

PORTAGER

A Natural Place to Move



A Message from Mayor Patricia M. Randall

The Holidays all focus on light: The star on top of a tree; the candles on a menorah or a kinara; the nose on that flying deer. Light can be a guiding force or a sign of hope. But, as humans, we all crave light during this darkest time of the year.

Try as I might, I can think only of positive things with light. When one sees the light, they start to understand. When one recalls a life and death experience, light is often mentioned and usually in reference to the Heaven’s gateway. The moon or a star can serve as the guiding light leading travelers from afar. A lighthouse shines its beacon directing ships through dark nights and inclement weather. Here at home, our city’s annual tree lighting ceremony on December 2 is the symbolic gesture signaling the start of the Holiday Season.

As the final month of the calendar year, December also often serves as a time of reflection. It has been an exceptional

year for the city of Portage. Our team has crossed a number of items off of the wish list and I choose to celebrate by sharing them with you. For me, they start with expanded customer service and even greater transparency for each and every resident and their families:

- » Expanded Public Safety by adding eight new positions through a \$1 million federal grant (see article below).
- » Extended hours and tripled membership at the Portage Zhang Senior Center
- » Secured \$1.75 million to establish a more accessible, permanent farmers market
- » Expanded access to and resurfaced miles of our trail system for families throughout the city
- » Created a virtual window for citizens to monitor development projects from planning to completion
- » One of only three Michigan cities to win a GFOA Triple Crown for excellence in budgeting and financial reporting
- » Cut spending to reduce city debt from \$56 million to \$53 million, and maintained our AA+ bond rating
- » Captured a \$3 million commitment of Kalamazoo County

- housing millage dollars for investment in Portage
- » Planned improvements at Lakeview and Lexington Green Parks with \$2 million in ARPA and grant dollars
- » Purchased land on Industrial Drive for the future site of our Department of Public Works facility
- » Renovated the Haverhill water tower

Upon reflection, 2023 has been a very good year in Portage!

As we enter this Holiday Season, may we find joy in places we do not expect. May we be a source of inspiration to others. And, most importantly, may we offer comfort and kindness to those isolated during the dark, cold days of another Michigan winter.

While December may be synonymous with Christmas for many, it also includes other major holidays around the world as well: Hanukkah, Rohatsu, Winter Solstice, and Kwanzaa, to name a few. Whatever your custom and whatever your faith, I wish you the experience of shining bright and serving as the light for another.

– Patricia M. Randall

2023-2025 Portage City Council Seated

In the City of Portage, an election is held every two years to choose its Mayor and City Council. The Mayor is elected for a term of two years, while the six Councilmember seats are four-year terms, with the election of three Councilmembers every two years.

The 2023 City General Election was held on November 7, 2023. Mayor Patricia M. Randall was re-elected to her fourth two-year term. Councilmembers Chris Burns and Jim Pearson were re-elected to new four-year terms. Nicole Miller was elected to a four-year term and Jihan Ain Young was elected to fill the remaining two years of a vacant four-year term.

The 2023-2025 Portage City Council was officially seated during the November 14, 2023, City Council meeting, at which time the Council re-elected Jim Pearson to serve as Mayor Pro Tem. By City Charter, the Mayor is the presiding officer of the Council and the Mayor Pro Tem performs the duties of the Mayor in her absence.

The City Council meets twice a month (see 2024 meeting schedule to the right) at Portage City Hall and the public is always encouraged to attend. The City Council acts as the legislative and policymaking body of the city, while the City Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city. Citizens are encouraged to contact the City Administration with concerns about city services by visiting reportit.portagemi.gov or by calling Complaint Resolution at 329-4404.



Following her swearing in, Mayor Patricia M. Randall is congratulated by City Clerk Erica Eklov.



City Clerk Erica Eklov swears in Councilmembers Jihan Ain Young, Nicole Miller, Jim Pearson, and Chris Burns.

2024 City Council Meeting Schedule

Portage City Council meetings are held twice a month on Tuesdays at 7 PM in Council Chambers at Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue.

View Agendas and Minutes at www.portagemi.gov/610

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| » Tuesday, January 9 | » Tuesday, July 9 |
| » Tuesday, January 23 | » Tuesday, July 23 |
| » Tuesday, February 6 | » Tuesday, August 13 |
| » Tuesday, February 20 | » Tuesday, August 27 |
| » Tuesday, March 5 | » Tuesday, September 10 |
| » Tuesday, March 19 | » Tuesday, September 24 |
| » Tuesday, April 9 | » Tuesday, October 8 |
| » Tuesday, April 23 | » Tuesday, October 22 |
| » Tuesday, May 14 | » Wednesday, November 6* |
| » Tuesday, May 28 | » Tuesday, November 19 |
| » Tuesday, June 11 | » Tuesday, December 3 |
| » Tuesday, June 25 | » Tuesday, December 17 |

*The first meeting in November will be held on a Wednesday to avoid a meeting on the evening of Election Day on Tuesday, November 5.

Department of Public Safety – Police Division Receives \$1M COPS Grant

In a significant stride towards enhancing community safety, the Portage Department of Public Safety (PDPS) has been awarded a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office). The grant, allocated under the COPS Hiring Program (CHP), aims to fortify law enforcement efforts by enabling the hiring of eight new career law enforcement officers in Portage.

Celebrating a Safer Community

Portage Mayor, Patricia Randall, expressed her enthusiasm for the grant, stating, "Public Safety is among our highest priorities. Portage is a safe community, and adding staff to keep up with call volume will help us keep it that way. Congratulations to Director Arnold and his team."

The PDPS, under the leadership of Director Nicholas Arnold, plans to utilize the grant to bolster public safety services and collaborate closely with the Portage community.

Strategic Enhancements for Public Safety

The addition of eight new positions brings forth several strategic improvements within the Police Division:

- » *New Flexible 12-Hour Shift:* Implementing a new schedule to allow for personnel redeployment during peak service hours, as identified in a 2022 staffing study.
- » *Data Analysis Response Team (DART):* Allocating patrol personnel to DART, utilizing data and analytical software to target high-traffic crash areas, crime hot spots, and community concerns.
- » *Organizational Command Staff Changes:* Facilitating the redeployment of line-level patrol supervisors to the field, enhancing supervision, direction, and mentorship for newer officers.
- » *Community Engagement Function:* Establishing a community engagement function within the Patrol Division to foster trust and transparency between the Police Division and the community.
- » *Personnel Reallocation:* Reallocating personnel from the lab team to manage evidence processing, ensuring seamless collaboration between the Detective Bureau and the lab function.

Investing in Community Safety

The CHP award will cover up to 75 percent of the salary and fringe benefits for each of the eight new positions over a three-year funding period. The grant is a testament to the city's resourceful staff and is important in meeting the growing service demand as Portage expands.

The City of Portage expresses deep gratitude to the COPS Office for this substantial grant, recognizing that the planned improvements within PDPS will translate to a safer and more secure Portage.

As Portage evolves, the commitment to community safety remains steadfast, and the PDPS looks forward to implementing these enhancements to better serve and protect the residents of Portage.



Interested in a Career in Law Enforcement?



Winter in Portage: Community Responsibilities

December often marks the beginning of the snowy season in Michigan, blanketing roads and neighborhood sidewalks and hindering access to fire hydrants and bus stops. The City of Portage encourages Portage residents to be aware of their civic duty to remove snow and ice from public sidewalks, fire hydrants and bus stops.

Assist Your Fellow Portager – Clear Snow and Ice from Sidewalks, Fire Hydrants, and Bus Stops

Assistance from businesses, residents, and property owners is greatly appreciated in keeping key public areas free of snow and ice buildup during the winter months.

Sidewalks

Public sidewalks adjacent to all types of property (residential, commercial, etc.) provide safe routes to schools, bus stops, and other essential destinations. City Code (Sec. 66-4) mandates that sidewalks be cleared of snow by the adjacent property owner or occupant within 24 hours of snowfall and ice within 12 hours of accumulation. To ensure sidewalks are accessible, a minimum clearance width of three feet is appropriate. Special attention to sidewalks near street corners is necessary to ensure snow banks do not obstruct access to and from the sidewalk.



Fire Hydrants

The Portage Fire Division urges property owners to clear snow away from any fire hydrants on or adjacent to their property. In the event of a nearby fire, it is crucial that firefighters have unobstructed access to fire hydrants to enable the immediate attachment and use of fire hoses to combat the blaze.



Bus Stops

Property owners are also requested to assist in keeping bus stops clear of snow and ice. Assistance in these areas helps public transit and school bus stop users safely enter and exit buses at bus stops.



We understand that keeping up with winter maintenance can be challenging; however, your efforts in maintaining your property are greatly appreciated by the City of Portage and your neighbors.

If you become aware of a neighbor who might need help with property maintenance this winter, please extend a helping hand if you are able. By following these guidelines and working together, we can ensure a safe and enjoyable winter for everyone in Portage.

Overnight On-Street Parking Restrictions

The City of Portage recently modified its parking ordinance to shorten the overnight on-street parking restriction to December 1 through March 15. The ordinance (Sec. 78-2) prohibits parking on the street from 2 to 6 AM during this period. This restriction applies regardless of whether snow is present.



The City of Portage also strongly recommends that residents avoid parking on the street whenever possible outside the 2 to 6 AM hours when snow is present. This ensures that city snow removal equipment can complete the snow clearing process as swiftly and effectively as possible.

Are You Ready for Winter?

The Winter Readiness Guidebook offers information about snow plowing, on-street parking, sidewalks, and more. The guidebook provides answers to questions that residents frequently ask during the winter. The Winter Readiness Guidebook is available at portagemi.gov/31.



January Curbside Brush Collection

The January Curbside Brush Collection includes the collection of whole Christmas trees (free of tinsel and ornaments) as well as brush and branches. Place the materials at the curb by 7 AM on the Monday of the designated collection week (see map to the right) to ensure the collection of your items.

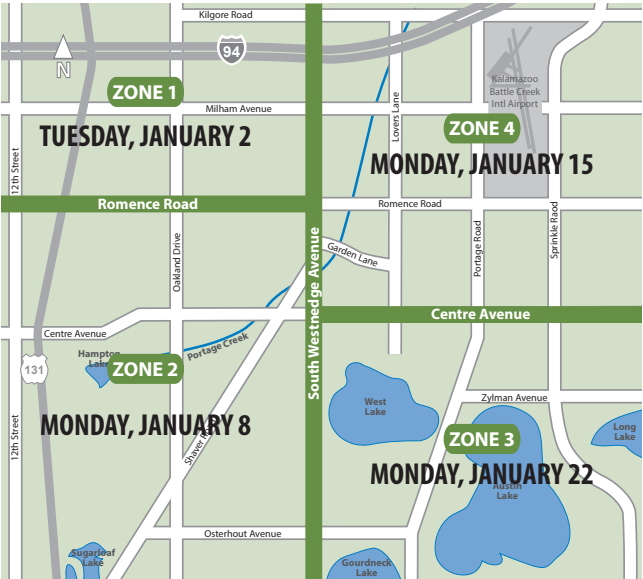
Each street will undergo a single cleanup, scheduled during its assigned week. Once crews have cleared an area, they cannot come back for late additions. In case of snowfall, residents should clear snow from brush piles and Christmas trees so that crews can easily spot and collect the items.

Complete details regarding the Curbside Brush Collection Program can be viewed at portagemi.gov/280 or by contacting the Department of Public Works 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 only when every property owner has signed an indemnification form. Contact the Department of Public Works at 329-4444 regarding collection on private streets.

January Curbside Brush Collection Dates

Collection begins on the date noted and will be completed by the end of that week.



Compost Drop-Off Day

January 27, 2024, 9 AM – 1 PM

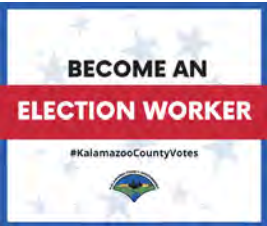
On Saturday, January 27, the City of Portage Compost Facility welcomes residents to dispose of brush, leaves, and Christmas trees (without decorations and tinsel) from 9 AM to 1 PM. You can find the compost facility at 10905 Oakland Drive, a short distance south of West Osterhout Avenue. Department of Public Works staff will be on hand to guide patrons to the designated drop-off areas for brush, leaves, and Christmas trees.



Early Voting Coming to Kalamazoo County

Following the passage of Proposal 2 in November 2022, Michigan will offer in-person early voting for state and federal elections, which will be implemented with the Presidential Primary in February 2024. Portage voters will have nine consecutive days of early voting from February 17 - 25 at four early voting sites in Kalamazoo County, all of which can accommodate voters from any participating jurisdiction. Each site will be open 9 AM to 5 PM daily.

Be a Part of Early Voting – Join the Election Inspector Team



As part of a new collaborative agreement, cities and townships in the county will provide election workers to Kalamazoo County to work at the Early Voting sites. Inspectors will be paid by Kalamazoo County for their time (\$16/hour for inspectors, \$18/hour for chairpersons) and must go through required trainings

before being appointed to serve in an election. Election inspectors must be registered voters in the State of Michigan and cannot be challengers, candidates, members of a candidate's immediate family, or members of the local Board of Canvassers. Anyone convicted of a felony is also ineligible. The Early Voting period will consist of nine days with 10-hour shifts for workers. Inspectors can work one day or all nine days.

If you are interested in working at the Early Voting locations, apply with the Kalamazoo County Clerk's Office at kalcounty.com/vote. Complete the State of Michigan Election Inspector Application and Kalamazoo County addendum to the application. Sign and return the application either via mail or in person at the Kalamazoo County Clerk's Office, 201 West Kalamazoo Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49007. You can also return the application via email to elections@kalcounty.com.

Questions? Contact the Kalamazoo County Clerk's Office at 384-8080. For more information about Early Voting in Michigan, please visit mi.gov/vote.

Transformative Renovation Coming to Lakeview Park

Exciting Upgrades and New Amenities

Lakeview Park, a beloved community space founded in 1970, is currently undergoing a transformative renovation to revitalize its aging amenities, most of which were originally constructed in the 1970s and 1980s. Following a public input meeting organized by Portage Parks & Recreation in May 2022, the city has made adjustments to the project's design to better align with the preferences and needs of the community.

As one of the city's oldest parks, boasting 1,200 feet of shoreline along Austin Lake, the renovation aims to upgrade and enhance the current features enjoyed by citizens, while introducing exciting new additions. Among these enhancements is a new game area equipped with outdoor ping pong, cornhole, and game tables, providing additional



A rendering of a new boardwalk and game area at Lakeview Park.

recreational opportunities for park-goers.

Noteworthy improvements include the expansion and addition of roof structures on the two popular fishing docks, the creation of inviting sitting areas along a new boardwalk with scenic water views, and the establishment of an inspiration garden seamlessly integrated with existing walking trails, offering a tranquil space for passive relaxation.

The plan also addresses environmental considerations, such as the removal of invasive plants along the waterfront, the clearing of dead and diseased trees, and the introduction of native trees and plants as part of the park's land management strategy.

In preparation for future developments, utility upgrades are underway to support the construction of a new restroom building, facilitate picnic rentals, and accommodate future electric vehicle charging stations. Construction for this phase of the project is scheduled to commence in early spring 2024, with completion expected by the end of the year.

Subsequent phases of the renovation will focus on park rental facilities, parking lots, the relocation and widening of the entrance, and the incorporation of additional amenities. Notably, there are no plans to include a boat launch facility, boat docks, or any alterations to the existing channel under Portage Road. The community can look forward to a revitalized Lakeview Park that combines modern amenities with the natural beauty that has made it a cherished part of the city for over five decades.



City Hall Exhibition

Winter Celebrations

Keep the winter blues at bay. Discover the different ways people around the world celebrate the long winter nights. Learn how various cultures share stories, bring loved ones together, honor traditions, pass down recipes, and start new beginnings.

- » Now - January 2, Monday - Friday during business hours
- » Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue)
- » FREE (No registration required)

Creative Corner: Ornament Making

This art program is tailored to students with special needs. Students will enjoy following the lead artist while adding their own personal artistic flare. Participants will be guided through each one-hour session and work with different art mediums to develop their unique, artistic voice. Please wear clothing that can get messy, as students will be using paint, clay, or dyes. The program fee covers art supplies and tools.

- » Thursday, December 7, 6 - 7 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$5 per participant, per session (Registration required)

Portage Holiday Market

Shop the Portage Holiday Market to find the perfect gifts and stocking stuffers for your friends and family. Shop local and support vendors selling crafts, tasty treats, handmade products, and holiday goodies.

- » Saturday, December 9, 9 AM - 1 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » FREE (No registration required)



PZSC Fitness Class Registration

As winter embraces us with its chilly charm, the temptation of holiday treats beckons. Yet, for those committed to maintaining an active lifestyle, the PZSC has curated an array of fitness classes tailored to cater to diverse interests and skill levels, numbering close to 20 different invigorating options. To ensure you don't miss out on the fitness fun, mark your calendars now for early registration in our upcoming fitness series.

- » Registration for January/February fitness classes open on Monday, December 11 at 8 AM.
- » Registration for March/April fitness classes open on Monday, February 12 at 8 AM.

To secure your spot, remember that payment is required and is expected at the time of registration. We accept cash, checks, and credit cards – please make checks payable to the “City of Portage.” In the event your desired class reaches capacity, we'll gladly add your name to the wait list for the series. However, inclusion on the wait list doesn't guarantee a spot in the next series. Should a spot become available, we'll promptly reach out to you. For any inquiries or assistance, reach us at 329-4555. Your journey to a fit and fabulous winter awaits!

Area Agency on Aging 3A

Families visiting older loved ones over the holidays often discover they have reached a point of needing extra assistance to remain independent in their homes. A representative from the Kalamazoo County Area Agency on Aging 3A Office meets with those who need information, referrals or assistance for aging at home. Their focus is on helping individuals aged 60 and over to live independently, with dignity, in their homes.

Portage Parks & Recreation Events, Camps & Classes

1,000 Acres. 20 Parks. One City.

To find out more and register online, visit mypark.portagemi.gov and click the REGISTER NOW! button.

REGISTER NOW!

Kidscape Holiday Fun Club

The Kidscape Holiday Fun Club program features fun recreational activities and games. This youth program is designed for children ages 6 to 11 and features a variety of indoor activities. The Fun Club is a program designed for elementary school children that spans two half-days. It provides an opportunity for kids to participate in enjoyable group games and creative art and craft activities. The registration fee includes two half-days of programming and a daily snack.

- » Wednesday & Thursday, December 27 & 28, 9 AM - 12 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$60 per participant (Registration required)

Yoga 4 Life: Session 3

Registration for Session 3 is open! Relax, refocus, and improve your strength and flexibility with yoga to improve your life. Join personal fitness trainer, Josie Moorlag, for this monthly four-week yoga class open to adults 18+ with all levels of experience. Students must provide their own yoga mat and are encouraged to wear comfortable exercise clothing.

- » Tuesdays, January 9, 16, 23, 30, 7 - 8 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$59 per participant, per session (Registration required)

Adult Ping Pong League: Session 2

Get ready to serve up some forehands and backhands! Registration for Session 2 is open now through January 5, 2024. Ping pong is a great low-impact sport that can be played by any athlete. Game times start every half-hour beginning at 6 PM. This league is for adults, age 18+ and runs for 10 weeks.

- » Wednesdays, January 10 - March 13, 6 - 8 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$40 per participant, per session (Registration required)

PORTAGE IdeaWorx Cottage Food Law 101

Transform your idea into reality by participating in business development programs and services at Portage IdeaWorx. Classes focus on food, arts, and science ideas to help you turn your dream into a new business venture. Do you want to learn more about selling foods made in your own home kitchen? Discover what it takes to become a Cottage Food Law vendor by attending this workshop hosted by the Small Business Development Center at Western Michigan University. Learn about Michigan Cottage Food Law licensing requirements and guidelines for preparing and selling cottage foods.

- » Wednesday, January 17, 6 - 8:30 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$40 per participant (Registration required)

Stewardship Day

Learn how to be a steward of the land. Join the MDNR & Michigan United Conservation Clubs and help remove woody invasives like glossy buckthorn to make room for native plants to grow. Lunch will be provided. Bring your work gloves and enthusiasm and be ready to work outside for a minimum of three hours. Closed toed, waterproof footwear is recommended. Supplies for invasive species removal will be provided.



- » Saturday, January 13, 9 AM - 12 PM
- » Gourdneck State Game Area (Angling Road, 2nd Parking Lot)
- » FREE with lunch provided (Registration required)

Portage Zhang Senior Center Events, Activities & Classes

Explore More. Have Fun. Live Well.

Find us at 203 East Centre Avenue | mypzsc.portagemi.gov | Questions? Call 329-4555.

Experience a vital, vibrant community offering a wide variety of services and activities that match the needs of active older adults. Membership at the PZSC is open to anyone over the age of 50. Portage residency is not required. All events are held at the Portage Zhang Senior Center unless otherwise noted.

Emphasis is placed on individuals with the greatest economic or social need, however, they welcome anyone to contact them with questions concerning aging issues.

- » Wednesday, December 6, 9 AM - 12 PM
- » FREE (No registration required and open to the public)

Dementia Support Group

This drop-in support group is a safe place to learn, offer and receive helpful tips, and meet others coping with Alzheimer's or another dementia. Participation can be empowering, helping members feel better prepared to cope with their unique situation. Support group members are typically the spouse, adult child, other family member, or friend of someone with dementia. Care partners report feeling less alone, more able to confront their daily problems, and more hopeful about the future. For additional information about dementia, contact the Alzheimer's Association at 1-800-272-3900.

- » Tuesday, December 12, 6 - 7:30 PM
- » Virtual via Zoom or in-person
- » FREE (No registration required and open to the public)

Holiday Performance

Elvis Tribute Artist, Jake Slater

Don't have a Blue Christmas! Elvis tribute artist, Jake Slater is a crowd-pleaser and favorite at the PZSC. Jake will wow the audience with some Elvis Christmas classics and popular hits. Don't miss out! Call to register today at 329-4555.



- » Wednesday, December 13, 4 - 5:30 PM
- » \$10 (Registration required, open to the public)

New Member Meet & Eat

If you have recently become a member of the Portage Zhang Senior Center or are thinking about joining, the PZSC Meet & Eat is for you! This is an excellent opportunity for us to get to know you better and introduce you to the center and the diverse programs and events scheduled throughout the year. Come and enjoy a complimentary light breakfast while we provide an overview of all the PZSC offers! This event is generously sponsored by StoryPoint Portage and Kalamazoo. To reserve your seat, call 329-4555.



- » Friday, December 15, 9 - 10 AM
- » FREE (Registration required)

December Holiday Double Feature

"A Christmas Story" and "A Christmas Story Christmas!"

Join us for this classic holiday movie pairing, sure to elicit memories and good laughs. To complete the festive mood, we will keep you toasty warm with hot chocolate and other seasonal treats.



- » Wednesday, December 20, 1 - 5:30 PM
- » FREE (No registration required)

2023 Winter Property Taxes

City of Portage 2023 winter property tax bills were mailed to property owners in late November, and payment is due by 5:30 PM on Wednesday, February 14, 2024. Property owners who don't receive a winter tax bill by December 11, 2023 are asked to contact the Portage Treasury Office. Failure to receive a tax bill does not relieve the property owner of the responsibility for payment of the tax and applicable fees. To quickly access your property tax information and pay online, scan the QR code located on the front of your bill. Property tax information is updated daily.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

USPS Mail: Mail your payment to the City of Portage, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue, Portage, MI 49002. Please include your payment and the bottom portion of your tax statement. 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. To avoid a 3% late fee, **mailed payments must be postmarked by the U.S. Post Office on or before February 14, 2024**, and received by the city no later than February 21, 2024. In all late payment disputes, the Portage Treasury Office will rely on the postmark applied by the Postmaster (metered postmarks are not accepted).

Drop Box: A 24-hour drop box is located at the south "Exit Only" door of City Hall at 7900 South Westnedge Avenue, Portage, MI 49002. Look for the "Night Drop Box" sign near the curb. Include the bottom portion of your tax statement with your payment. Payments deposited after 5 PM or on weekends are processed on the next business day. Payment by check authorizes the city to convert the check to an electronic funds transfer; your bank account may be debited as soon as the same day the city receives the check payment.



Online or Phone Payments: Pay online with a credit/debit card (3% fee, \$2.95 minimum) or E-check payment (\$2.50 fee). Visit portagemi.gov and click on the Bill Pay icon. Phone payments can be made by calling 1-844-943-3997 (3% + \$0.75 fee).

Auto Pay: Visit portagemi.gov and click the "Bill Pay" icon on the home page to set up auto payment of your recurring tax bill. Select "Register to Pay Current Taxes" and register your account. Then go to *My Profile > Payment Methods > Add new credit/debit card OR Add new bank*. Once you have entered and confirmed your information, select "set up auto-pay." Payment will be debited from your account on the tax due date. A 3% fee, 2.95 minimum applies when using a credit/debit card; no fee when using a checking or savings account. Contact the Treasury office with any questions. **Note: If you previously set up auto pay for property taxes and have sold your home, you must log into your online account and cancel your auto pay.**

Online Banking: Pay through your financial institution's online bill pay. First, contact your bank to confirm that they honor tax payments through their system. Use your parcel number as your account number. Online banking payments should be scheduled no later than January 31, 2024, to ensure timely delivery of funds to the City of Portage to avoid late fees.

In Person at City Hall: Visit the Treasury Office located at Portage City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue. The Treasury Office is open Monday - Thursday, 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM, Friday, 8 AM - 12 PM. City Hall will be closed:

- » Friday, December 22
- » Monday, December 25
- » Monday, January 1
- » Monday, January 15

All 2023 property taxes that remain unpaid on March 1, 2024, will be turned over to the Kalamazoo County Treasurer for collection where additional fees will be added.

Questions regarding tax bills may be directed to the City of Portage Treasury Office at 329-4455.

We're Decorating for the Holidays!

Enter your holiday-themed house in our **"Decked Out Home" Holiday Decorating Contest** sponsored by Consumers Energy. Just upload photos of your "decked out home" on our Facebook post or email them to publicinformation@portagemi.gov by Monday, December 18 at 11:59 PM to enter. On December 19, an interactive map will be shared on Facebook. Judging from our top-secret judge will occur from December 19 through December 21. The winning homes will be announced on Facebook on Friday, December 22, and awarded their prize and a special certificate in person at the January 9 City Council Meeting. Thanks to our sponsor Consumers Energy for these cash prizes: 1st place - \$200, 2nd place - \$150, 3rd place - \$100. Complete contest rules can be found at portagemi.gov in the spotlights section.



Our Poinsettia trees will be in full bloom throughout the Christmas season at City Hall and the Portage Zhang Senior Center thanks to our generous sponsors, AVB, Abonmarche Byce, and Hinman.



"Take-Down Day" is Thursday, December 21. Help us say goodbye to our seasonal decor by dropping by either site before 5 PM to pick up your free poinsettia!

HINMAN
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POSTAL CUSTOMER

Portage City Hall and all other non-emergency city offices will be closed on the following dates:

Christmas

- » Friday, December 22
- » Monday, December 25

New Year's

- » Monday, January 1

In the event of a police, fire or medical emergency, please dial 9-1-1.

Portage City Council

Portage City Council meetings are held twice a month on Tuesdays at 7 PM at Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue) in Council Chambers and are always open to the public.

The City Manager

The City Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city. Citizens are encouraged to contact the City Manager with concerns or complaints about city services by visiting reportit.portagemi.gov or by calling Complaint Resolution at 329-4404.

Televised City Meetings

City Council, Planning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals meetings can be viewed live on Spectrum channel 995 and AT&T channel 99. All meetings can be viewed via live streaming at portagemi.gov/205.

DECEMBER 2023

5	7:00 PM	City Council Meeting
7	7:00 PM	Planning Commission Meeting
11	7:00 PM	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
19	7:00 PM	City Council Meeting
21	7:00 PM	Planning Commission Meeting

The Portager

The *Portager* is the official publication of the City of Portage, used to inform residents of city services and events, as well as city projects that have significance to Portage citizens. The newsletter is published monthly and delivered to every mailbox in the 49002 and 49024 zip codes.

This month's front and back cover photos feature holiday decorations in the City Centre & Celery Flats Historical Area.

PORTAGER Editor
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