

# PORTAGER

*A Natural Place to Move*

## A Message from Mayor Patricia M. Randall

Here we go again. Exactly 40 days after the dual tornadoes on June 16, Portage residents were again pummeled with another storm containing damaging straight line winds and torrential rain. Equally destructive and even more wide spread throughout the densely populated northern section of our city, both residents and businesses experienced extensive damage. By midnight, additional employees from Public Works and Public Safety were called in to deal with this latest crisis. Two structure fires, four technical rescues and sixteen non-working traffic lights all became top priority. As assessments continued, we were comforted by the confirmation of no lives lost and no serious injuries.

"Bravo!" again for citizens seeking shelter in reaction to the neighborhood sirens and alert systems. As we work with our residents to reopen streets and trail ways, please note that natural waste will be picked up curbside (see article on page 2). If experience is the key to wisdom, we are certainly wiser as a community. Day by day we will take steps to return our community to its pre-storm condition. We are resilient and we will continue to move forward together!

How one manages and allocates their money reveals much about a person. The same holds true for a community. The priorities we have are reflected in our annual budget. Those priorities are set by the City Council members you

have elected and implemented by staff. This council has reserved 20% of our general budget for a "rainy day fund." This forward thinking asset management allowed our city to respond to the two weather events immediately, rather than waiting for state or federal dollars.

Once again, Portage has a balanced, \$103 million budget for the 2024/25 year. We also continue to maintain the same millage rate of 10.6400, as we have for the past five years. Over the past 16 years the city's debt has been reduced from a staggering \$108M to a more healthy balance of \$47.5M—a reduction of 55%! Our Taxable Value grew 6.79% this past year. However, as with most budgets, it's not just what you make, it's what you spend. This Council manages your tax dollars wisely while continuing to deliver the high level of services you deserve and have come to expect.

We place a high priority on "quality of life" and invest about 6% of the budget in our Parks & Recreation Department. This investment is a nod to the many families that are drawn to our parks for recreation and relaxation, or to improve their mental and physical health. That's also why we display our parks so prominently in our city logo. We continue to present our city as a community which values biking, swimming, running and nature.

To fully maintain your favorite park we allocate the spending on our parks based upon the age of the infrastructure and to ensure "replacement before failure." This summer, Lexington Green and Lakeview Park will see significant investment. To meet current standards and present offerings, we're updating facilities at each park. We work hard to expand

our trail system each year to increase connectivity to neighboring communities and right here within our own city. Thanks to citizen input, we are offering new nature programs including "Sound 'Scapes, Forest Bathing and Kids Step Up Run Club." We have expanded current programs including ranger hikes, yoga, cooking classes, pet portraits and bike programs due to overwhelming demand. Area pickleball leagues and clinics have attracted over 400 participants and generated lengthy waiting lists. Participation in softball remains strong with 82 teams registered. Camps and classes are also offered for fishing, hiking, glass blowing, paddle board and archery.

The Summer Concert Series and all other events held in our parks fall into the category of "Parks Department offerings." On July 11, Kait Rose & Co: Fleetwood Mac Tribute band will make music at the Overlander Bandshell. On July 20, Ramona Park will host a beach bonfire, s'more making and an outdoor movie, "Finding Captain Nemo." July 26 presents a combo: Friday in the Flats and the movie "The Incredibles" to wrap up the month.

Through Labor Day, 16 lifeguards are stationed at Ramona Park Beach seven days a week from 10 AM to 8 PM. Tennis, pickle ball and basketball courts, play sets, and pavilions are open for your enjoyment. Clearly, our Parks & Recreation Department does an amazing job offering something for just about everyone. But, if you just want to come and take in the scenery, breathe fresh air and forget about the weather, that is fine too. I hope to see you there!

- Patricia M. Randall

## A New DPW Facility

### Addressing Critical Needs for Safety, Efficiency, and Staff Well-being

As stewards of our city's infrastructure and services, we must provide the Department of Public Works and Department of Transportation & Utilities with adequate facilities to continue serving the Portage community effectively. The current Department of Public Works (DPW) facility, dating back to the 1960s, has faithfully served its purpose for decades. However, its age and limitations are becoming increasingly apparent, posing challenges to safety, operational efficiency, and staff welfare.



A floor drain in the Department of Public Works garage.



A dilapidated ceiling in the Department of Public Works garage.

In August 2023, the City Council approved the purchase of three properties on Portage Industrial Drive for the development of a new DPW campus. A modern office building on one parcel will serve as the home for the administrative offices of the Department of Public Works and the Department of Transportation & Utilities, including Veolia, the city's contracted utilities vendor. Costs for the construction of garage facilities, a salt barn, and a storage facility, as well as modifications to the administrative offices, will exceed \$20 million. When compared to anticipated maintenance and projected capital expenses at the existing DPW site, the investment will represent savings over the long term.

The City Council recently approved a \$161,000 contract to engage architects and engineers for the development of a comprehensive building program. This initiative includes the creation of a conceptual

design, a feasible timeline, and precise budget estimates. Funding for the construction of the new DPW facility is programmed in the city's Capital Improvement Program over the next four years.

### Here's why investing in a new DPW facility is not just beneficial but necessary for the future of our city:

#### Addressing Aging Infrastructure and Safety Concerns

The existing facility, in use since the '60s without major renovation, is showing signs of age, wear, and tear. Critical safety aspects, such as buildings in states of decay or disrepair, and outdated or lacking fire suppression systems and alarms, are putting personnel and equipment at risk. The absence of proper access points and blind spots further exacerbate safety hazards, potentially leading to serious accidents or injuries.



Above: The entrance to the street sweeper debris storage barn.

Left: The back wall of the salt barn.

#### Enhancing Operational Efficiency

Operational efficiency is key to delivering prompt and reliable services to Portage residents. The current facility's limitations, from inadequate storage space for equipment to



The antiquated traffic monitoring center.



Inadequate storage space.

outdated electrical infrastructure, hinder the ability of DPW and T&U staff to operate at peak efficiency. The need for expansion, upgrades, and constant repairs strains the city budget and disrupts daily operations.

#### Prioritizing Staff Well-Being and Accommodations

The staff who work at the DPW building are the backbone of our city's core services, and their well-being is a top priority. The current facility falls short in providing adequate accommodations for employees, from outdated locker rooms to limited conference space. Lack of privacy, accessibility, and amenities affect morale and hinder productivity and collaboration.



The locker room for Veolia employees.

#### Planning for Future Growth and Sustainability

Investing in a new DPW facility isn't just about addressing current needs but also planning for future growth and sustainability. A modern facility equipped with the latest technology, energy-efficient systems, and sufficient space for expansion will serve the city and Portage residents well for years to come. A new facility will help to integrate sustainable practices, such as energy efficient buildings, electric vehicle charging stations and alternative energy implementation, aligning with our city's commitment to environmental responsibility.

The decision to invest in a new DPW facility isn't just about bricks and mortar; it's an investment in the future of our city and the welfare of Portage residents. By addressing critical safety concerns, enhancing operational efficiency, prioritizing staff well-being, and planning for future growth and sustainability, we're laying the foundation for a stronger, more resilient community.

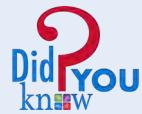
Let's come together to support this vital initiative and ensure that our DPW has the tools and resources they need to continue serving our city with excellence.

# 2024 Summer Property Taxes

The 2024 summer tax bills for the City of Portage will be mailed by July 9, 2024, and payment is due by 5:30 PM on Monday, September 16, 2024. Property owners who do not receive a summer tax bill by July 19, 2024, are encouraged to contact the Portage Treasury Office at 329-4455. Failure to receive a tax bill does not relieve the property owner of the responsibility for payment of the tax and applicable fees. Property tax information is updated daily and is available at [portagemi.gov/154](http://portagemi.gov/154).

## Payment Options

**U.S. Postal Service Mail:** Mail your check or money order to the City of Portage, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue, Portage, MI 49002. Please include payment and the bottom portion of the tax statement. To avoid the 3% late fee, mailed payments must be postmarked by the U.S. Post Office on or before September 16, 2024, and received by the city no later than September 23, 2024. When mailing payments after September 9, 2024, the Treasury Office recommends hand delivering payments to the Post Office to witness the clerk postmark the envelope. In all late payment disputes, the Treasury Office will rely on the postmark applied by the Postmaster (metered postmarks are not accepted). Please be aware that all payments mailed in Portage go through processing in Grand Rapids, which can add several days to delivery times.



Your tax bill is comprised of taxes from eight taxing jurisdictions, including Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Kalamazoo Regional Education Service Agency, State Education Tax, Portage Public Schools (or for some Comstock Public Schools or Vicksburg Public Schools), Kalamazoo County, the Central County Transportation Authority, and the Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority, in addition to the City of Portage.

**City Hall Drop Box:** A 24-hour drop box is located at the south Exit Only door of City Hall at 7900 South Westnedge Avenue.

Look for the "Night Drop Box" sign near the curb. Please include the bottom portion of your tax statement with your check or money order. Payments deposited after 7:30 AM or on weekends may be processed on the next business day.

**Pay by Phone:** Call 1-844-943-3997 and follow the prompts to pay with a credit/debit card (3% - minimum \$2.95 processing fee) or e-check payment (\$2.50 processing fee).

This phone payment service charges an additional \$0.75 processing fee.

**Pay Online:** Visit [portagemi.gov](http://portagemi.gov), and click the "Bill Pay" icon at the bottom of the home page. Select "Sign In to Pay Current Property Tax." If you don't have an account yet, select "Register or Pay Current Taxes," select "Summer Tax," enter your Parcel ID (found on your tax bill), and click "Search Invoices." Select your summer tax bill and click "Register Selected Invoices." Enter the requested information and create a password then click "Complete Registration." Follow the prompts to pay your invoice with a credit/debit card (3% - minimum \$2.95 processing fee) or e-check payment (\$2.50 processing fee). Fees are set and retained by the payment processing vendor (Invoice Cloud).

**Auto Pay:** Visit [portagemi.gov](http://portagemi.gov), click the "Bill Pay" icon. Follow the instructions above to sign-in or create an account. Select "AutoPay," add a credit/debit card (3% - minimum \$2.95 processing fee) or banking information (no processing fee), then set up Auto Pay.

**Online Banking:** Contact your financial institution to learn if an online bill pay service is available. Online banking payments should be scheduled no later than August 31, 2024, to ensure

timely delivery of funds to the City of Portage to avoid late fees. Use your parcel number as your account number.

**In-Person at the Treasury Office:** Payments in the form of cash, check, credit/debit card (3% - minimum \$2.95 processing fee), and money orders are accepted at the Treasury Office in Portage City Hall. 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.

## City Hall Business Hours

- » M-Th: 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM and F: 8 AM - 12 PM
- » Closed Friday, August 30, 2024, employee training
- » Closed Monday, September 2, 2024, for Labor Day.

## Summer Deferment

Summer taxes may be deferred until February 14, 2025, if your 2023 total household income was less than \$40,000, the property is your primary residence, and you meet one of the following requirements:

- » 62 years of age or older
- » Paraplegic, Hemiplegic or Quadriplegic
- » Totally and Permanently Disabled or Blind
- » Eligible Service person, Veteran, Eligible Widow or Widower

Applications for Summer tax deferrals are available at the Treasury Office and must be returned with the bill remittance portion by September 16, 2024.

Questions regarding property tax bills and payment options may be directed to the Treasury Office at 329-4455. All 2024 taxes that remain unpaid on March 1, 2025, will be transferred to the Kalamazoo County Treasurer for collection, where additional fees will be added by the county.

\*All processing fees are set and retained by the payment processing vendor (Invoice Cloud).

## Grants Provide Assistance to Portage Residents in Need

For more than two decades, the City of Portage has awarded annual grants to local human service agencies that provide housing, food, clothing and other critical assistance to Portage citizens in need. As part of these long-standing partnerships, the FY 2024-25 Budget includes grants from the General Fund and the Community Development Block Grant Fund for the following:

Community Partner Agency*	Award	Services to Portage Residents	Website
Catholic Charities	\$11,000	Emergency support, counseling, shelter and outreach for homeless and at-risk youth at the ARK Shelter and Community Services program. Bread for Life food program.	<a href="http://ccdotk.org">ccdotk.org</a>
Community Healing Centers	\$7,400	Youth counseling services and case management	<a href="http://communityhealingcenter.org">communityhealingcenter.org</a>
Community Living Options	\$15,000	Renovations to the Clifford House exterior areas; Learning materials and support for adults with disabilities and seniors.	<a href="http://communitylivingoptions.org">communitylivingoptions.org</a>
Disability Network	\$14,000	Program for persons with disabilities.	<a href="http://dnswm.org">dnswm.org</a>
First Day Shoe Fund	\$5,000	New shoes for elementary students.	<a href="http://firstdayshoefund.org">firstdayshoefund.org</a>
Gryphon Place	\$4,000	2-1-1 Information and Referral, 24-hour hotline.	<a href="http://gryphon.org">gryphon.org</a>
Housing Resources, Inc.	\$25,000	Housing stabilization for vulnerable persons facing a housing emergency.	<a href="http://housingresources.org">housingresources.org</a>
Kalamazoo Literacy Council	\$5,000	Education, job training, and financial literacy for English Language Learners.	<a href="http://kalamazooliteracy.org">kalamazooliteracy.org</a>
Milestone Senior Services	\$18,000	Critical minor home repairs and modifications for low-income older adults and adults with disabilities.	<a href="http://milestoneservices.org">milestoneservices.org</a>
Portage Community Center	\$69,600	Youth development, health care, education and supportive services. Emergency Assistance programs like food pantry and holiday food baskets, free clothing, and financial assistance. Transportation assistance and youth recreation scholarships are also available.	<a href="http://portagecommunitycenter.org">portagecommunitycenter.org</a>
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church	\$17,000	Purchase and distribution of fresh food boxes & necessary household items. Critical housing & utility assistance.	<a href="http://popportage.org">popportage.org</a>
YWCA	\$20,000	Emergency support (24-hour hotline), counseling and shelter for victims of domestic assault and/or sexual assault, Human Trafficking.	<a href="http://ywcakalamazoo.org">ywcakalamazoo.org</a>

\*City Council also approved a special "stop-gap" funding of \$5,000 each to Lending Hands and Twelve Baskets Food Bank.

For more information, please call the Department of Community Development at 329-4477, or visit the links to the partner agencies.



The Office of Kalamazoo County Clerk/Register of Deeds Meredith Place offers a free **Property Fraud Alert** service that allows a property owner to have their name monitored within the Register of Deeds office to track possible fraudulent recordings that affect their property. Sign up by entering your personal and/or business name and be notified when a document is recorded with your name match. For more information and to sign up, visit [propertyfraudalert.com](http://propertyfraudalert.com).



## Calling Portage Artists

Portage is proud to offer a rotating display of artwork from local artists and art patrons for City Hall visitors to enjoy. With each exhibit, information about the creator is displayed and many of the featured works are available for sale. The collections are rotated bi-monthly with openings starting in September 2024. Artists or collectors with a Portage connection interested in displaying their works in the can contact the Office of the City Manager at 329-4400 or by emailing [janssena@portagemi.gov](mailto:janssena@portagemi.gov).



## Friendly Reminder

Portage residents are reminded of the importance of property maintenance activities: lawn maintenance, tree debris removal and properly disposing of unwanted items into the trash receptacle. Please take a moment to properly maintain your property by controlling weeds and keeping lawns mowed on a regular basis.



Visit [reportit.portagemi.gov](http://reportit.portagemi.gov) or contact the Department of Community Development at 329-4477 to report a community quality concern.

# YOUR BACKYARD IS BIGGER THAN YOU THINK

## Yoga 4 Life

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

- » Tuesdays, July 9 - 30, 7 - 8 PM
- » Overlander Bandshell (7810 Shaver Road)
- » \$59 (Registration required)



## Summer Concert Series

*Kait Rose & Co. Presents: Fleetwood Mac Tribute*

Make memories with your friends and family at the Summer Concert Series and satisfy your Fleetwood Mac craving! Enjoy all of your favorite Fleetwood Mac music spanning 45 years, from their biggest anthems to their deepest ballads - all delivered with irresistible energy. Bring a chair or blanket for lawn seating and leave yourself a little room to dance and get your groove on! Admission is FREE to the Summer Concert Series, thanks to our series sponsor, the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo.

- » Thursday, July 11, 7 PM
- » Overlander Bandshell (7810 Shaver Road)
- » FREE (No registration required)

## Youth Tennis Camp

*Presented by YMCA of Greater Kalamazoo*



This camp is for beginner players ages 5 to 14 years. Participants will acquire basic knowledge of all strokes with an emphasis on playing points on a scaled-down court size utilizing developmental equipment. Match situations will be introduced. The camp meets Monday through Thursday mornings from 9 to 11 AM, with Friday as a make-up day in case of inclement weather. Maximum of 50 participants.

- » July 15 - 18, 9 - 11 AM
- » Oakland Drive Park (7650 Oakland Drive)
- » \$75 per participant (Registration required)

## Pet Portraits

Make some paw-some memories! Bring a photo of your pet to the South Westnedge Dog Park for a unique pet portrait. Portraits will be scheduled in 15-minute increments. A schedule of appointments between 1 and 4 PM will be sent to registered participants before the program date.

# YOU HAVE MORE FRIENDS THAN YOU KNOW

## Centenarian Brunch - 100 Trips Around the Sun

*A Centennial Celebration of Timeless Journeys*

We pay tribute to those celebrating their 100th year. Centenarians and their families are invited to this celebration. Whether you are turning 100 this year or have already begun your second century, we want to honor you. Share your life's journey, connect with other centenarians, make new friends, and create lasting memories.

- » Thursday, August 15 - 11 AM to 1 PM
- » FREE (Registration required)



## Total Fit Fusion- NEW!

*Instructor Garrett McLaughlin, ATC, CSC*

We blend the best of mobility, strength, agility, and cardiovascular training through a challenging yet unconventional workout to take your health and everyday performance to the next level. Unleash your inner athlete with mobility and locomotion drills, agility, hand-eye coordination, and core strengthening. All levels of fitness are welcome, but you must be able to move up and down onto the mat unassisted.

- » Thursdays, July 11 - August 29, 12:30 - 1:30 PM
- » \$35 Members | \$45 Non-Members (Registration required)

## Portage Parks & Recreation Events, Camps & Classes

### 1,000 Acres. 20 Parks. One City.

To find out more and register online, visit [mypad.portagemi.gov](http://mypad.portagemi.gov) and click the REGISTER NOW! button.

**REGISTER NOW!**

Portrait designs will be stylized in a caricature or cartoon format from the photo that you provide. Space is limited. Wednesday, July 17, 15-minute appointments from 1 - 4 PM

- » South Westnedge Dog Park (9010 South Westnedge Avenue)
- » \$20 per portrait (Registration required)

## Creative Corners

These art programs are tailored to students with special needs. Enjoy following the lead artist while adding your artistic flare. Each guided, one-hour session will explore a different theme or artistic medium to develop participants' artistic expression and voice. Space is limited. Please wear clothing that can get messy, as students will be exploring with differing mediums. The program fee covers art supplies and tools.

### Nature Journaling

- » Thursday, July 18, 6 - 7 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$5 per participant, per session (Registration required)

### Tie Dye

- » Thursday, August 1, 6 - 7 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » FREE (No registration required)

## Beach Bonfire

Take a break from your hectic schedule to relax and enjoy the warm summer night air, live music, and a bonfire at Ramona Park Beach. Gather with friends and family for this summer tradition under the stars. S'more making supplies will be provided.

- » Saturday, July 20, 8 PM
- » Ramona Park Beach (8600 South Sprinkle Road)
- » FREE (No registration required)

## Owl Spotlight Workshop

Dive into the bizarre world of owls to learn about their history and lore. Dissect owl pellets and discover why owls are so unique. This class explores the life cycle of birds and features a feather sensory station and STEM-focused bird habitat game. Space is limited to a maximum of 15 participants. No live owls will be present at this program.

- » Tuesday, July 23, 10 AM - 12 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$10 per participant (Registration required)

## Competitive Pickleball League

This is a six-week competitive pickleball league at Ramona Park. Games will be played to 11 or 15 points. Points matter and your score will move you up or down a court the following week. Maximum of 52 participants. Adults 18+.

- » Tuesdays, July 23 - August 27, 6 - 7:30 PM
- » Ramona Park (8600 South Sprinkle Road)
- » \$35 (Registration required by July 12)

## Friday at the Flats

Join us on the fourth Friday of every month, May through August, for dinner and experience a range of food trucks and live, local musicians. Seating is limited, but lawn space is plentiful, so bring a blanket or chair. Connect with your family and friends at Celery Flats through food, live music, and fun.

- » Friday, July 26, 4:30 - 8:30 PM
- » Celery Flats Pavilion (7335 Garden Lane)
- » FREE (No registration required)



## Movies in the Park: The Incredibles



Wind down with your family in the park, under the stars, for this FREE family entertainment event at the Celery Flats Historical Area. The movie will start at dusk. Bring a blanket or chair for lawn seating. Don't forget to stop by the Friday at the Flats event before the movie (4:30 to 8:30 PM) for a bite to eat from local food trucks or bring your own snacks for the movie.

- » Friday, July 26, Dusk (approximately 9 PM, varies on sunset)
- » Celery Flats Historical Area (7335 Garden Lane)
- » FREE (No registration required)

## Portage Cornhole League

It's time to play cornhole! Bring a friend, and make new friends in this fun, low impact cornhole league. Over eight weeks, players rotate partners to keep games fresh and exciting. Adults 18+. Maximum of 20 participants.

- » Wednesdays, August 7 - September 25, 6 - 8 PM
- » Schrier Park (850 West Osterhout Avenue)
- » \$40 per participant (Registration required by August 2)



## The Sweet Treats of Summer

July is here, and that means cherries, blueberries, peaches and raspberries are plentiful at the Portage Farmers Market! It's also time for broccoli, cabbage, green tomatoes. July is the time to fire up the grill and delight your guests with the finest locally produced meats and cheeses around. The Portage Farmers Market is *Fresh, Rain or Shine* every Sunday from 9 AM to 1 PM through October 13, at City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue). Follow us on Facebook @PortageMarketMI or Instagram @PortageMarket, or visit [farmersmarket.portagemi.gov](http://farmersmarket.portagemi.gov).

## Portage Zhang Senior Center Events, Activities & Classes

### Explore More. Have Fun. Live Well.

Find us at 203 East Centre Avenue | [mypad.portagemi.gov](http://mypad.portagemi.gov) | To find out more or to register, 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.

## Special Date Night – Watercolor Painting

Grab your special someone and join us for this special date night event. Each couple (married, dating, or friends) will complete one canvas to create a beautiful mirror image watercolor painting. The fee includes supplies for two people, one wine ticket per person, and chocolate-covered strawberries. Don't miss out on this one-time event with your special someone!

- » Tuesday, July 23, 5 - 7 PM
- » \$40 Members | \$45 Non-Members (Registration required)

## Harmonia – A Sanctuary for Sojourner Truth

Sojourner Truth was among the most prominent abolitionists and women's activists in the 1800s. She spent ten years in the former town of Harmonia, near Battle Creek. Preservationists Kevin & Amy Ailes were able to locate the site of the former town as well as her home. Learn what was found as well as the technology used at this interesting presentation on local history.



- » Tuesday, July 9, 6 - 7 PM
- » \$3 Members / \$5 Non-Members (Registration required)

## Portage Public Safety Showcase

Have you ever been curious about what really goes on behind the scenes during law enforcement calls, fire calls, or medical emergencies?

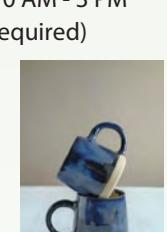


Well, get ready to dive into the action with our exciting two-day class, held in partnership with the Portage Public Safety Department! We'll provide lunch, snacks, and water to keep you fueled up and ready to go. Registrants must commit to attending both days. Space is limited.

- » Wednesday, July 10 and Thursday, July 11, 10 AM - 3 PM
- » Free and Open to the Public (Registration required)

## Clay Slab Mugs / Cups

Join ceramist Kim Barrett, as you create and embellish a ceramic slab mug/cup in about two hours of work. You'll then choose from a select group of glazes to be completed by the instructor. After a week of drying time, our instructor will fire and glaze your mug/cup, which you can pick up at a later date. No previous knowledge is necessary.



- » Thursday, July 25, 3 - 5 PM OR Tuesday, August 1, 1 - 3 PM
- » \$35 Members | \$40 Non-Members (Registration required)

# PORTAGER

## State Primary Election: August 6

The Office of the City Clerk is preparing for the State Primary Election to be held on August 6, 2024. Registered voters can select a candidate to be a political party's candidate for elected office to run in the General Election in November. Visit the Michigan Voter Information Center at [mi.gov/vote](http://mi.gov/vote) to view a sample ballot; select "What's on the Ballot?"

### Primary Election - Special Ballot Instructions

For this election, you may vote in one party section only. You cannot "split your ticket." If you vote in more than one party section, your ballot will be rejected. If you make a mistake, you can spoil and return your ballot by completing a form in person at the Portage Office of the City Clerk and obtain a new ballot.

### Register to Vote

The last day to register by mail or online for the August election is Monday, July 22, 2024. After that, you must register in person at the Office of the City Clerk. Visit [mi.gov/vote](http://mi.gov/vote); select "Am I registered?"

### Three Options for Voting

#### 1. Early In-Person Voting

Michigan voters have nine consecutive days of early voting, from Saturday, July 27 through Sunday, August 3. Four early voting sites throughout Kalamazoo County can accommodate voters from any participating jurisdiction, including Portage. Each site will be open 9 AM to 5 PM daily.



#### Four Early Voting Sites in Kalamazoo County

- » **WMU's Fetzer Center** – 2251 Business Court, Kalamazoo
- » **Douglass Community Center** – 1000 West Paterson Street, Kalamazoo
- » **Kalamazoo County Expo Center** – 2900 Lake Street, Kalamazoo
- » **Portage Parks & Recreation** – 320 Library Lane, Portage

For more information about Early Voting in Michigan, please visit [mi.gov/vote](http://mi.gov/vote); select "How Do I Vote Early?"

#### 2. Absentee Voting

Apply for an Absentee Voter (AV) ballot at [mi.gov/vote](http://mi.gov/vote); select "How do I apply for an absentee ballot?" You may also visit the Office of the City Clerk during normal business hours, and on Saturday, August 3 from 8 AM to 4 PM.

#### AV ballots must be returned by 8 PM on Election Day:

- » Turn in your AV ballot during an early voting site (see above) from 9 AM to 5 PM between July 27 and August 3.
- » Hand-deliver your AV ballot to the Office of the City Clerk during normal business hours.
- » Use the drop box at City Hall, Fire Station No. 1, 2 or 3.
- » Return your AV ballots via mail in the postage-paid return envelope.

#### Permanent Absentee Ballot List

Do you:

- » Prefer to vote absentee and receive your ballot in the mail?
- » Have a single permanent address?
- » NOT use the USPS mail forwarding or mail holding services?
- » Wish to eliminate the need to submit an application for every election?

If so, consider signing up for the Permanent Mail Ballot List. You will AUTOMATICALLY receive your ballot in the mail ahead of EVERY election.

#### 3. Vote In-Person at Your Precinct

Polls are open from 7 AM - 8 PM on election day. The City of Portage is split into 19 precincts, each with its own polling location. Voters are assigned a voting precinct when you register to vote, which can be found on your voter identification card. You can also visit [mi.gov/vote](http://mi.gov/vote); select "Where is my polling place?"

## First Time Voter Sticker Contest



The Office of the City Clerk, along with the Youth Advisory Committee, will conduct the "First Time Voter" sticker contest. The winning sticker design will be available for first time voters during the November 2024 Presidential Election.

### Contest Rules

- » Open to Portage K - 12 students.
- » Design must be non-partisan, non-political, and must not advocate for a candidate or issue.
- » Design must contain the phrases "First Time Voter" and "#PortageVotes".
- » Artwork must be original (not AI generated) and will become the property of the City of Portage.

Entries will be accepted August 1 - 31, 2024 and will be judged by the Youth Advisory Committee on September 9, 2024. Designs can be created using your preferred method (digital, paint, crayon, mixed media, etc.) Please submit your entry in .jpg format at the highest possible resolution.

Visit [portagemi.gov/158](http://portagemi.gov/158) for more information or to enter.



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## City Closing Notices

Non-emergency city offices will be closed on the following date:

### Independence Day

- » Thursday, July 4

### Regular Business Hours

- » Monday - Thursday, 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM
- » Friday: 8 AM - 12 PM

## 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.



Mayor Patricia M. Randall  
(269) 329-4400  
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Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson  
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Nicole Miller  
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Terry R. Urban  
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## 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](http://reportit.portagemi.gov) or by calling Complaint Resolution at 329-4404.



Chris Burns  
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Vic Ledbetter  
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Jihan Ain Young  
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Patrick McGinnis, City Manager  
(269) 329-4400  
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## 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](http://portagemi.gov/205).

### JULY 2024

8	7:00 PM	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
9	6:00 PM	City Council Meeting
18	7:00 PM	Planning Commission Meeting
23	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 the City Centre area.

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