

I-94 Construction Through the Heart of the Commercial Corridor in Full Swing

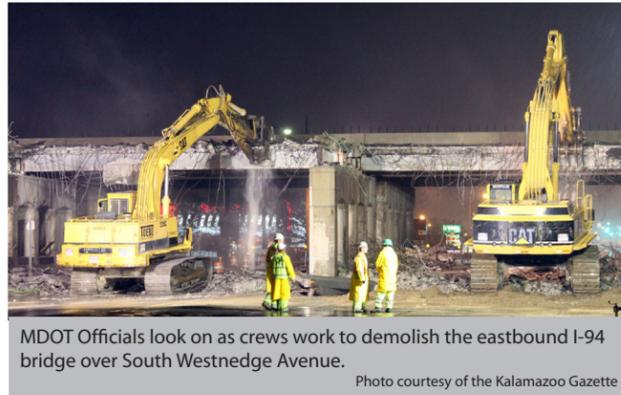
Merchants Remind Residents They Are Open for Business!

Construction work on I-94 from east of Oakland Drive to west of Portage Road resumed in early April 2010. The project will result in a widened I-94 with three through lanes in both directions and a rebuilt interchange at I-94 and South Westnedge Avenue. This construction season, work will be focused on the eastbound lanes of I-94 with removal and replacement of the eastbound I-94 bridges over Westnedge and the railroad tracks and Portage Creek. Construction on sound walls and other related construction items will also continue. All this work on the eastbound lanes necessitates the closure of numerous ramps at the Westnedge interchange. **Ramps that will remain open through the summer include:**

- ◆ northbound Westnedge to westbound I-94
- ◆ southbound Westnedge to westbound I-94
- ◆ westbound I-94 to northbound Westnedge

All other ramps to and from Westnedge will be closed until at least November 2010.

To facilitate the safe removal of the existing I-94 bridge over Westnedge, a temporary closure of Westnedge took place during the overnight and early morning hours of April 24 and 25. An additional closure of Westnedge is planned in June, when a new clear-span bridge structure over Westnedge will be installed.



MDOT Officials look on as crews work to demolish the eastbound I-94 bridge over South Westnedge Avenue. Photo courtesy of the Kalamazoo Gazette

Other than these two temporary, short-term closures, through traffic on Westnedge will be maintained to the greatest extent possible. Although access to and from

I-94 to Westnedge will be limited, Westnedge businesses remain open and eager to do business with you. Area residents are urged to continue patronizing Westnedge businesses during the 2010 and 2011 construction seasons.

WESTNEDGE
OPEN for business

The 2011 construction season will bring the start of work on the westbound I-94 lanes, which will necessitate closure again of certain ramps to and from Westnedge. As during the 2010 construction season, partial access to Westnedge from I-94 will be provided throughout the project. All ramps at the I-94 / Westnedge interchange should be open by late fall 2011, as well as all lanes on I-94.

While the disruption to traffic and local businesses is unfortunate, the long-term benefits to the Kalamazoo / Portage area will be substantial. Motorists and merchants are urged be patient during the construction process.

United Water Sponsors Water Week Activities

Water Week is May 3-8, and United Water is looking to spread the word to all students. Not only is it a week to celebrate, but time to share ideas about water.

During Water Week, United Water will hold a coloring contest for elementary students and a writing contest for middle and high school students. As students, it is your time to shine and show us what you think about the world's most precious resource – **water!**

United Water looks forward to working with Portage Public Schools, but more importantly to see students' creativity in action. As the city's utility contractor, United Water does many important things for the utility system. This is a chance for students to show what they know about the water system.

Drawings and writings will be collected from schools on Thursday May 6 and United Water and city officials will judge the entries. Put on your thinking caps and put your creativity to the test! Good luck and remember to have fun.

Call 324-4896 for more information.



Abundant Wildlife – A Mixed Blessing in Portage

Portage is blessed with a considerable amount of natural habitat for the benefit of plant and animal life. But in order for animal populations to survive and adapt, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (MDNRE) strongly encourages residents to not feed wildlife in residential settings.

Providing food for wild animals increases the risk of the transmission of diseases, as germs and bacteria can be spread through public feeding by bringing animals together in a confined area to share the same food source. This is particularly true for deer and raccoons. Bird feeders can also transmit diseases if not regularly cleaned and sanitized.

Drawing wildlife into neighborhoods by a resident for personal enjoyment many times causes concerns for others in the neighborhood. As animals are fed in residential settings, they tend to lose fear of humans, which increases their presence in neighborhoods. As a



result, deer will feed on flowers, trees and other plants, raccoons can create living space in attics and wild turkeys can be aggressive toward humans. Additionally, large animals frequenting neighborhoods increase the opportunity for accidents with vehicles, leading to injuries and costly repairs.

As the summer season nears, please respect the health, safety and welfare of animals and citizens – please do not feed the wildlife in Portage.

Annual Spring Cleanup Reminder

The City of Portage Annual Spring Cleanup continues through May 20, 2010. Please ensure your disposal materials are at the curb by 7 a.m. on your scheduled pickup date, and not earlier than three days prior. If you have any questions about the scheduled pickup date for your neighborhood, or need information regarding materials and preparation for the program, please call the Department of Streets and Equipment at 329-4444, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Spring Cleanup information is also available online at www.portagemi.gov/government/cleanup.asp.

Portage Firefighters are PHTLS Certified



The Portage Fire Department has heightened the level of care provided for citizens by being one of the first departments in the state recognized with Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS) certification through the American College of Surgeons. Portage firefighters received PHTLS certification through several hours of intense training over a two-week period.

Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support Certification is recognized worldwide and has been proven to reduce fatalities in locations where rescue providers have achieved this level of training. In addition to PFD, local organizations who have adopted this certification include the Level One Trauma Centers at both Bronson and Borgess hospitals and Pride Care Ambulance. The Portage Fire Department has raised the standard of care in the State of Michigan by making the commitment to provide quality patient care to the people of Portage through a higher level of education and training.

Recreational Fire Information

Spring is the season when thoughts turn to backyard fires, cookouts and yard cleanup. Residents are reminded that a permit is required for all recreational fires except those kindled in commercially manufactured fire containers such as grills or outdoor fireplaces. Permits can be obtained by contacting the Portage Fire Department at (269) 329-4487.

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

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

- ◆ Fire pits must be constructed at least 25 feet from all structures and should be 25 feet from property lines if possible.
- ◆ Fire pits must have a diameter no greater than 3 feet.
- ◆ The fire pit must be lined with a non-combustible material, such as brick or rock and must have bare earth inside the liner.
- ◆ Fire pits cannot be built under low-hanging branches or other combustible materials.

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

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

extinguished.

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

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

For more information on recreational fires in the City of Portage, call the Portage Fire Department at 329-4487 or visit the www.portagemi.gov/living/fire_prevention.asp.

Become an On-Call Firefighter!

The City of Portage Fire Department employs both Career and On-Call Firefighters. If you have the desire to help people and have the willingness to learn new skills and face new challenges, this opportunity could be for you! The City of Portage provides training for certification in Michigan Firefighter I and II, Hazardous Materials and Medical First Responder. New recruits will receive compensation for training and response calls.

Minimum requirements:

- ◆ Must be 18 years of age by May 26, 2010
- ◆ Must possess a valid Michigan driver's license
- ◆ Must successfully pass a written test, physical agility test, physical examination and background investigation.

On-Call firefighter informational meetings will be held on Saturday, May 8 at 10 a.m. and Wednesday, May 12 at 7 p.m. at the Central Fire Station, 7830 Shaver Road. Individuals interested in becoming a paid On-Call Firefighter for the City of Portage are encouraged to attend **one** of the two meetings to learn about the recruitment process, expanded residency criteria, compensation and training requirements. A tour of the Central Fire Station is also planned.

For more information, please call the Employee Development Department at 329-4533 or visit www.portagemi.gov/government/employment.asp. Details about the Portage Fire Department can be found at www.portagemi.gov/living/fire_department.asp.

Election Worker Opportunities

Interested in serving your community? The City of Portage is currently taking applications from those individuals interested in serving as election workers for the upcoming August and November elections. To be eligible, workers must be registered voters of Kalamazoo County. Election workers receive training in advance of the election and are compensated for each training session and for working Election Day. If you are interested in becoming an election worker or would like additional information, please contact the Department of Employee Development at 329-4533 or e-mail Janet Sparks at sparksj@portagemi.gov.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day

The Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste Center will be holding a special collection for Portage residents on Saturday, May 22, 2010. 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 also open on Tuesday and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., on Wednesday from 12 noon to 6 p.m. and the second Saturday of every month from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Call 373-5211, or go online at www.kalcounty.com/hhw for more information.

Med Collection Program

The Portage Police Department has teamed up with Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste, Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department, Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety and various other community resources to offer a collection program for unwanted or expired medications.

According to a Partnership for a Drug Free America 2008 Attitude Tracking Survey, one in five teens report abusing prescription drugs, which can be found in family medicine cabinets and from friends. This depicts the growing problem of pill addictions. Additionally, in a nationwide study of public drinking water, the Associated Press found a wide variety of pharmaceuticals, including antibiotics, mood stabilizers and hormones, in the drinking water of 41 million Americans. This program allows for pills to be disposed of by appropriate means instead of flushing them down the toilet or putting them into landfills.

This service is **free** to all Kalamazoo County residents (with the exception of the residents of Galesburg). The collections are scheduled for May 8, June 12, July 10, August 14 and October 9. All

collections will be held at the Household Hazardous Waste Center at 1301 Lamont Avenue in Kalamazoo. Collections will be from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The collection will accept the following items:

- ◆ Prescription medications, including antibiotics, birth control pills and insulin
- ◆ Medication samples
- ◆ Over-the-counter medications, such as ibuprofen, aspirin and cold medicines
- ◆ Personal care products, such as medicated ointments, lotions and shampoos
- ◆ Veterinary medications
- ◆ Vitamins and supplements

When preparing the medications for collection, leave all medications in their original containers, leave the name of medication on label and use a permanent marker to make personal information unreadable. Place all medication containers into a zip-lock baggie for safe transport. Medical sharps or syringes, I.V. bags and infectious waste will not be accepted. For further information, call the HHW Center at 373-5211 or visit www.kalcounty.com/hhw.

Summer Entertainment Series Offers Something For Everyone



Summer is almost here, and that means it's time to come out and enjoy the many wonderful activities the Summer Entertainment Series (SES) has planned for your journey through summer. Highlights included the return of the popular Taste of Portage, featuring **Al's Basement Band** and the **Kalamazoo Concert Band** on Saturday, June 26. The Portage Party in the Park is on August, 14 with the crowd pleasing **Three Men and a Tenor** making an encore performance.

New this year is the Break-a-Leg Players; a theatrical opportunity for children entering the second grade through college as they will present **Alice in Wonderland** July 30-August 7. Auditions will take place on July 6 & 7 with performers rehearsing Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., beginning July 12. More information about the Break-a-Leg Players can be obtained at the Parks Department. For those who love Shakespeare, or for those who don't, you won't want to miss Shakespeare in the Park presentation of the beloved classic **Romeo & Juliet** July 9-18.

Kids Kickoff, Lunch & Learn and the Teas at historic Stuart Manor will also be making a return to the SES line up. Patrons this year will also be able to purchase tickets online and can sign up to become a fan on Facebook. To see a complete listing of SES programming and/or to purchase tickets go to www.portagemi.gov and click on the SES icon or contact the City of Portage Department or Parks and Recreation at 329-4522.

Volunteer Planting Day May 21, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

The Portage City Centre annually transforms into a mass of colorful floral displays during the summer months. Show your community spirit by helping to plant the annual flowers that are a key factor in our local economy. Volunteers are needed to plant on Friday, May 21 from 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Each volunteer will receive pizza and soft drinks at noon. Volunteers are asked to bring gloves and a hand-trowel, but don't worry, plenty of each will be available. Although drop-in participants are welcome, if you plan on attending please contact the Parks Department at 329-4522 in advance to assist with lunch planning.

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

Relax this Summer in Your Portage Parks!

Celery Flats Livery

The Celery Flats Livery opens for the season on May 1. Rent canoes, kayaks and bicycle surreys at reasonable rates for the enjoyable 30-45 minute trip from the Celery Flats Historical Area to Bicentennial Park on Milham Ave. The Livery is located just north of the Celery Flats Interpretive Center on Garden Lane.

Try a surrey in 2010! These attractive four-wheel bikes hold 2-6 people, can be rented by the 1/2 hour or hour and can be used on the 2-mile trail portion running from the Livery north to Milham Avenue.

Bicycle Surrey rental fees: \$15 per hour and \$10 per 1/2 hour

Kayak rental fees: \$15 for one-person kayak and \$18 for two-person kayak

Canoe rental fees: \$18 for two people and \$4 for an additional passenger

Celery Flats Drop-in Livery Hours: May 1 through Labor Day

Thursday	4 to 8 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday	12 noon to 7 p.m.
May 31, July 4 and September 6	12 noon to 7 p.m.

Call 324-9204 during drop-in hours for more information. Call 329-4522 weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to schedule group outings requiring 5 or more canoes (minimum 2 week notice required). No reservations during drop-in hours. Last rentals at 6:30 p.m. on weekends/holidays and 7:30 p.m. on Thursdays.

Ramona Park Beach

Lifeguard monitored swimming and beach activities are available May 29, 30 and 31 and then seven days a week from June 5 through September 6. Beach hours are from 10:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Come out and enjoy the only public park swimming area in Kalamazoo County staffed by professionally trained lifeguards.

Vehicle permits are required for entry into Ramona Park and may be purchased at the contact station located near the park entrance during regular park hours.

2010 Vehicle Permit Fees:

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

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

Call the City of Portage Department of Parks and Recreation at 329-4522 for more information about these and other recreational opportunities in the City of Portage.



What is Pickleball?

Pickleball is a fun game played on a tennis court with the net lowered to 34 inches at the center. It is played with a perforated plastic baseball and wood or composite paddles. Pickleball is easy for beginners to learn, but can develop into a quick, fast-paced, competitive game for experienced players.

Free Pickleball Clinics at Lexington Green Park

Learn the basics from Melissa Muha, official Portage Ambassador to the USA Pickleball Association at free Pickleball clinics at Lexington Green Park on Tuesday, May 11 from 10 - 11:30 a.m. and 6 - 7:30 p.m. No equipment or experience required. Wear comfortable athletic wear and a pair of tennis shoes.

Pickleball Drop-in Play at Lexington Green Park

Players of all skill levels are invited to play at no charge. Drop-in play is Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30 - 8 p.m., June through August. Limited equipment will be available to loan out, but players are also welcome to provide their own gear.

Call the Portage Senior Center at 329-4555 to pre-register for the two free clinics or for more information about drop-in play.

Angling Adventures School of Fish Summer Day Camps



The Angling Adventures program has expanded the 2010 day camps to include basic learning skills as well as additional techniques for the slightly more advanced youth. Each School of Fish day camp will provide youth with a safe and supervised environment where they have the opportunity to be engaged in fishing activities and educational opportunities, instructed by Park Rangers and other local experts. Youth will participate in community conservation efforts, many hands on activities, and of course...GO FISHING!

All campers will receive their own spincasting rod to use and take home! Registration fee is \$65 per camp and is due at the time of registration, which begins May 10. Camp space is limited so be sure to register early.

Little Lunkers (Ages 6-12)

June 28 – July 1 ♦ 1:30 – 5:30 p.m.

- ♦ Fish Identification
- ♦ Knot Tying & Rod Rigging
- ♦ Casting Skills & Safety
- ♦ Aquatic Conservation
- ♦ Tackle Crafting
- ♦ Shoreline Fishing

Advanced Anglers (Ages 9-15)

July 26 - 29 or August 16 - 19 ♦ 8:30 – 12:30 p.m.

- ♦ Artificial Lures
- ♦ Fishing techniques (jigging, using a spoon, etc.)
- ♦ Advanced Knots
- ♦ Boater Safety
- ♦ Introduction to Fly Fishing
- ♦ Fishing from a Canoe

For more information about School of Fish Summer Day Camps and registration forms, please contact the City of Portage Department of Parks and Recreation at 329-4522.

Youth In Government

The Portage City Council seeks the involvement and input of Portage youth in local government. The information below details how Portage youth may become involved in their local government.

Youth Advisory Committee

The Youth Advisory Committee consists of up to 19 high school youth representatives and is tasked with providing input to the City Council and City Administration regarding programs, services, projects and issues. The Committee meets approximately once a month, with meeting dates and times to be determined once the committee is formed.

Youth Participant to a Board, Commission or Committee

One youth will be appointed to existing citizen boards, including the Environmental Board, Senior Citizen Advisory Board, Park Board, Historic District Commission and Human Services Board. The Youth Participant will be a non-voting liaison, but will be encouraged to participate in all discussion. Descriptions of these Boards and Commissions are available at www.portagemi.gov/government/boards_and_commissions.asp.

Who should participate?

Applicants must be residents of the City of Portage between ages of 13 and 18 and a full-time student. A diverse group of students representing both public and private schools as well as home-schooled students is desired. Individuals that represent a variety of interests and can provide an honest and thoughtful perspective who are able and willing to make the necessary time commitment are encouraged to register.

It is anticipated the City Council will interview applicants in early June and youth involvement responsibilities will begin thereafter for those selected. The duration of the appointment is one year. If you desire further information about Youth In Government Programs please contact Adam Herringa, Deputy City Clerk at herringa@portagemi.gov or 329-4511, or visit www.portagemi.gov/government/youth_advisory.asp.

To sign-up, please return the registration form (at right) to the Office of the City Clerk, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue, Portage, MI 49002. Or, sign-up online at www.portagemi.gov. A parent/guardian release form will be sent to applicants, which must be completed prior to being appointed to any position.

Youth In Government Registration Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

School: _____ Current Grade: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Are you a City of Portage resident? Yes No

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

In what non-school activities do you participate (e.g, sports, volunteer, work, etc.)?

Why are you interested in participating in the Youth in Government Program?

What unique perspective are you able to offer if selected to participate on the Youth Advisory Committee or as a Youth Participant to a Board, Commission or Committee?

In which area(s) are you interested in serving? (You may check more than one.)

Youth Advisory Committee

Youth Participant to: Environmental Board Senior Citizen Advisory Board

Park Board Historic District Commission Human Services Board

Please return completed form or register online by May 21, 2010.

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A Place for Opportunities to Grow
7900 South Westnedge Avenue
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What's Happening at the PSC?

For more information on the activities below or other services available at the Portage Senior Center (PSC), call 329-4555 or visit www.portagemi.gov/living/senior_center.asp.

Celery City Showcase Talent Competition – Wednesday, June 23 – Friday, June 25
Enjoy over 40 acts provided by talented local performers of all ages over a three day span. Singing, dancing, skits, bands and more! Audition forms still available at the PSC.

Friends of the PSC Benefit Golf Scramble – Monday, May 17
Win cash prizes, door prizes, or a weekend trip to Las Vegas! Proceeds support programs and services at the PSC.

Kalamazoo Kings Tickets – Kalamazoo Kings tickets for all home games on sale at the PSC. Half of all sales proceeds support programs and services at the PSC.

Billy Elliott the Musical in Chicago – Saturday, May 15
Based on the movie with music by Elton John.



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Televised City Meeting Schedule

The following City of Portage meetings can be seen live and rebroadcast one week later on Portage Cable Access Channel 19. All meetings are held in the City Council Chambers at City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue and are open to the public.

May 2010

6	7 p.m.	Planning Commission
10	7 p.m.	Zoning Board of Appeals
11	7:30 p.m.	City Council
20	7 p.m.	Planning Commission
25	7:30 p.m.	City Council

June 2010

3	7 p.m.	Planning Commission
8	7:30 p.m.	City Council
14	7 p.m.	Zoning Board of Appeals
17	7 p.m.	Planning Commission
22	7:30 p.m.	City Council



Cable Access channel 19 is available as a live video stream on the Portage Cable Access home page (www.portagecableaccess.org) and the City of Portage Community Learning Resources page (www.portagemi.gov/learning).

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