



MARCH 2024

PORTAGER

A Natural Place to Move



A Message from Mayor Patricia M. Randall

Have you ever given much thought to the word “balance?” It’s a commonly used word that is pretty important.

Phrases such as “work-life balance,” “I’ve lost my balance,” “what’s my account balance?” and “a balanced diet” all filter into our everyday lives. A scale can measure symmetrical balance. The yin and yang is the symbol for balance.

There are four elements of balance:

1. Emotional balance is the state of being aware of one’s emotions enough to manage them in a way that is gentle, honest, and wise; having a positive, mental well-being with self-awareness.
2. Physical balance is the ability to maintain equilibrium; basically remain in an upright and stable position. The visual, the vestibular (inner ear), and the proprioceptive (sensory) systems all have to work in harmony.
3. Mental balance is a sense of tranquility that arises from inner peace and harmonizes relationships with the external world.
4. Spiritual balance is when one allows our deepest principles to hold our passions in check. Connecting to nature, meditation, or prayer help keep our mind-body-soul aligned.

Not surprisingly, a city needs balance, too. Balancing growth, the budget, residents’ wants vs. developers’ needs, private rights with public benefit, and forever balancing differing perspectives and expectations. And, unlike human balance, physical exercise, a healthy diet, avoidance of drugs, and alcohol, and getting plenty of sleep are not how a balanced community is achieved. If growth is the opposite of stagnation, Portage is fortunate to still be attracting new businesses, expanding existing businesses, and attracting people wanting to call our city home.

In 2023 we experienced a 6% increase in total taxable property value to reach a very impressive number of \$2,443,656,405. In fact, Portage accounts for 23% of the taxable value in all of Kalamazoo County! Growth does require new development. However, as available land within our city decreases, this growth is occurring on properties that are, more often than not, in someone’s backyard. City Council and staff are dedicated to achieving development opportunities that are palatable to our residents as we work to update the city’s Master Plan.

On behalf of the City Council, I thank everyone who has participated in our Master Plan work sessions. Please note that there is still an opportunity to participate by taking a survey. Simply visit [ForwardTogether.portagemi.gov](https://www.portagemi.gov/forwardtogether).

We have received accolades for our financial budgeting process from the Governmental Accounting Standards Board. We continue to pay down our debt from the high in 2008 of \$110 million to less than half that – \$45 million today.

We have also worked hard to maintain our AA+ bond rating so that if we ever do have to borrow again we will be able to do so at the lowest possible interest rate.

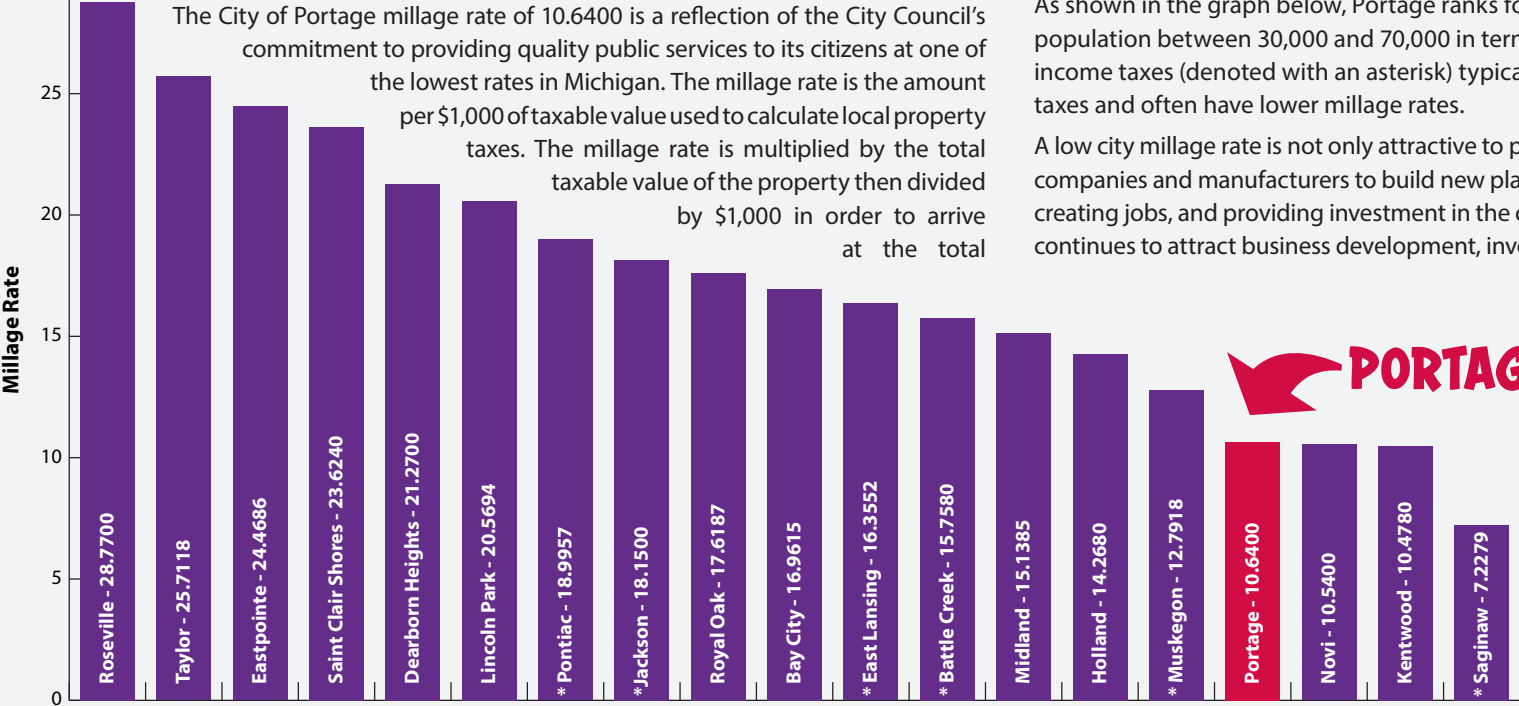
As for balancing differing expectations and perspectives, the old saying is true: while you can make some people happy some of the time, you really can’t make everyone happy all the time. However, that doesn’t mean we’re not trying. As turmoil in our country and the world swirls around us, your Council chooses to focus on what matters most – your home, business, and the city around us. That is where we can be most effective and what you elected us to do.

This Council has a longstanding policy of not taking a stand or choosing a side on global and other issues outside our jurisdiction. And, it would be disingenuous for us to presume that we can speak to the beliefs and ideologies of every individual within our city. Our silence on human tragedies both within our country and beyond our shores not does imply “support” for any side. It very much does mean that we are determined to do what only a local council can do: focus on the city that you elected us to protect, preserve, and improve.

Everything takes time. Leadership requires expertise, patience, and compromise. Your City Council works tirelessly to achieve the balance that ensures Portage will continue to thrive for not just us but for our children and grandchildren. I yearn for greater balance as I hold my tree pose during yoga class each day.

– Patricia M. Randall

Portage Millage Rate Ranks Low Among Similar-Sized Michigan Cities



value of city property taxes. The owner of a home in Portage with a taxable value of \$100,000 would pay \$1,064.00 in property taxes to the City of Portage. (School, county, and state taxes are levied separately and added to this amount.)

As shown in the graph below, Portage ranks fourth lowest among Michigan cities with a population between 30,000 and 70,000 in terms of millage rate. Municipalities that also levy income taxes (denoted with an asterisk) typically don’t need to raise as much in property taxes and often have lower millage rates.

A low city millage rate is not only attractive to potential home buyers, it also encourages companies and manufacturers to build new plants or expand or renovate existing facilities, creating jobs, and providing investment in the community. This competitive advantage continues to attract business development, investors, and residents to Portage.

*These cities also levy income taxes, in addition to property taxes.

Sources:
Michigan Department of Treasury
United States Census Bureau

Salute to Veterans

Help the City Honor Veterans and Active-Duty Military

2024 Salute to Veterans

Sponsor a personalized light-pole banner with a photo of your veteran for \$200. The city will display the banners on light poles in Liberty Park from Memorial Day to Labor Day 2024. The banner is yours to keep at the end of the display.

Proceeds from this program will benefit veterans services at the Portage Zhang Senior Center. Visit the City Manager’s web page at www.portagemi.gov/170 for complete details.

Hurry! Only 25 banners are available and will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. The deadline to claim your banner and submit a photo of your veteran is April 26, 2024.

Look Inside...

for important information about the

Spring Cleanup Program

National Flood Insurance Program

For more than 40 years Portage has been an active participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), a program administered and managed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The NFIP provides affordable flood insurance to property owners and encourages communities to adopt and administer floodplain management regulations. As a participant, Portage has proactively worked to protect structures from damage and loss caused by flood events. The program provides design and construction standards for structures in and around Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA). In addition to lowering the risk of flood susceptibility, the program provides the opportunity for property owners in these areas to acquire flood insurance at a reduced rate.



Flood maps, base flood elevations (BFE) and other related material that recognize areas that have the potential to flood are maintained by the City of Portage Department of Community Development. Similar information is also

available at the Portage District Library. The information and material help property and business owners in determining if their site is in or near a SFHA and the proactive actions that should be taken to protect their investment. Ground elevation certificates, which are used to verify existing building elevations, and letters of map amendment, a process to remove properties from flood hazard areas, are also tracked and maintained by the Department of Community Development. Assistance for property owners seeking flood hazard area map information and/or methods to potentially change flood area records is also provided.

Most property owners are not aware that insurance policies typically do not cover damage caused by flood events. Special flood insurance is required to cover such events and is only available to communities that participate in the NFIP. Because Portage participates in the program, property owners are able to obtain flood insurance at a reduced cost. If you do not currently have flood insurance, you may wish to contact your insurance provider to review your options.

The Department of Community Development can provide you with the following information upon request:

- » Whether a property is within a SFHA as shown on the current FIRM for the City of Portage.
- » Additional flood insurance data for a site, such as FIRM Zone, floodway locations, the BFE or depth, if shown on the FIRM.
- » Information/handout on the mandatory flood insurance purchase requirement that applies to people who are getting a federally-backed mortgage or loan for a property in the SFHA.
- » Access to Elevation Certificates that have been processed in the City of Portage if they exist for a specific property.
- » Copies of Letters of Map Amendment (LOMAs) or Letter of Map Revision (LOMRs) are also retained in the Department of Community Development.

Useful information relating to floodplains is also provided by the State of Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) at [michigan.gov/egle/about/Organization/Water-Resources/floodplain-management](https://www.michigan.gov/egle/about/Organization/Water-Resources/floodplain-management).

Please call the Department of Community Development at 329-4477 for assistance or if you have questions.

Guidelines for Selecting and Managing Contractors for Your Home Projects

Your home is one of your most significant investments, deserving diligent upkeep and management. State of Michigan Construction Codes administered by the City of Portage serve as crucial safeguards, ensuring the well-being of residents. Whether you or a contractor undertake construction activities on your property, adhering to these codes through obtaining necessary permits and approvals is essential. Failure to do so may compromise the value of your property and lead to complications, especially when selling your home.

When entrusting a contractor with significant tasks such as additions, basement finishing, deck installations, or heating system replacements, choosing a reputable and qualified professional is paramount. Here are some key points to consider:



1. **Avoid High-Pressure Sales:** Resist impulsive decisions pushed by high-pressure sales tactics. Opt for quality work at fair prices, taking the time to deliberate over your project thoughtfully.
2. **Get Multiple Quotes:** Obtain quotes from several contractors and scrutinize each carefully, ensuring you compare similar scopes of work to make informed decisions.
3. **Verify Licensing and Insurance:** Prioritize licensed and insured contractors to steer clear of potential

- safety hazards or future complications. Beware of contractors who dodge the responsibility of obtaining permits, as this could indicate inadequacy or lack of compliance.
4. **Document Everything:** Ensure all agreements are clearly outlined in written contracts, delineating project details, timelines, costs, and payment terms. Verify the contractor’s credentials, including their State of Michigan license number, before commencing any work.
 5. **Check References:** Request recent references from the contractor’s past clients to gauge their performance and reliability. Avoid contractors unable to provide recent references, as it may hint at unfavorable work history.
 6. **Partial Payments:** Refrain from paying the full project cost upfront. Instead, arrange for partial payments corresponding to completed work stages, withholding final payment until all terms are met, and necessary inspections are completed.
 7. **Verify Permits and Inspections:** Confirm that the contractor obtains the required permits and undergoes inspections as mandated by construction codes. Keep copies of permits for your records and ensure all inspections are duly conducted and documented.
 8. **Maintain Communication:** Foster open communication with your contractor throughout the project, addressing any questions or concerns promptly. Early intervention can prevent misunderstandings and adjustments later in the process.

By adhering to these guidelines and investing due diligence upfront, you safeguard your home investment and ensure the successful completion of your construction project.

Portage Homeowners May Benefit from Federal Tax Credit for Clean Energy Upgrades

Making energy efficiency upgrades to a home can result in cost savings, contribute to environmental sustainability, and increase property value. The amount of federal tax credit available to homeowners and the types of qualifying expenses were expanded by the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. Portage homeowners may qualify for tax credits for energy efficiency upgrades made on their primary residence. In some cases, renters who purchase energy efficient appliances and products may also qualify.

Tax credit eligible products include:

- » Home clean electricity products, such as solar panels from a provider in your area, and home back-up power battery storage with capacity of 3 kWh or greater
- » Heating, cooling, and water heating systems, if they meet specific efficiency requirements
- » Other energy efficiency upgrades, if they meet specific efficiency requirements and are installed according to specific building/ electrical codes, such as:
 - Panelboards, sub-panelboards, branch circuits, or feeders that have load capacity of 200 amps or more
 - Insulation materials and systems
 - Exterior windows

The amount of credit homeowners can receive is a percentage of the total improvement expenses in the year of installation, but is typically 30% for home clean electricity products. For energy efficient product upgrades, the credit is typically 30% per year up to a specified lifetime maximum.

Homeowners interested in exploring the energy efficiency options for their home, particularly the eligibility and code requirements in their area, should consult with a trusted contractor, plumber, or electrician. A tax consultant should be consulted with questions regarding application for tax credits.

Further information on eligible expenses and related tax credits can be found at [energy.gov/policy/articles/making-our-homes-more-efficient-clean-energy-tax-credits-consumers](https://www.energy.gov/policy/articles/making-our-homes-more-efficient-clean-energy-tax-credits-consumers).

Change Your Clocks, Change Your Batteries

Daylight Saving Time starts at 2 AM on Sunday, March 10. When you set your clocks ahead by one hour, remember to change the batteries in your smoke alarms. According to the National Fire Protection Association, approximately 25% of smoke alarm failures are due to dead batteries. Moreover, homes without functional smoke alarms have a death rate from fires more than double that of homes with operational alarms.

To prioritize home fire safety, the Portage Department of Public Safety – Fire Division recommends monthly smoke alarm tests and annual battery replacements. Smoke alarms should be replaced after ten years. This simple precaution can potentially save lives.

Understanding the significance of smoke alarm signals is essential. Alarms with non-replaceable 10-year batteries emit a chirp when the battery is low, indicating the need for immediate replacement of the entire unit. For alarms with other battery types, annual battery replacement is necessary. If an alarm chirps, indicating low battery, replace the battery promptly.

When replacing batteries, adhere to the manufacturer’s instructions and recommended battery types listed on the alarm or in the manual. Using the wrong battery can compromise the alarm’s functionality.

Be Ready for Severe Weather

As spring nears, so does the potential for severe weather. It’s crucial to ensure you and your loved ones are prepared. As part of Michigan’s Severe Weather Awareness Week, March 17 to 23, the Department of Public Safety will share important safety tips on social media. When you hear the statewide tornado drill being conducted on March 20 at 1 PM and on the first Saturday of every month at 1 PM, take the opportunity to have a discussion about emergency preparedness.



Michigan faces various severe weather threats during spring, including tornadoes, thunderstorms, and floods. To enhance your safety and readiness, we urge you to follow these four essential steps:

Stay Informed: Initiate discussions with your family about the risks associated with severe weather. Establish communication channels for being aware of impending storms and familiarize yourselves with disaster plans

at your workplace, your children’s schools, and other frequented locations.

Create a Plan: Ensure your family is equipped to handle severe weather, regardless of where they are when a storm hits. Teach children important details like their address, family phone numbers, and how to dial 9-1-1. Identify a safe shelter area within your home and establish evacuation procedures. Keep an updated list of emergency contacts handy.

Build an Emergency Kit: Emergencies often necessitate immediate evacuation or sheltering in place, sometimes without access to essential services for days. Assemble a 72-hour emergency supply kit containing crucial items in a portable container such as a 5-gallon bucket, duffel bag, or backpack. For comprehensive guidance on assembling your kit, visit [michigan.gov/miready](https://www.michigan.gov/miready).

Practice and Maintain: Review your family emergency plan every six months to ensure everyone remembers their roles and responsibilities. Conduct periodic emergency evacuation exercises and fire drills.

By taking proactive steps to prepare for severe weather, you can significantly increase your family’s safety and resilience in the face of adversity. Let’s stay vigilant and ready as we embrace the spring season.

YOUR BACKYARD IS BIGGER THAN YOU THINK

City Hall Exhibition

Ten Little Known Facts

Exhibitions that focus on local arts, nature, and history are displayed in the lobby at Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue) during the year. Celebrate the legacy of Black History Month this month, and every month. Discover memorable moments and courageous stories in American history that you may have never known. Learn about lesser-known change-makers, like Claudette Colvin and the bus boycotts, Onesimus and inoculations, the first African American pilot, cowboys, and more.

- » Now - March 29, during normal business hours
- » FREE

Earn-A-Bike with Open Roads

Eager to ride a bike? Want to rebuild one? This is the workshop for you. Over five weeks, learn to fix a bike that needs repair. Under the instruction of skilled cyclists from Open Roads, you will learn the ABCs of bicycle care, repair, and maintenance. Bicycles are provided by Portage Parks & Recreation. Upon completion of the program, participants take home the bike they repaired. This program is designed for adults.

- » Mondays, March 4 - 25 & Tuesday, April 2, 5 - 7 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$50 per participant (Registration required)

Yoga 4 Life

Join personal fitness trainer Josie Moorlag in this monthly Yoga class for adults of all levels of experience. Yoga is an excellent way to relax, refocus, improve your strength, balance and flexibility, and help manage pain. Students are asked to bring their own yoga mat and water, and wear comfortable exercise clothing. Adults age 18+. Maximum of 20 participants.

- » Tuesdays, March 5 - 26, 7 - 8 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$59 per participant (Registration required)

Kingpins Drumline

Students with special needs are invited to participate in a six-week drumming program tailored for performers of different abilities. Drumming provides a thrilling outlet for each participant. Students practice drumming to different songs, work together, and will be guided through each one-hour session. Space is limited for this activity.

- » Thursdays, March 14 - April 18, 6 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » FREE (Registration required)



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!

Nature Journaling Workshop

Learn the art of nature journaling! Connect with nature through the practice of drawing or writing. This workshop is for artists, outdoor enthusiasts, or those who are somewhere in the middle. Develop a sense of curiosity and engage with the environment in a new and creative way. This fun, relaxing practice helps you connect more closely with nature, and results in the creation of your own unique nature journal. Journals and creative instruments will be provided for this activity and are included in the program fee.

- » Friday, March 15, 6 - 7 PM
- » Schrier Park Building (850 West Osterhout Avenue)
- » \$10 per participant (Registration required)

Coming up in April

Geo Mystery Tours

Frog Frenzy

Uncover the secrets of Portage through Geo Mystery Tours. Discover what makes frogs and toads so hoppin'! Get out your magnifying glass, put on your adventure hat, and listen to the sounds of spring! Join the adventure at any time, but the expedition must be completed by the end of April. Beginning GPS coordinates will be emailed to registered participants.

- » Frog Frenzy, April 1 - 30
- » Portage Parks
- » FREE (Registration required)

Solar Eclipse Kits

Take this once in a lifetime opportunity to view a total solar eclipse – where the sun, moon, and you are all in alignment! On Monday April 8, the Portage and the Kalamazoo area will darken, with the solar eclipse at its peak totality around 3 PM. Thanks to the Air Zoo, solar eclipse packets will be made available to registered participants, while supplies last. Registered participants will be emailed packet pickup details and information. The next total solar eclipse is projected to occur in Spain in 2026, so don't miss out on this one!

- » Solar Kit Pickup Dates, April 1 - 5 & 8
- » Solar Eclipse, Monday, April 8, around 3 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » FREE (Registration required)

*Safe viewing tips, activities, and information can be found at airzoo.org/eclipse-2024.



Adult Doubles Ping Pong

Double your fun with doubles ping pong! Bring a friend and make new friends in this recreational doubles ping pong activity. Players are randomly selected for teams and rotate

tables throughout the activity, so each game is new and exciting all in the name of fun. This activity is for adults 18 and over with a maximum of 20 participants. Registration is open from March 1 - 31.

- » Wednesdays, April 3 - May 8, 6 - 8 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$36 per participant (Registration required)

Kids Fix It! Here Comes Summer

Don't let a broken bike stop your summer fun. Kids learn the ABCs of bicycle maintenance in this hands-on program for kids 6 to 12 years old. Mechanic instructors from Pedal Bicycle provide instructional support and bike-specific tools to get your wheels on the ground! Participants must provide their own bike, helmet, and chaperone.

- » Saturday, April 13, 9 - 11 AM
- » Millennium Park (280 Romence Road) Rain location: Celery Flats Pavilion (7335 Garden Lane)
- » \$10 per participant (Registration required)

Birding Workshop with the Audubon Society of Kalamazoo



Enjoy a presentation from Russ Schipper of the Audubon Society of Kalamazoo. Discover different types of birds and see taxidermy birds up close! This program is designed for students ages 8 to 12. Space is limited for this program; maximum 35 participants.

- » Saturday, April 13, 10 - 11 AM
- » Schrier Park (850 West Osterhout Avenue)
- » \$10 per participant (Registration required)

Park Patrol

Join the Portage Park Patrol and contribute to the ongoing enhancement of our parks, ensuring they remain a delightful experience for everyone. Attend an orientation where participants will delve into the responsibilities of Park Patrol volunteers, the Park Patrol Code of Conduct, complete a participation waiver, and view a Park Patrol orientation presentation. This event is a valuable opportunity for both returning volunteers and newcomers to connect with the Portage Parks & Recreation staff. Establish meaningful points of contact to address concerns, learn effective ways to report maintenance issues to city staff, and be a proactive force in enhancing the park experience for everyone. Snacks and coffee will be provided and returning Park Patrol members will be honored with new badges, acknowledging their continued dedication and service to the community.

- » Saturday, April 13, 2 - 3 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » FREE (Registration required)

Portage Farmers Market Seeking Farmers, Food Producers, Artisans, and Musicians for the 2024 Season

The Portage Farmers market is now accepting vendor applications for the 2024 season. Every year, the market attracts approximately 30,000 customers who are eager to shop local and support small businesses.

The 2024 Portage Farmers Market will run on Sundays, from May 5 through October 13, from 9 AM to 1 PM at Portage City Hall. Featuring between 20 to 30 local vendors, the market offers fresh produce, cheese, milk products, meat, eggs, fruits, baked goods, flowers, crafts, handmade gifts and so much more!

The goal of the Portage Farmers Market is to support and strengthen opportunities for farmers, local specialty food



producers and artisan entrepreneurs, and contribute to the overall health of the community. If you have a local business that aligns with this mission, you are encouraged to visit farmersmarket.portagemi.gov where you can find the 2024 Portage Farmers Market Rules & Guidelines and an online application. Vendor applications can also be picked up in-person at Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane).

The Portage Farmers Market also features a variety of family-friendly musicians and musical groups. We welcome applications from area musicians interested in entertaining market patrons. Visit farmersmarket.portagemi.gov to complete an application online.

For more information, email farmmkt@portagemi.gov or call the Farmers Market Manager at 329-4421.

Check the Inserts... for the 2024 Spring & Summer Parks & Recreation Guide



MARCH 2024

PORTAGER

YOU HAVE MORE
FRIENDS
THAN YOU KNOW

Portage Zhang Senior Center Events, Activities & Classes

Explore More. Have Fun. Live Well.

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

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.

Kitchen-Made Remedies

How Herbs Support the Physiology

Kitchen Made Medicine for Colds and Flu

Learn about ways to boost the body's immune system naturally, why we get sick and what we can do to prevent it. Take home a list of remedies you can make in your kitchen, and make a homemade syrup to take home to boost the body's natural defenses against seasonal colds and flus.

- » Wednesday, March 6, 1 - 2 PM
- » \$10 Members / \$15 Non-Members (Registration required)

Balancing Energy with Food & Remedies for Brain Fog

Do you ever feel tired or have low energy or struggle with brain fog? Learn about the three main body and digestive types and how foods fuel people differently based on their makeup. Make a brain-boosting tea to boost digestion and clear the mind.

- » Wednesday, March 13, 1 - 2 PM
- » \$10 Members / \$15 Non-Members (Registration required)

Gut Health

A balanced gut is the root of good health. In this workshop, explore how the microbiome plays a role in our health and well-being and make homemade tea to help reduce naturally occurring toxins in the body.

- » Wednesday, March 20, 1 - 2 PM
- » \$10 Members / \$15 Non-Members (Registration required)



Herbal Infusions/Herbal Tinctures

Learn about homemade teas, syrups, oils, salves, poultices, tinctures, salts, and decoctions! Get tips and tricks to growing an herbal garden for the spring. Choose a tea, salt, or tincture make-and-take remedy.

- » Wednesday, March 27, 1 - 2 PM
- » \$10 Members / \$15 Non-Members (Registration required)

WMU Prof Talks

The Cemeteries of Kalamazoo County

There are many ways to tell the history of a town, a city, or a county, including books, structures, and cemeteries. This class will look at the final resting places of so many who lived in Kalamazoo County and played a role in the day-to-day life of the area. Nearly 50 area cemeteries will be discussed, including the design and some of the inhabitants.

- » Thursday, March 7, 2 - 3:30 PM
- » FREE (Registration required)

American Red Cross Blood Drive

Absolute Homecare and Medical Staffing is partnering with the PZSC to offer an American Red Cross Blood Drive. Register for an appointment by calling 353-6180 or schedule online at redcrossblood.org; specify "Portage Zhang Senior Center" as your location. Walk-in appointments are also available. Contact the American Red Cross of Southwest Michigan at 353-6180 with questions.

- » Friday, March 15, 12 - 5:45 PM



Selkie Trio - St. Patrick's Day Performance

Join us for this special St. Patrick's Day concert with the Selkie Trio. Selkie was born out of three multi-instrumentalists' friendship and their love for playing in the Celtic tradition. They write music inspired by Michigan's natural places, sing in Gaelic, French and English, and can play dance music for days. Their music ranges from fast fiddling to popular Irish songs, to otherworldly harp music, and everything in between.

- » Thursday, March 14, 4 - 5:30 PM
- » \$5 Members / \$10 Non-Members (Registration Required)



Women in Air and Space

Pioneering Women in Early Flight

Dive into the riveting stories of three trailblazing women – Katharine Wright, a driving force behind the success of her famous brothers; Bessie Coleman, the first African American woman with a pilot's license; and Katherine Chung, a pioneering Asian American aviator. Each overcame unique challenges to contribute significantly to the history of flight.

- » Thursday, March 21, 2 - 4 PM
- » \$3 Members / \$5 Non-Members



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Board of Review Reminders

Annual Assessment Change Notices were mailed to Portage residential property owners in February. If you believe your property valuation is inaccurate, you may appear before the March Board of Review to appeal the valuation. The Board of Review will meet with property owners Monday, March 11 through Thursday, March 14.

Property owners may call the Office of the City Assessor at 329-4433 to schedule an appointment with the Board of Review. Appeals may also be made by a signed letter sent to the Office of the City Assessor by 5:30 PM on Wednesday, March 13, 2024. Written appeals must include a completed Form L-4035 Petition to the Board of Review available online at portagemi.gov/156. Written appeals, including documentation and Form L-4035, can submitted by mail, email, dropped off to the Office of the City Assessor, or placed in the 24-hour drop box at City Hall.

Please call the Office of the City Assessor at 329-4433 with questions.

Portage City Council

Portage City Council meetings are held twice a month on Tuesdays at 6 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.

MARCH 2024

5	6:00 PM	City Council Meeting
7	7:00 PM	Planning Commission Meeting
11	7:00 PM	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
21	7:00 PM	Planning Commission Meeting
19	6:00 PM	City Council 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 photo features Stuart Manor in the Celery Flats Historical Area.

PORTAGER Editor
Mary Beth Block | blockm@portagemi.gov