing on April 7, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. at Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue).

The draft 2016-2020 Consolidated Plan and 2016-17 Annual Action Plan can be viewed on the city website at www.portagemi.gov > Departments > Community Development > Planning, Development and Neighborhood Services > CDBG Program Consolidated Plan. Hard copies of the draft Plan are also available at Portage City Hall, the Portage Senior Center (320 Library Lane), the Portage District Library (300 Library Lane) and the Portage Community Center (325 East Centre Avenue). For more information regarding the CDBG Program and the Consolidated Plan, please feel free to contact the Department of Community Development at 329-4477.



Visit www.portagemi.gov or scan the QR Code to register. Those without internet access are encouraged to call 329-4405 to provide current contact information.



Healthy Neighborhoods Create Great Communities: Be a Good Neighbor

Every great community includes healthy and vibrant neighborhoods. While there are many ways to create a high quality of life in a community, many simple and common sense actions can help to maintain and improve neighborhoods, and make Portage a great place to live, work and play:



- ◆ Say hello and make an effort to get to know your neighbors. Consider hosting a neighborhood picnic. Talk with your neighbors about issues that may negatively affect the quality of neighborhood life.
- ◆ Maintain lawns and swimming pools and remove or properly store trash and debris.
- ◆ If your neighborhood has public sidewalks, regularly remove snow and ice or debris.

- ◆ Assist elderly or disabled neighbors with tasks that may prove challenging for them, like the removal of snow and ice from sidewalks, gutter cleaning, leaf raking or moving garbage containers to and from the street.
- ◆ Regularly maintain painted building surfaces such as walls, windows and trim; repair siding and roofing and clean rain gutters. Be sure to observe local regulations including building and zoning codes.
- ◆ Remove inoperable vehicles or store them in a garage; park all other vehicles on an improved driveway surface.
- ◆ Do not block driveways, mailboxes or sidewalks with motor vehicles, recreational or landscaping equipment.
- ◆ Keep pets on a leash or confined to secure yard areas, clean-up after them and avoid excessive dog barking.



- ◆ Avoid playing loud music and operating domestic power tools during early morning or late night hours.
- ◆ Join or form a Neighborhood Watch group. Call the Community Policing Desk at 324-9255 for more information.



Desirable neighborhoods are important building blocks to a great community. In addition, neighborhood quality can be reinforced by the efforts of its residents and being a good neighbor has a rewarding and positive effect.

The City of Portage has established community quality, housing and property maintenance codes to achieve and maintain the livability and appearance of the community. If you have a neighborhood issue or concern that you wish to report, contact the Department of Community Development at 329-4466 or 329-4477 or use the City of Portage Report It! tool found at www.portagemi.gov/reportit.aspx.

National Flood Insurance Program

The City of Portage participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which allows property owners the opportunity to obtain flood insurance for properties located in or near a flood hazard area. Homeowners and businesses benefit from the city's participation in the program by reduced vulnerability to costly flooding events, through proactive flood reduction efforts and the option to purchase flood insurance. Flood insurance covers direct physical loss due to a flood event.



The City of Portage Department of Community Development maintains information and maps that distinguish areas having the potential to flood or that are subject to flooding. Similar flood related information is also available at the Portage District Library. The information and material is provided to assist property and business owners in determining if their site is located in or near a flood hazard area and actions that can be taken to help protect their investment. Ground elevation certificates (verifying existing building elevations relative to adjacent ground levels) and letters of map amendment (used to remove properties from flood hazard areas) are maintained by the Department of Community Development. Assistance is also provided by the Department of Community Development to property owners seeking flood hazard area map assistance and potential map changes.

Many homeowners are not aware that homeowner's insurance policies typically do not cover damage from flood events. Homeowners who do not have flood insurance may wish to contact an insurance provider to review options. Flood insurance is only available to property owners in communities that participate in the NFIP. Because Portage participates with the NFIP floodplain management program, customers are able to obtain flood insurance at reduced costs.

If you have questions or need assistance with the National Flood Insurance Program, please contact the Department of Community Development at 329-4477. Useful information can be found at the "Floodplain Management in Michigan Quick Guide" website: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/lwm-quickguide_202673_7.pdf.

Protect Your Family From Exposure to Lead-Based Paint

Lead is a toxic substance that can affect people of any age and is especially harmful to children, pregnant women and unborn babies. Lead accumulates in the body, so even small amounts can pose a health hazard over time.

The use of lead in paint can be traced back to Greek and Roman times and continued well into the 20th century. In 1978, paint containing more than 0.06% (by weight of dried product) lead was banned for residential use in the United States by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. However, lead can still be found on interior and exterior areas of homes built before 1978. If disturbed, lead-based paint chips or dust can be created, which is the most common way people are exposed to lead.

Lead dust can be created when repairing areas with lead paint, opening and closing windows and through normal wear and tear of painted areas. Homeowners can eliminate or reduce exposure to lead-based paint by following safe practices daily and during home improvement projects. If your home was built before 1978 and you are concerned about lead poisoning, or before beginning a

home improvement project, consider having your home tested by a certified lead professional.

To find a list of certified lead professionals and contractors, visit www.michigan.gov/mdhhs > Keeping Michigan Healthy > Chronic Diseases > Lead Poisoning.

If you discover lead paint in your home and choose to undertake a home improvement project without the assistance of a professional contractor, visit www.leadfreekids.org > Protect Your Home > For Do-it-yourselfers to view important safeguards to prevent lead dust from spreading throughout your home.

For additional information concerning lead-based paint safe practices, renovation and remodeling guidelines, including what to do if you think someone is suffering from lead poisoning, visit www.epa.gov/getleadsafe and www.hud.gov/offices/lead or call the Environmental Protection Agency hotline at 1-800-424-LEAD.



April is National Fair Housing Month

The City of Portage recognizes and supports Fair Housing Month and the educational activities that will help to eliminate discrimination in housing and foster equal housing opportunities.

The Federal Fair Housing Act (1968 and 1988), the Michigan Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act of 1976, and the Michigan Persons With Disabilities Civil Rights Act of 1976 make it illegal to discriminate in the sale or rental of housing when the discrimination is based on any of the following factors:

- ✓ Race
- ✓ Religion
- ✓ Disability
- ✓ Color
- ✓ Gender
- ✓ Marital Status
- ✓ National Origin
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Familial Status

These national and state laws protect people against discriminatory actions such as:

- ◆ refusing to sell or rent housing
- ◆ quoting a difference in housing availability
- ◆ quoting a difference in required security deposit
- ◆ quoting a different monthly rent
- ◆ refusing to rent to a family or individual with children
- ◆ sexual harassment of a tenant

If you are interested in educational opportunities regarding fair housing, or if you suspect discrimination in a housing purchase, sale or rental transaction, including a difference in terms, conditions or opportunity, please contact:

Fair Housing Center of Southwest Michigan
269-276-9100



The Fair Housing Center is available to assist persons within the Portage area with fair housing community education and complaint investigations.

For information and referral assistance, please contact the City of Portage Department of Community Development at 329-4477.

Portage Youth Advisory Committee to Host Green-a-Thon 2016

An Earth Day Celebration

The Portage Youth Advisory Committee in cooperation with the Portage Environmental Board and Park Board is hosting a fun community event to celebrate Earth Day. Green-A-Thon 2016 will be held at the Celery Flats (7335 Garden Lane) on Saturday, April 23 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Green-a-Thon 2016 will have games, music and free seedlings (while supplies last). Representatives from local organizations and businesses will provide education about environmental ideas you can utilize in your home or business. Learn about opportunities to volunteer for "green" causes as well as meet other individuals that are committed to promoting environmentally friendly action in Portage.

The Portage Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) was created by the Portage City Council in the spring of 2008 to give



Western Michigan University's Sunseeker Solar Car stopped by Green-a-Thon 2015.

Portage students an opportunity to share their ideas and participate in local government. The YAC hopes this event will raise awareness of environmental issues that affect the citizens of Portage and provide opportunities to become more ecologically friendly. Providing a forum for such opportunities helps create a sense of social responsibility

to participate in and encourage "green" behavior.

For more information or to register your organization or business to host a table at the event to share ideas and opportunities to live green in Portage, contact Adam Herringa, Deputy City Clerk at herringa@portagemi.gov or 329-4512. No sign-up is required and the event is free and family friendly. See you there!

Water Treatment Facility Open House

Saturday, April 23 - 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The City of Portage and Suez Water Environmental are proud to invite Portage residents to tour the Garden Lane Water Treatment Facility and learn about the procedures used in producing high-quality water. Hands-on demonstrations and presentations will be available along with plant tours and refreshments.



An open house will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 23 (to coincide with Green-a-Thon, the annual Earth Day Event) at the Garden Lane Water Treatment Facility, 7411 Garden Lane, just east of the Celery Flats. Parking is available at the water treatment plant and in the Celery Flats overflow parking lot.

City Centre Flower Planting Volunteer Opportunities

The City of Portage partners with Kalamazoo In Bloom each year to plant and maintain flower beds in the City Centre Area. Volunteers are needed to assist with two important tasks to create a beautiful display of summer blooms for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Flower Planting Day

Friday, May 20, 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Volunteers are needed to plant annual flowers in City Centre flower beds.



Adopt a Bed

Volunteers are needed to "adopt a bed" in the Portage City Centre Area.

To register to volunteer for either opportunity, visit www.portagemi.gov > Quick Links > Volunteering. For additional information, visit www.kalamazooinbloom.org or call the Department of Public Services at 329-4444.

April Events at the Portage Senior Center

It's in the Bag Purse Sale!

Saturday, April 16 - 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Portage Senior Center will host the second annual It's in the Bag purse sale and raffle! Gently used purses, tote bags, name brands and knock-offs will be available for you to purchase at bargain prices. Over 500 bags, many of them leather and name brand, have been donated. Stop by and get something "new to you!" New designer bags donated by generous sponsors will be raffled off during the event, so don't miss your chance to walk away a winner!



Proceeds from these events help to sustain critical programs and services offered at the Portage Senior Center. The Portage Senior Center promotes quality of life and independence for the thousands of older adults in the greater Portage area. For more information, call the Portage Senior Center at 329-4555.

21st Annual Friends of the Portage Senior Center Golf Scramble

Monday, May 23 - 9 a.m. Shotgun Start

The 21st Annual Friends of the Portage Center Golf Scramble will be held at the beautiful Gull Lake Country Club located in Richland on Monday, May 23. This event is open to all ages and offers 18-hole play for \$95 per player.

Corporate sponsorships are also encouraged.

After a great day of golf, enjoy lunch and camaraderie with friends and friendly competitors alike. Prizes are awarded

to winning teams in a variety of categories and a 50/50 raffle will also be held. Sponsorship information and registration forms are available at the Portage Senior Center, or by visiting www.friendspsc.org. For additional information contact the Portage Senior Center at 329-4555.

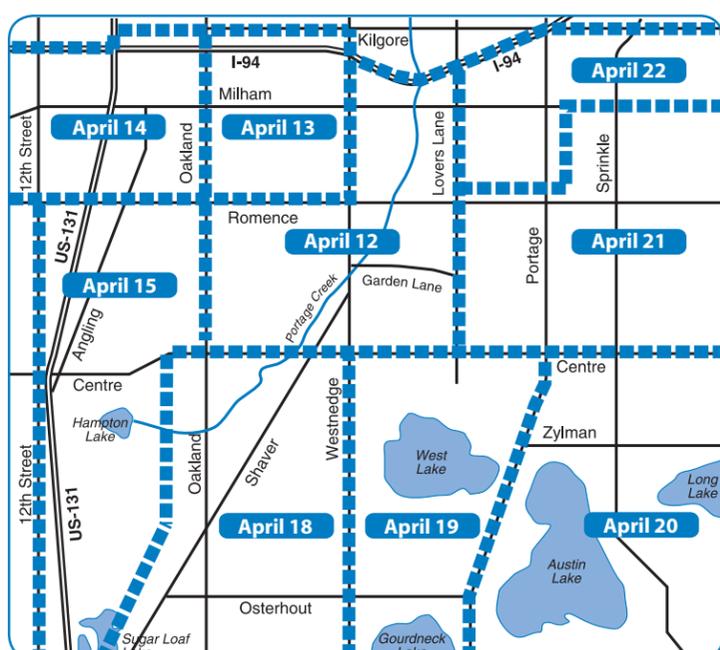


Spring Hydrant Flushing Schedule

The City of Portage utility contractor, Suez Environmental, will conduct fire hydrant flushing from Tuesday, April 12 through Friday, April 22. The map at right indicates 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 hours. This is a tentative schedule which may need to be adjusted dependent on weather and other factors.

Hydrant flushing accomplishes important objectives for the water system:

- ◆ Improves water quality by removing sediment that accumulates in the water system between flushings.
- ◆ 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. It is recommended that you check for discoloration prior to using water for laundry or cleaning during this period of flushing. 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 United Water with any questions or concerns at 324-9235.

Central State University Chorus Performs In Honor of Black History Month

The City of Portage was proud to host the Central State University Chorus, from Wilberforce, Ohio, at Portage Northern High School on February 26. The Chorus, under the direction of Professor Jeremy Winston, performed a concert in tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to celebrate Black History Month. "The Central State University Chorus delighted the crowd with its stirring and inspirational performance to celebrate the contributions of Dr. King," said City Manager Larry Shaffer. "The talented young singers provided amazing testimony to the promise of a future where every citizen is valued."



Dr. Monifa Jumanne and Dr. Romeo Phillips, the Chair and Honorary Chair of the CSU Concert Committee



Kalamazoo Vice Mayor, Don Cooney; Portage Mayor, Peter J. Strazdas and Portage Mayor Pro Tem, Nasim Ansari



The Central State University Chorus Performs in Honor of Black History Month



April 18 – May 19

The 2016 Spring Cleanup Program details were distributed to Portage residents in the March 2016 edition of the Portager. To view program details online, including a collection map, visit www.portagemi.gov and click on the Spring Cleanup icon.

Just in Time for Spring Cleanup, Free Electronics Recycling Event!

Recycling electronics keeps harmful materials such as mercury, cadmium, lead and cathode ray tubes out of the waste stream and the environment. The City of Portage and Schupan eScrap Recycling will host a free electronics recycling drop-off event for Portage residents on Saturday, April 16 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Department of Public Services (7719 South Westnedge Avenue).

Schupan eScrap Recycling is an R2 certified, locally-owned company. In addition to rigorous audits, the R2 certification requires that all hard drives are either destroyed through an industrial-strength hard drive shredder or undergo a standard "three-pass wipe" through US Department of Defense-compliant data erasure software. This process removes all partitions, tables and drive formats. Disposing of your electronics through Schupan will protect any personal data that may remain on a hard drive. "We are pleased to partner with

Schupan eScrap Recycling for this recycling event," said Department of Public Services Director, Rod Russell. "We are confident in Schupan's ability to ensure the safe, secure and legal recycling of your electronics."

Items accepted: PCs, servers, keyboards, mice, laptops, game consoles, LCD/CRT monitors and televisions, memory chips, hubs and routers, printers, copiers, scanners, fax machines, radios, projectors, rechargeable batteries, cable boxes/home modems, VCRs/DVD players, gaming systems, car batteries, telephones, cell phones, PDAs, tape drives, hard drives, optical drives, servers, networking gear, cords, home phones, office phones, cables, cameras and almost anything with a circuit board.

Items not accepted: Light bulbs, alkaline batteries, smoke detectors, household appliances, any items containing PCBs or mercury switches.



7900 South Westnedge Avenue
Portage, Michigan 49002-5160

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
KALAMAZOO, MI
PERMIT NO. 33

ECRWSS

POSTAL CUSTOMER

City of Portage Mobile Applications and Social Media

Statistics show that more than 75 percent of adults use social media on a daily basis as the primary means of communicating and accessing information important to them. The City of Portage incorporates social media with its overall communications to provide citizens different ways to communicate and do business with the city. Here are a few of the more prominent social media options provided:



MI.Portage Mobile Application

Includes access to city news, events, parks locator and amenities listing, the K-Metro bus route mobile application PortageAlert mass notification system, Report It! citizen request for service application and more. MI.Portage is available in the Apple Store and Google Play Store.

PortageAlert Mass Notification System



A mass notification system for emergency and community outreach communications. Messages sent from PortageAlert include road construction updates, parks programs, special city program reminders, hydrant flushing alerts, emergencies and more. PortageAlert is accessible from the city website home page www.portagemi.gov or the MI.Portage application.

Facebook



Visit and like the Facebook pages for the Portage Senior Center and the Department of Public Safety.

RSS Feeds

The city currently provides Real Simple Syndication feeds on the city website for the following city website pages: News, Events, Employee Opportunities, Volunteer Opportunities, Bid on a Project, Council Agendas and Minutes, Portager Newsletter.

Waze Mobile GPS Traffic App



The city began posting construction projects to Waze in 2015. Waze is a free social traffic and navigation app that uses real-time road reports from drivers nearby to save commuting time and improve your everyday driving experience.

In Memoriam...



The City of Portage family mourns the recent deaths of two city employees.

Janet Hughes served as a Communication Services Clerk from 2008 until her untimely passing in November 2015 while on vacation in Israel. Janet was known for her kindness and willingness to help anyone in need.



James Brown, a Senior Park Ranger since 2012, passed away unexpectedly in February 2016. Jim's love of the outdoors was evident in his work. He especially enjoyed passing along his knowledge of the outdoors to children.

Both Janet and Jim are greatly missed by their co-workers.

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 > Report It!



Mayor Peter J. Strazdas
327-4478
peter.strazdas@portagemi.gov



Mayor Pro Tem Nasim Ansari
327-0016
nasimhansari@yahoo.com



Richard Ford
616-560-8328
richard.ford@portagemi.gov



Jim Pearson
303-5459
jimpearson4@gmail.com



Patricia M. Randall
324-7779
patricia.randall@portagemi.gov



Claudette Reid
491-9725
claudette.reid@portagemi.gov



Terry R. Urban
323-8160
terry.urban@portagemi.gov



Laurence Shaffer, City Manager
329-4400
shafferl@portagemi.gov

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.



MONTH

- 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

Portager Editor: Mary Beth Block – blockm@portagemi.gov