

# PORTAGER

*A Natural Place to Move*



## A Message from Mayor Patricia M. Randall

It always gets worse before it gets better. Cleaning. Organizing. Road Construction.

If a Michigan summer is synonymous with biking, swimming, cookouts, and really late sunsets, it is also identified with orange cones, Rathco barricades, and traffic backups. Love it or hate it, we're in this together.

Street maintenance projects require a matter of weeks and will be supervised by our Department of Public Works. The Council has budgeted \$1.25 million for the 2025 Mill & Fill and Chip Seal programs this year. Approximately nine miles of local streets will be resurfaced during the school system's summer calendar: Mid-June through mid-August. While

disruptive to those who live along them, the inconvenience is short-lived.

Street reconstruction is another story and falls under the oversight of our Department of Transportation & Utilities. The Council has budgeted \$1.75 million for local and \$6.13 million for major street reconstruction this year. The focus this season is West Milham Avenue from Oakland Drive to 12th Street, to include a new traffic signal on Monticello Avenue. As part of our all-inclusive "complete street" policy, we're rebuilding the entire road, aligning sidewalks with ADA standards, and installing or replacing utilities and traffic signals. If water, sewer, and storm pipes are over 75 years old, smaller than the 8-inch diameter we use today, or have experienced a series of breaks over the past decade, they will be replaced. Obviously, there is no point in replacing the actual road if what lies beneath it is below current standards.

Supporting our business corridors has become a City Council priority after the lengthy Portage Road and I-94 multi-year MDOT project. Businesses isolated by road construction suffer, as do those downstream. The city will be taking a more proactive approach using additional signage, portable traffic signals, and some night and weekend work to help mitigate disruption to affected businesses. When it comes to bidding, the night and weekend work is almost double the cost and seems to attract only larger firms with a greater workforce.

I thank you in advance as we learn to reroute travel to our destinations. Please continue to support all of our local businesses, including those within construction zones.

Embrace the magic of spring!

— Patricia M. Randall

## A Busy Construction Season Ahead

Local governments play a crucial role in delivering essential city services, including maintaining infrastructure such as roads and municipal utilities. The city oversees 73 miles of major streets, 151 miles of local streets, 52 traffic signals, and 58 miles of on-street bike lanes. Additionally, it manages 265 miles of water mains, 242 miles of sanitary sewer, and 142 miles of storm sewer.

With warmer weather on the horizon, the departments of Transportation & Utilities and Public Works are preparing for a busy season of road and utility improvements. Several major street and utility reconstruction projects are scheduled for the summer.

### #1 West Milham Avenue 12th Street to Oakland

The West Milham Avenue Reconstruction Project includes resurfacing the existing roadway from South 12th Street to Oakland Drive, replacing the traffic signals at the West Milham Avenue and Monticello Avenue/Devon Street intersections to meet Americans with Disability Act (ADA), extending city traffic signal fiber network from Angling Road to Oakland Drive, and restoration. **Construction is scheduled to begin June 9, 2025.**

### #2 South Westnedge Avenue Osterhout to South Shore

The South Westnedge Avenue Reconstruction Project includes reconstructing the existing roadway from Osterhout Avenue to South Shore Drive, rehabilitating the water main from Oakview Drive to South Shore Drive, installing sanitary sewer service leads, and new sidewalk from Bacon Avenue to Equestrian Drive. **Construction is scheduled to begin April 28, 2025.**

### #3 Angling Road Squire Heath to Romence

The Angling Road Microsurfacing project includes applying a layer of asphalt emulsion blended with finely crushed stone over the existing asphalt from Squire Heath Lane to Romence Road. Microsurfacing is a protective seal coat that extends the life of the pavement. **Construction is scheduled for July 2025. Microsurfacing typically takes less than one week to complete and traffic disruptions will be minimal.**

### #4 2025 Local Street Reconstruction

*Amberly, Brigham, Davcliff, Daventry, Shoreham, Towhee, Welbury, and Winkfield, and portions of Radcliffe, Robinswood, and Rothbury*

This project includes storm drainage improvements, concrete curb at intersections, barrier-free access at all sidewalk crossings including tactile warning surfaces, pavement milling and asphalt resurfacing. New sidewalks will be installed on portions of Amberly Street, Brigham Street, Davcliff Avenue, Rothbury Street and Winfield Avenue to fill in gaps of existing sidewalk. **The expected construction period is June through September.**

to bond the new asphalt to the old surface. Driving on the tac coat should be avoided as this material may attach to tires and vehicle undercarriages, and may be carried onto your driveway or garage floor.

### #6 2025 Chip Seal Program

*Osterhout, Westnedge to Shaver; Oakland, Centre to Milham; Centre, Lovers Lane to Portage; and Mandigo, Andrews to Autumnview*

This program involves crack sealing the street, removing the street's edge berm to expose the entire surface of the road, applying chip seal material to the street, sealing the street with an emulsion fog spray, and sweeping any loose stones. **Chip Sealing typically takes less than one week to complete and traffic disruptions will be minimal.**

### Traffic Signals

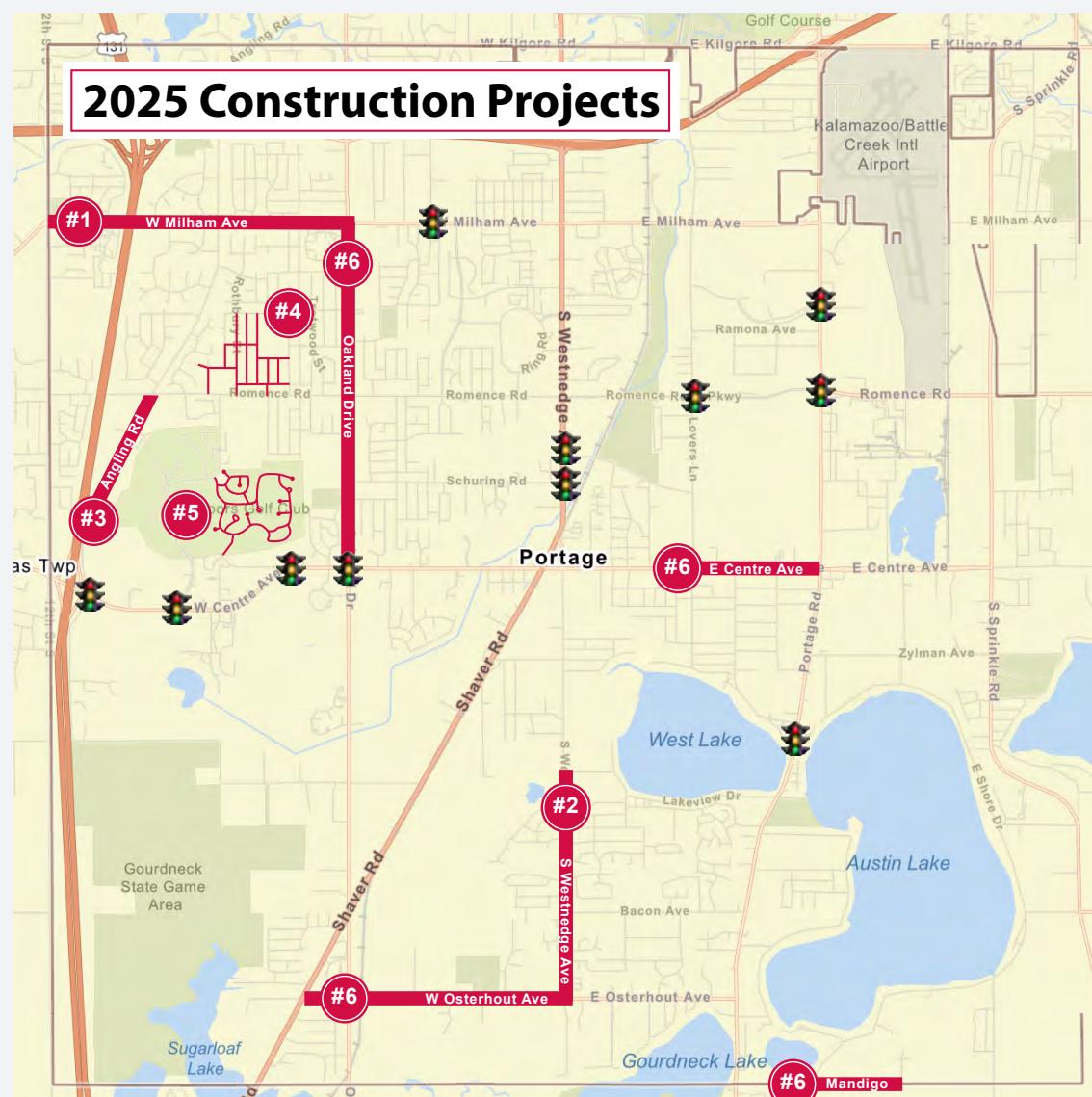
The City of Portage Capital Improvement Program has funding for planned improvements in 2025 of a new traffic signal at the Forest Drive/Portage Road intersection and replacement of the traffic signal at the Angling Road/West Centre Avenue intersection. In addition to this work, traffic signal mast arms and poles will be replaced at eight intersections across the city (see map) due to structural weakening as a result of the May 2024 tornado.

We understand that construction projects can be inconvenient for drivers and pedestrians. The City of Portage is committed to completing projects on schedule while minimizing disruptions for residents, businesses, and motorists.

As with any work near public roadways, drivers are urged to stay alert in construction zones. Please drive cautiously around workers and remember to **Give 'em a Break.**

For more information, contact the Department of Transportation & Utilities at 329-4422 or the Department of Public Works at 329-4444. You can also visit [portagemi.gov/295](http://portagemi.gov/295) for the latest project updates.

Stay informed about construction projects by signing up for the city's Notify Me system. Subscribe to Road Construction Updates at [portagemi.gov/list.aspx](http://portagemi.gov/list.aspx) to receive real-time alerts straight to your inbox.



### #5 2025 Mill & Fill Program

*Heather Ridge, Innisbrook, Kilbirnie, Glenalmond, MacArthur, Burnock, Jessica, Dunross, Muirfield, Carnoustie, St. George, St. Anthony, Turnberry, Bennington, Troon, Wadsworth, and Hillsmoor*

Mill and fill involves removing badly worn road areas and overlaying the surface with 1.5 inches of new asphalt. A "tac coat" (oily substance) is sprayed on the street before paving

# Portage Road 360 Open House #3

## Help Shape the Portage Road Corridor

The Portage Road 360 planning process continues, and your input is more important than ever! Residents, business owners, and community members are invited to attend Portage Road 360 Open House #3 on Wednesday, April 16, from 5:30 to 7 PM at the Portage Zhang Senior Center (203 East Centre Avenue).



Portage Road 360 is a community-driven initiative focused on transforming the Portage Road corridor from East Osterhout Avenue to East Centre Avenue into a safer, more vibrant, and walkable space. This effort builds upon the 2021 Lake Center District and Corridor Plan, which introduced ideas like a new traffic signal at Forest Drive and mixed-use zoning. Now, the city is refining the vision with further community input.

» How can Portage Road become a destination, not just a pass-through?

» What do you like about the Lake Center corridor today?

» What changes would you like to see?

This open house offers a **Community Report Out**, where attendees will learn about key takeaways from previous feedback and participate in interactive stations designed to gather ideas on how to enhance the corridor.

Don't miss this opportunity to help shape the future of Portage Road! Your feedback will play a vital role in creating a corridor that meets the needs of the community.

## Residential Building Permits

### Protect Your Home and Investment

Your home is one of your most valuable investments, and proper maintenance and management are essential. To help ensure safety, quality, and compliance with state regulations, the City of Portage administers and enforces the State of Michigan Construction Codes. These codes protect the health, safety, and welfare of residents, and when construction work is performed – whether by you or a contractor – permits may be required.

Building, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing permits, along with inspections and approvals, help safeguard your property value and are required by law. Unpermitted work can lead to costly issues, especially if you sell your home in the future.

If you're hiring a contractor for projects such as building an addition, finishing a basement, installing a deck, or replacing a furnace or water heater, permits and inspections are required. Choosing a reputable contractor is crucial.

Consider the following tips:

#### » **Beware of high-pressure sales tactics.**

Avoid contractors who push you into a "limited-time" deal. Take time to plan and compare options.

» **Get multiple quotes.** Prices vary based on materials, labor, and demand. Ensure you're comparing similar project



scopes and costs.

» **Verify licensing and insurance.** Michigan law requires contractors to be licensed and insured. Avoid those who ask you to pull the permit—they may be unlicensed or unqualified.

» **Get everything in writing.** A detailed contract should include the project scope, timeline, costs, payment schedule, and contractor contact information. Work should not begin until all agreements are signed and necessary permits are obtained.

» **Check references.** Ask for and verify recent references. A reputable contractor should have no issue providing them.

» **Avoid paying in full upfront.** Payments should align with project milestones. Final payment should only be made after completion and city inspections.

» **Ensure proper permits and inspections.** Ask for a copy of the permit for your records and confirm all required inspections, including the final inspection, are completed.

» **Communicate regularly.** Keep an open line of communication with your contractor. Address concerns early to prevent costly changes later.

By following these guidelines, you can protect your investment and ensure a smooth construction process. For questions or more information, contact the Department of Community Development at (269) 329-4466.

## Free Trees Available to Portage Residents – Reserve Yours Today!

The City of Portage, in partnership with WK Kellogg Co, ReLeaf Michigan, and the Arbor Day Foundation, is offering free trees to residents as part of the ongoing recovery efforts following the May 7, 2024, tornado. The **Free Tree Giveaway** will take place on Saturday, April 19, from 10 AM to 1 PM at Ramona Park (8600 South Sprinkle Road).

Portage residents can reserve one of 350 free trees (**limit one per household**) by filling out the reservation form by **Friday, April 11, 2025**. Several varieties of native Michigan trees will be available, each weighing between 12 to 20 pounds, standing 3 to 4 feet tall, and coming in a five-gallon pot with planting instructions.

## A Step Toward Recovery

The May tornado caused widespread damage across Portage, downing thousands of trees and impacting the city's natural landscape. The tree giveaway is part of a broader effort to help reestablish the city's tree canopy and support long-term environmental sustainability.

"These trees will help restore some of what was lost and strengthen our community for years to come," said Portage City Manager Pat McGinnis.

*A Natural Place to Move*

## City Advances Unified Development Ordinance Update

The City of Portage is undertaking a comprehensive update to consolidate and streamline zoning, subdivision, and land use regulations into a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Leading the project is Kendig Keast Collaborative (KKC), a nationally recognized zoning and planning firm. This effort marks the first known comprehensive overhaul of Portage's zoning code since the city's incorporation in 1963. This effort, which began in January, has included three days of stakeholder and resident focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and presentations to the City Council and Planning Commission.



The City Administration and Kendig Keast Collaborative met with city stakeholders in January.

### Upcoming Critique Presentation

On April 16 and 17, the zoning experts from KKC will be back in Portage to present their critique of existing ordinances. The findings will be shared with the project's Technical Committee and the public, with a formal presentation at the Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, April 17 at 7 PM in the City Hall Council Chambers (7900 South Westnedge Avenue).

A key objective of this project is to align the city's zoning code with the recently adopted Forward Together 2045

Master Plan ([www.portagemi.gov/776](http://portagemi.gov/776)). A primary focus is addressing housing shortages in the City of Portage by implementing new regulations that promote housing development, as outlined in the Master Plan adopted in August. This includes establishing guidelines to support mixed-use developments that incorporate housing in designated commercial areas, such as the City Centre and Crossroads Mall Area redevelopment areas.

### Sources Drawn for the Critique

KKC is drawing from multiple sources to develop its critique, including feedback from January's outreach meetings, policy goals from the Master Plan, and insights from Community Development staff who manage the city's ordinances daily. The review also incorporates best practices and tools recommended by the State of Michigan for local government zoning and land use regulation.

### What's Next?

Following the presentation and public feedback, KKC will begin drafting new regulations and revising existing standards related to housing development. These proposed changes will be presented to the Planning Commission and City Council for review and potential adoption later this year. Other sections of the zoning code will be rewritten after the housing-related updates, with final adoption expected in May 2026. Additional public presentations will be scheduled at key milestones to ensure ongoing community engagement throughout the process.

Questions? Call the Department of Community Development at 329-4477.

## Home Repair Funding

Your home is your castle – an essential part of the American Dream. Planning to pay for inevitable home repairs is a big part of being a homeowner, and we sometimes overlook or underestimate our home's needs. Making repairs as soon as possible will help prevent them from adding up and becoming a bigger problem. The City of Portage Department of Community Development offers forgivable loans for "necessary" home repairs.



Loans are available to eligible homeowners on a first-come, first-served basis, while funding is available. Improvement examples include replacing your roof or furnace, repairing leaking pipes or the foundation, electrical updates, city water and sewer hook-ups, accessibility ramps, and energy efficiency improvements.



Call us at 324-9280 to learn more!

**FREE TREES TO THE FIRST 350 PORTAGE HOUSEHOLDS TO SIGN UP**

**THANKS TO:**

**WK Kellogg Co**

**ReLeaf Michigan**

**Arbor Day Foundation**

"We are grateful to WK Kellogg Co, ReLeaf Michigan, and the Arbor Day Foundation for making this possible."

### Event Highlights

**Tree Pickup:** Reserved trees will be available for drive-through pickup near the Ramona Park Beach House.

**Planting Demonstrations:** ReLeaf Michigan's tree experts will provide hands-on demonstrations at 10:30 AM, 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM to help residents plant and care for their trees.

**Special Guests:** Don't miss a chance to take a photo with Tony the Tiger and Portage's own Mr. Crispy!

### How to Reserve Your Tree

Residents must reserve their tree in advance, as quantities and species are limited. To secure your tree, scan the QR code to the right or visit [www.releafmichigan.org/Portage](http://releafmichigan.org/Portage) to complete the reservation form. Once the tree reservation form is complete, a tree will be reserved for you regardless of your pickup time.

Join us in bringing new life to Portage – one tree at a time!



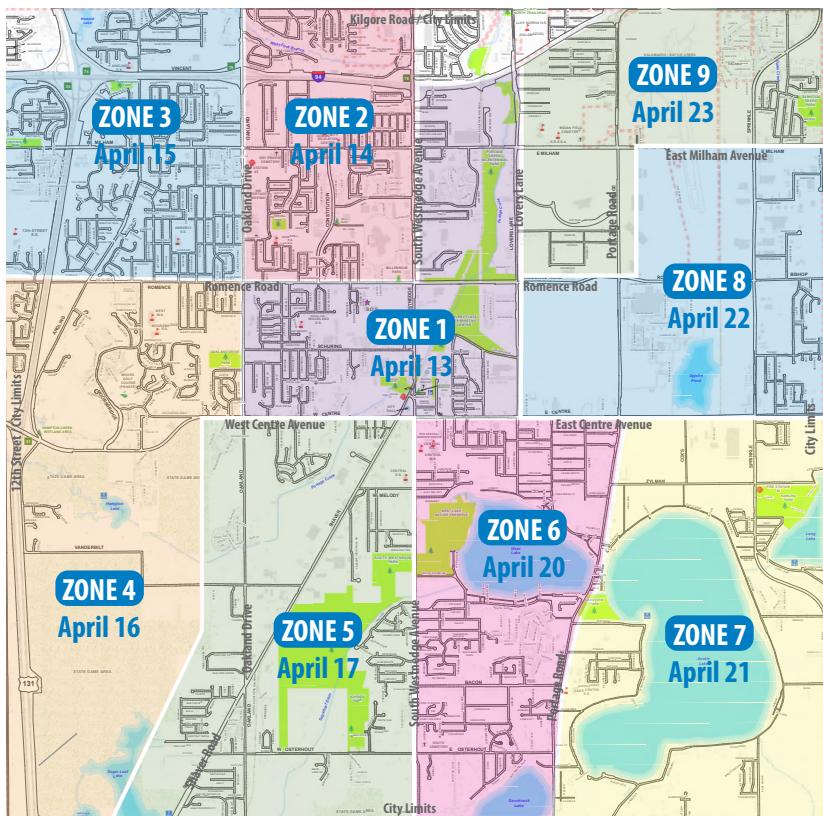
# Fire Hydrant Flushing Begins April 13

## What You Need to Know

The city's utility contractor, Veolia, will conduct fire hydrant flushing beginning the evening of Sunday, April 13 through April 23. The map below indicates dates hydrant flushing will take place in each area of the city. Most hydrants will be flushed between 11 PM on the date indicated and 7:30 AM the following morning to avoid high-traffic hours. This is a tentative schedule; it may be necessary for this work to be performed outside an assigned day or area to provide the best possible results.

Hydrant flushing helps improve water quality by removing sediment that accumulates in the water system and provides the opportunity to test proper operation of the fire hydrants and the water pumping system. Some water discoloration will occur during the flushing process. Residents are urged to check for discoloration prior to using water for laundry or cleaning during this period. Even though water may be somewhat discolored, it is safe to drink.

During the flushing process, large quantities of water are discharged from the hydrants. Motorists should watch for vehicles and workers engaged in this work and reduce speeds accordingly. Please call the City of Portage Water Department (Veolia) at 324-9235 with any questions or concerns.



## Brush & Bagged Leaf Collection Runs May 5 - 30



Brush and bagged leaves, including ornamental grasses, will be collected in May as part of the Curbside Brush Collection program. The map to the right indicates the week that materials will be collected. All materials should be at the curb no later than 7 AM prior to your designated Monday. Residents are reminded that **materials may not be collected on Monday; however, each zone will be cleared of materials by the end of the designated week**. Visit [portagemi.gov/280](http://portagemi.gov/280) for complete program details.

### How Should I Prepare My Brush/Leaves?

- » Branches should be 4 to 6 feet in length
- » Branches must be less than 3 inches in diameter
- » Stack in neat piles at curbside
- » Do not cut up Christmas trees
- » Place leaves/ornamental grasses in biodegradable paper bags

### What Will NOT Be Collected?

- » Brush and branches generated from removal of a tree by a professional service
- » Grass clippings, flowers, weeds, garden materials
- » Firewood
- » Lumber, timbers, building materials, railroad ties, landscape materials
- » Roots or tree stumps
- » Loose leaves OR leaves bagged in plastic bags

## Spring Cemetery Maintenance Reminder

As Department of Public Works staff prepare for cemetery mowing and maintenance, please keep these grave decoration guidelines in mind:

- » Property owners are responsible for the regular care and upkeep of grave decorations.
- » Annual flowers must be planted within 12 inches of the memorial and must not extend beyond lot boundaries when in full bloom. Fresh flowers are permitted only in flush marker sections (for up to three days) from April through September.
- » Artificial flowers may be placed in upright marker sections following the same guidelines as regular flowers and must be removed at the end of the growing season. Artificial decorations are allowed in all cemetery sections from October through March. However, they are not permitted in flush

marker sections from April through September. Perennial flowers may be planted in urns or vases placed on either side or directly behind upright grave markers, as long as they remain within plot boundaries.

### Spring Cleanup Requirements

By April 1 of each year, please remove:

- » Winter and Christmas wreath decorations
- » Artificial flowers in poor condition. (City staff will begin removing deteriorated artificial flowers and flower pots starting May 1. These items may not be returned to the property owner.)

**Important Reminder:** Shrubs and trees are not permitted on cemetery lots. The Department of Public Works reserves the right to remove any unauthorized plantings as necessary.

Your cooperation is appreciated. For more information, please contact the Department of Public Works at 329-4444.

## Spring Cleanup Program

The City of Portage Spring Cleanup Program runs through May 1, 2025, giving residents the opportunity to dispose of household clutter and unwanted items by placing them at the curb for pickup. Collection occurs only once in each neighborhood zone, so be sure to have items at the curb by 7 AM on your scheduled pickup date. Items may be placed curbside up to three days before the collection date.

### Key Reminders:

- » The city is not responsible for items removed by private parties.
- » All accepted items placed at the curb will be collected – keep children's toys away from this area.
- » Separate metal from other trash at the curb.

### Accepted Items

- » Furniture & household items (must be bundled,

bagged, or boxed in parcels under 50 lbs)

- » Mattresses & bed springs
- » Metal items (pile separately)
- » Appliances (washers, dryers, stoves, etc.)
- » Toilets
- » Lawn & yard equipment (must be drained of fuel/oil)
- » Carpet (rolled in lengths under 6 feet and 50 lbs)

### Not Accepted

- » Tires, concrete, bricks, or rocks
- » Yard waste, brush, or leaves
- » Construction materials
- » Hazardous waste, paint, oil, or chemicals

For disposal of hazardous materials, contact the Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste Program at 373-5211 or visit [kalcounty.com/hhw](http://kalcounty.com/hhw).

Find your pickup date at [portagemi.gov/283](http://portagemi.gov/283).



## City Centre Flower Planting Volunteer Opportunities

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



### Flower Planting Days

Many volunteers are needed to plant annual flowers and spread mulch in flower beds in the City Centre and at the Portage Creek Bicentennial Park Trail trail head. Planting will

take place from 9 AM to 12 PM on Tuesday, May 13 through Thursday, May 15, and Saturday, May 17. Earlier shifts are available on these dates, as well as other dates to help lay out the designs and prepare the beds for planting. Volunteers will plant triple the amount of annual flowers compared to last year. Bring your favorite gardening tools if you have them. Extra trowels, gloves, and kneeling pads will be available.

For planning purposes, registration is encouraged. Sign up at [kalamazooinbloom.org/events](http://kalamazooinbloom.org/events) or scan the QR code. Parking details meeting locations can be found on the sign-up link.

Check-in and on-site registration for each planting day will begin at 9 AM. Kalamazoo in Bloom will provide water and snacks.

### SCAN TO SIGN UP FOR FLOWER PLANTING DAYS



### Adopt-a-Bed

Adopt-a-bed volunteers are needed to "adopt a bed" in the Portage City Centre area. Adopters care for an assigned flower bed each week throughout the growing season, weeding and deadheading as necessary. Watering is done by Kalamazoo in Bloom gardeners. Adopter orientation will be held in late May. Flower bed adopters receive recognition with their name displayed on a flower bed sign all summer long. Sign up at [kalamazooinbloom.org/events](http://kalamazooinbloom.org/events) or scan the QR code.

To learn more about these two volunteer opportunities, email [director@kalamazooinbloom.org](mailto:director@kalamazooinbloom.org) or call 548-6232.

### SCAN TO SIGN UP FOR ADOPT-A-BED



## Portage Youth Advisory Committee Seeks Members for 2025-26 School Year

The City of Portage Youth Advisory Commission (YAC) was founded in 2008 to give a voice to the youth of Portage. The YAC is tasked with providing input to the City Council and City Administration regarding programs, services, projects, and issues affecting youth in the City of Portage. The YAC offers students the chance to be decision-makers for youth issues, needs, and opportunities; build leadership skills; earn community service hours; learn about local government; learn about local philanthropy; and give back to the community.

The YAC is open to students ages 13 to 18 in the Portage area and meets once a month during the school year. Committee officer positions include Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary, and members serve on several of the city's other Advisory Boards & Commissions. Yearly projects and events include the Winter Snow Party, Recycled Art Contest, Green-A-Thon, and the annual free school supply event sponsored by the Portage Department of Public Safety (see articles to the right).

Interviews for the YAC are held each May before the City Council. The application deadline is Friday, May 2. Visit [portagemi.gov/440](http://portagemi.gov/440) to learn more or call the Office of the City Clerk with any questions at 329-4511.



## Recycled Art Contest

### Use Recycled Materials to Create Art!

The Portage Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) will host the 3rd annual Recycled Art Contest to celebrate Earth Day. The contest is open to any Portage resident Kindergarten to adult. Entries are due by April 18, 2025, at noon. Winning entries will be displayed at City Hall from April 28 to May 2.



All projects must be original work made from clean, recycled materials and be no larger than 3'x3' in size. You may use colored pencils, charcoal, crayons, paint, cardboard, glue, wire, tape, string, or other adhesives to help the recycled material maintain the desired appearance.

The artwork will be judged, and winners selected by YAC members. Winners will be notified by email. More details and how to enter can be found by visiting [portagemi.gov/878](http://portagemi.gov/878).

## 17th Annual Green-A-Thon

### Our Power, Our Planet Earth Day Celebration

Join the Portage Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) for the 17th Annual Green-A-Thon, a celebration of Earth Day and sustainability! This year's event takes place during the opening day of the Portage Farmers Market on Sunday, May 4, at Portage City Hall.

Stop by the YAC booth to pick up a free tree seedling in honor of Arbor Day, learn about composting and recycling, and explore ways to make a difference in your community. Enjoy interactive demonstrations, fun activities for kids, and exciting giveaways – all designed to promote environmental awareness and action.

- » Sunday, May 4, 2025, 9 AM - 1 PM
- » Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue)
- » FREE (No registration required)

Don't miss this opportunity to celebrate Earth Day and support sustainability with the YAC!



## Respecting Differences

Join the City of Portage at the 26th Annual Respecting Differences event, featuring the theme "Embracing Neurodiversity in the Workplace." This year's event will include engaging presentations by Jason Reid and Kristin Light.

Sign language interpreting services will be provided, and free parking will be available for attendees in the Miller parking ramp and in parking lots 33, 34, and 35 near the auditorium.

This event is sponsored by the City of Portage in partnership with Western Michigan University, the City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo County, Integrated Services of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo College, and Kalamazoo Valley Community College. Don't miss this opportunity to learn and engage – we hope to see you there!

- » Wednesday, April 9, 2025.
- » Two sessions are available: 9 AM and 1:30 PM
- » Miller Auditorium, 1341 Theater Drive, Kalamazoo
- » FREE (No ticket required)

## About the Speakers



**Jason Reid** is an Invisible Disability Expert who has successfully eliminated disability barriers in the workplace, boosting productivity. He lives with Crohn's disease and arthritis.



**Kristin Light** is a Mental Health and Neuro-inclusion Expert who brings valuable insights into employee engagement, having navigated neurodivergent and mental health challenges both personally and professionally.



For free parking locations and more event information, scan the QR Code or visit [wmich.edu/respectingdifferences](http://wmich.edu/respectingdifferences).



**ANNUAL EVENT**

## RESPECTING DIFFERENCES

Wednesday, April 9, 2025  
9 to 10:30 a.m. or 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Jason Reid and Kristin Light  
Embracing Neurodiversity in the Workplace

Miller Auditorium | 1341 Theatre Dr., Kalamazoo, MI 49008

## Honor a Veteran or Active-Duty Service Member with a Personalized Banner at Liberty Park

The City of Portage is proud to recognize and honor those who have served or are currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces through the 2024 Salute to Veterans program.

This initiative allows community members to sponsor a personalized light-pole banner featuring a photo of their veteran or active-duty service member.

For a \$200 sponsorship, each banner will be displayed on light poles in Liberty Park from Memorial Day through Labor Day 2024, creating a powerful tribute to the brave men and women who have dedicated themselves to protecting our nation. At the conclusion of the display period, the banner will be returned to the sponsor as a lasting keepsake.



Proceeds from this program will directly support veterans' services at the Portage Zhang Senior Center, helping provide valuable resources and programs for those who have served.

**Hurry!** Only 25 banners are available, and reservations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Don't miss this special opportunity to publicly honor a loved one who has served or is currently serving in the military.

Claim your banner and submit your veteran's photo by April 30, 2025, at [portagemi.gov/170](http://portagemi.gov/170).

## POCKET PAY Merchant Spotlight

### John Schuring Jr. Co. GREENHOUSES

#### Garden Center Service at Big Box Prices

[www.schuringgreenhouse.com](http://schuringgreenhouse.com)

Schuring's Retail Greenhouse was established in 1991 to offer locally grown, beautiful product to our community. Our family owned store carries all product grown on our farm which was established in the early 1900s. We sell annuals, vegetables, herbs, container gardens, hanging baskets, and perennials. We are a seasonal business and take great pride in servicing our customers. We will be open for the 2025 spring season April 21 through June 14. Our hours are Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 7:30 PM; Saturday 9 AM to 5 PM; and closed on Sunday. We are located 1/4 mile west of South Westnedge Avenue at 610 Schuring Road. Looking forward to seeing everyone soon!

**Do you want to see your local small business featured in the Portager? Become one of over 30 local merchants that proudly accept Portage Pocket Pay.**



Learn more and sign up at [portagemi.gov/pocketpay](http://portagemi.gov/pocketpay).

## Sponsorship Opportunities for Foundation Fundraisers

Support local firefighters, officers, and seniors while gaining valuable exposure for your business by sponsoring two upcoming golf outings in Portage!



The **Friends of the Portage Senior Center** invite businesses and

community members to sponsor their 2025 Annual Golf Outing on Monday, May 19, 2025, at The Moors Golf Club. This event helps fund essential programs and services for older adults in Portage. Sponsorship options range from hole sponsorships to exclusive event partnerships, with benefits including logo placement on event materials, recognition during the outing, and opportunities to engage with participants. Your support ensures the Portage Senior Center continues to provide valuable resources and activities for seniors. Learn more and secure your sponsorship at [friendpsc.org/golf-sponsorship](http://friendpsc.org/golf-sponsorship).



The **Portage Public Safety Foundation** invites businesses and

community members to sponsor its Annual Golf Outing on Monday, September 15, 2025, at Angels Crossing Golf Course. Sponsorship levels range from \$100 to \$5,000, offering benefits such as logo placement on tee signs, check-in tables, and lunch buffets. Higher-tier sponsors receive exclusive perks, including paid foursomes, promotional opportunities, and special recognition during the event. Proceeds directly support public safety initiatives, ensuring first responders have the resources they need. Sign up today at [birdease.com/PPSF](http://birdease.com/PPSF).

Don't miss this opportunity to support the Portage community while promoting your business – become a sponsor today!

# YOUR BACKYARD IS BIGGER THAN YOU THINK

## Spring & Summer Fun Starts Now

Registration is open for Portage Parks & Recreation spring and summer programs! There's something for everyone to enjoy. Spots fill quickly, so don't wait! Browse programs and sign up today at [mypark.portagemi.gov](http://mypark.portagemi.gov).

### BIKEPORTAGE

From April 1 to October 31, grab a bike and hit the trails with BIKEPORTAGE! Start your ride at the BIKEPORTAGE station along the Portage Creek Bicentennial Park Trail, just north of the Celery Flats Pavilion. Get started by downloading the MOVATIC app from the Apple Store or Google Play, create an account, and follow the prompts to pay, unlock your bike, and ride. Just be sure to return your bike to the station before the park closes. Visit [portagemi.gov/794](http://portagemi.gov/794) for rental rates and more details!

### Hike with a Biologist: Woodcock Walk

Join the Michigan Department of Natural Resources on a guided hike to observe one of Michigan's early spring spectacles, the American woodcock courtship dance. Just after dusk listen for the call of the timberdoodle (woodcock) followed by a spiraling aerial performance. Bring your binoculars and headlamps or flashlights, a portable chair for viewing, and rubber boots or waterproof footwear.

- » Friday, April 11, 6:30 - 8:30 PM
- » Gourdneck State Game Area off Angling Road, second parking lot
- » FREE (Registration required by April 10)

### Portage Community Art Award Call to Artists

The City of Portage presents the 8th Annual Portage Community Art Award as part of the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts' (KIA) West Michigan Area Show (WMAS) – a juried exhibition showcasing artists from a 14-county region. A \$1,000 award will be given to a Portage resident whose artwork reflects the city's theme, *A Natural Place to Move*. The winning piece will be displayed in Portage City Hall for one year, beginning September 12, 2025, alongside a exhibition of 12 to 20 additional pieces through November 7, 2025. An exhibition unveiling event will be held on September 11.

Artists can submit entries through April 20, 2025, at [kiarts.org](http://kiarts.org). WMAS award winners will be announced on June 12, and the exhibition runs through September 14 at the KIA. For details, contact Portage Parks & Recreation at 329-4522.

## YOU HAVE MORE FRIENDS THAN YOU KNOW

### Coffee with a Cop

Join us for Coffee with a Cop, a casual meetup to connect with local law enforcement. Discuss safety, policing strategies, or simply get to know the officers serving our community. Enjoy open conversation over coffee – we're here to listen and share insights.

- » Wednesday, April 16, 10 AM - 12 PM
- » FREE and Open to the Public (Registration required)

### Transitions in Senior Living

*Exploring Housing and Care Solutions*

Join us for a three-part series with Kathy Barnitz of Jaqua Realtors, exploring retirement living, personalized planning, and preparing your home for sale. Let's navigate this new chapter with confidence.

- » Wednesdays, April 16, 23, 30, 11 AM - 12 PM
- » Free and Open to the Public (Registration required)

**Jaqua**  
Realtors

## Portage Parks & Recreation Events, Camps & Classes

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

The Portage Parks system is multi-faceted with activities and opportunities for families and people of all ages. To find out more and register online, visit [mypark.portagemi.gov](http://mypark.portagemi.gov) and click  REGISTER NOW!

### Garlic Mustard Pull Program

Help Protect Portage Parks by joining the Garlic Mustard Pull Program! First, take the Garlic Mustard Pull Orientation Class (required) to learn proper identification techniques, program rules, and participation guidelines. Then, get out there and start pulling! The Garlic Mustard contest begins May 1.

- » Friday, April 18, 11 AM - 12 PM (register by April 17)
- » Friday, April 25, 5:30 - 6:30 PM (register by April 24)
- » West Lake Nature Preserve (9001 South Westnedge Avenue)
- » FREE (Registration required)

### Earn-A-Bike Workshop with Open Roads

Learn the ABCs of bicycle care, maintenance, and repair in a hands-on environment. Bikes are provided and at the end of the program, participants take home the bike they repaired.

- » Tuesdays, April 8 - May 6, 5 - 7 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$50 per participant (Registration required by April 7)

### Adult Softball League

Join our adult slow-pitch softball league for fun, friendly competition, and community spirit! Co-ed teams play Mondays and Tuesdays, while men's teams take the field Wednesdays and Thursdays. Sign up at [CityBallSports.com](http://CityBallSports.com).



- » Session 1: April 21 – June 16 (Register by April 7)
- » Session 2: June 23 – August 11 (Register by June 9)
- » Fall Ball: August 18 – September 29 (Register by August 4)
- » South Westnedge Park (9010 South Westnedge Avenue)

### Farmers Market Opening Day - May 4



It's been 10 years since the Portage Farmers Market opened! It's grown a lot since then, but one thing hasn't changed – it's still the best place for the freshest locally produced food, handmade goods, and live music. With over 30 local vendors each week, you'll find an incredible selection of fresh produce, cheese, meats, eggs, baked goods, flowers, handmade crafts and unique gifts.

- » Sundays, May 4 – October 12, 9 AM – 1 PM
- » Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue)

### Qigong

Practice Qigong on the beach with instructor, Tao Ping and the Chinese American Association of Greater Kalamazoo. Baduanjin Qigong, a traditional Chinese exercise system, is great for beginners. This 10-week program for ages 5 and up blends gentle movement, breathing, and meditation to promote flexibility, circulation, and mental clarity.

- » Tuesdays, May 6 - July 8, 9 - 9:50 AM
- » Ramona Park (8600 South Sprinkle Road)
- » \$70 per participant (Registration required by May 5)

### Explore Archery for Adults

*Presented by Van Buren Youth Camp*

This four-week introductory archery program is perfect for adults interested in learning basic archery skills and safety using the USA Archery method. Bows and arrows will be provided or bring your own. This camp is for adults 18 and older.

- » Wednesdays, May 7 - 28, 6 - 7 PM
- » Schrier Park (850 West Osterhout Avenue)
- » \$60 per participant (Registration required)

### Register for Adult Pickleball Leagues

Join the fun at Ramona Park for Session 1 Pickleball Leagues, held Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at Ramona Park. Registration is open from April 21 through May 16.

- » Competitive - Tuesdays, May 27 - July 1
- » Intermediate - Wednesdays, May 28 - July 2
- » Recreational - Thursdays, May 29 - July 3
- » \$35 per participant (Registration required)

### Vendors & Performers Wanted for Upcoming Events & Markets

Applications are now being accepted for several upcoming events and markets, including the Spring Arts & Crafts Market, the Portage Farmers Market, and Friday at the Flats. These are great opportunities to showcase your products, services, and talents!

Whether you sell arts and crafts, run a food truck, are a local business, create awareness for a local organization, or you're a skilled performer looking to delight an audience, all are welcome to apply at [portagemi.gov/643](http://portagemi.gov/643).

## Portage Zhang Senior Center Events, Activities & Classes

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

Find us at 203 East Centre Avenue | [mypzsc.portagemi.gov](http://mypzsc.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 adult.

*Membership and participation 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.

### "Bits of Business" Expo

Join us for a vibrant celebration of active aging at the PZSC. Connect with over 65 local organizations offering resources on fitness, volunteering, housing, transportation, caregiver support, and independent living.



Enjoy convenient shuttle service from nearby parking lots (8:30 AM – 1:30 PM). Special thanks to Senior Living Advocates and Visiting Angels SWMI for sponsoring this event!

- » Friday, April 25, 9 AM - 1 PM
- » Free and Open to Public (No registration required)

### PZSC Bicycle Club Informational Meeting

Join group leaders for an informational meeting to learn about the PZSC Bicycle Club. The club rides on Wednesdays from May through October; ride times vary. PZSC membership is required.

- » Wednesday, April 23, 9 AM
- » FREE (No registration required)

# PORTAGER

## Recycling Right

### Portage's Curbside Program Supports Earth Day 2025 and Beyond



To celebrate Earth Day on April 22, 2025, the City of Portage is proud to highlight its single-stream Curbside Recycling Program, a key part of environmental sustainability. Funded by a voter-approved millage, it provides curbside collection of recyclable materials. Here's how it works:

#### Sign-Up for Curbside Recycling

Portage residents can sign up by visiting [portagemi.gov/284](http://portagemi.gov/284) and completing the registration form. New registrants will be assigned a recycling cart. Additional carts or different sizes can be requested by calling Best Way Disposal at 388-3300 (fees may apply).

#### Eligible Materials for Recycling

The program accepts a wide range of materials, which can all be placed in the same cart without the need for sorting. These materials include:

- Paper:** Newspapers, magazines, catalogs, junk mail, cardboard, and paperboard (such as cereal boxes).
- Plastics:** All plastic containers marked with recycling codes #1 through #7, including bottles, jugs, and tubs.
- Metals:** Aluminum and steel cans, and foil.
- Glass:** Bottles and jars, with no need to separate colors.

#### Preparing Your Materials for Recycling

Proper preparation is key to making the most of the curbside recycling program. Here's what you need to do:

- » **Rinse Containers:** Clean all recyclables, especially food and beverage containers, to prevent contamination.
- » **Remove Caps and Lids:** For most plastic containers and bottles, remove any caps or lids.
- » **No Bags:** Recyclables should not be placed in plastic bags. Use the cart directly for loose items.

#### Where to Place Your Cart

To ensure your recyclables are collected on time, place your cart at the curb by 6 AM on your scheduled pickup day. Keep the following tips in mind:

- » **Position the Cart Correctly:** The cart should be placed facing the street, and the lid should be closed.
- » **Allow Space:** Ensure the cart is not obstructed by vehicles or other items. Leave at least three feet of space between the cart and any other objects, including other carts, mailboxes or parked cars.
- » **Avoid Overflowing:** If you find your cart is full, consider waiting for the next recycling collection or contact Bestway Disposal at 388-3300 to request an additional cart (fees may apply).

#### Biweekly Collection

Recycling is collected every two weeks reducing truck traffic, fuel consumption, and emissions. The wheeled carts provide adequate space for two weeks' worth of recyclable materials.

#### Drop-Off Recycling Locations

In addition to curbside collection, Portage residents may utilize the Best Way Disposal drop-off recycling facility for a fee of \$2 per cubic yard. All items included in the Curbside Recycling Program are accepted at the drop-off facility located at 2606 Miller Road in Kalamazoo.

## Other Ways to Recycle

### Food Scraps Recycling Program

The city recently debuted a Food Scraps Recycling Program tailored to turn food scraps into rich, nutrient-dense soil for the environment. Diverting food waste to composting has additional benefits, including reducing pollution and landfill waste, and lowering methane emissions. This pilot program is a part of the city's continuous efforts toward sustainability. Learn more at [portagemi.gov/933](http://portagemi.gov/933).

### Plastic Bag Recycling Initiative

Portage residents can recycle plastic bags and film thanks to a collaborative effort between the Portage Environmental Board and the Portage Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), which aims to reduce plastic waste by providing convenient drop-off locations. Residents can bring their plastic bags and film to a designated collection bin inside Portage City Hall during normal business hours:

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

Additionally, students at Portage Northern and Portage Central High Schools can contribute through collection bins at their schools, with their environmental clubs actively gathering plastic bags to support the initiative.

## Get Involved This Earth Day

This Earth Day, make a commitment to recycle right! Spread the word to neighbors, friends, and family about the importance of proper recycling. By working together, we can continue to make Portage a model for environmental responsibility.

For more information about the curbside recycling program, please view the City of Portage Recycling Guide at [portagemi.gov/284](http://portagemi.gov/284). Please call the Department of Public Works at 329-4444 with questions.

Let's make every day Earth Day!



7900 South Westnedge Avenue  
Portage, Michigan 49002-5160  
[portagemi.gov](http://portagemi.gov) | (269) 329-4400

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## Showcase Your Art at Portage City Hall

The City of Portage invites local artists and collectors to display their work in a rotating exhibit at City Hall. This program provides a unique opportunity for artists to share their creativity with the community while offering visitors an inspiring visual experience.



Each exhibit includes information about the artist or collector, and in many cases, pieces are available for purchase. Displays rotate every two months, with new openings beginning in September 2025.

Artists and collectors with a connection to Portage interested in participating can contact the Office of the City Manager at 329-4400 or email [citymanager@portagemi.gov](mailto:citymanager@portagemi.gov).

## 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  
[patricia.randall@portagemi.gov](mailto:patricia.randall@portagemi.gov)



Mayor Pro Tem Jim Pearson  
(269) 303-5459  
[councilmemberjp@portagemi.gov](mailto:councilmemberjp@portagemi.gov)



Nicole Miller  
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Terry R. Urban  
(269) 323-8160  
[terry.urban@portagemi.gov](mailto:terry.urban@portagemi.gov)

## 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  
(708) 710-3102  
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Vic Ledbetter  
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Patrick McGinnis, City Manager  
(269) 329-4400  
[mcginnip@portagemi.gov](mailto:mcginnip@portagemi.gov)

## 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).

### APRIL 2025

14	7:00 PM	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
15	6:00 PM	City Council Meeting
17	7:00 PM	Planning Commission Meeting
29	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.

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