



FEBRUARY 2026

PORTAGER

A Natural Place to Move



A Message from Mayor Patricia M. Randall

Cupid comes calling in February, shooting arrows with a bow. Valentine’s Day brightens the month and is popular for romance and marriage proposals. With people seeking joy and connection, the use of online dating services has become popular across the globe. Match.com pioneered online personal ads and launched in 1995. As people defer marriage, meeting prospective partners has become more difficult. Contributing to the lack of social interactions is a carry-over from COVID: The “work from home” option. Working from home has many desirable benefits, including the optimization of time by eliminating commuting, the lack of a dress code, and reduced childcare costs.

In Portage, there are very few options to “work from home” for our 239 full-time and 44 part-time city employees, including 79 police employees and 38 firefighters. Park rangers need to be in our parks. Inspectors need to be

visiting building sites. Public Safety officers need to be keeping city residents and their families safe. Inside City Hall, our employees serve as the face of local government and are available five days a week to serve you.

Today, being able to retain good employees in a competitive job market without the flexibility of working from home is a challenge.

To stay competitive, the city regularly conducts a wage analysis of comparable jobs in our region. We strive to provide affordable health insurance options through Blue Cross Blue Shield and Blue Care Network. Last year the city partnered with TriShare, a State of Michigan program to supplement one-third of childcare expenses. This year the city adopted a down payment assistance program funded by the Kalamazoo County Housing Millage, Kalamazoo County and the City of Portage. Every six months the city does in-house training for all of our employees on a variety of topics, including improving customer service, identifying the signs of dementia and team building.

We take customer service seriously: Residents are offered satisfaction survey cards at each department window and online. Public feedback enables us to better serve you.

Developing talent and promoting from within provides our employees with an upward trajectory. It also gives us the benefit of knowing who we promote, confident that they understand the values of our community. Two recent well-deserved promotions include Matt Wolfe as Director of Public Safety and Jereme Rowland as Director of Public Works. Together, they have over 56 years of service employment in the City of Portage.

February is also Black History Month. Please consider attending a Portage-sponsored event on February 6. We’re hosting Candacy Taylor, author of Overground Railroad, which promises to be engaging. See event details on page 3.

As for Valentine’s Day, if you have already found your special someone, by all means participate in National Chocolate Month and give the gift of decadent candy. Celebrate the small joys in life and stay warm!

– Patricia M. Randall

Transition to Single-Hauler Waste Collection Underway as Voters to Consider Issue in May

Portage residents will soon notice new trash and recycling carts arriving at their homes as the city continues to implement its residential single-hauler waste collection program. While implementation moves forward, voters will be asked to consider the program’s future in a Special Election on May 5, 2026.

Single-Hauler Waste Collection Timeline

On **January 21, 2025**, the Portage City Council amended the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 58, to authorize the use of an exclusive contractor (single-hauler) for residential garbage, yard waste, bulk items, and curbside recycling. This action aligned with a long-term City Council goal to:

“Optimize Portage’s approach to solid waste disposal by adopting best practices to create a more efficient, reliable, and accountable approach to solid waste disposal services.”

The city’s intent was to provide waste removal services using one provider rather than multiple haulers operating independently across the city. Benefits often associated with the single-hauler approach – used by many communities across Michigan and the U.S. – include:

Lower, standardized pricing: Rates established through a competitive bidding and contract process result in lower, uniform pricing and more predictable costs for residents compared to individually negotiated services.

Reduced neighborhood impacts: Fewer collection trucks operating on residential streets, resulting in less truck traffic, noise, and roadway wear.

Centralized oversight: One contract establishes clear performance standards and provides a single point of accountability for service quality and issue resolution.

Environmental considerations: Fewer collection trucks and coordinated trash, recycling, and yard waste programs reduce vehicle emissions and support community environmental goals.

On **March 6, 2025**, the City Administration reviewed sealed competitive proposals from licensed waste haulers. Three companies – Best Way Disposal, Republic Services, and WM (Waste Management) – were interviewed by the City Administration. WM submitted the lowest of the three proposals.

Single-Hauler Waste Collection Bids			
Bidder	Best Way	Republic	WM
5-Year Bid	\$38,243,048	\$34,464,940	\$29,431,900

On **July 22, 2025**, the City Council voted 6-0 to award a five-year contract to WM to serve as the city’s exclusive

residential waste hauler with services beginning on March 1, 2026. WM’s low bid included a cost to residents of \$14.04 per month for garbage service, an average savings of 44%. A city study showed that residents currently pay anywhere between \$14.50 and over \$50 per month for garbage service, depending on their provider and plan. With a single hauler contract, every household will pay the same low rate for the same quality service.

WM Monthly Charges Five Year Contract March 1, 2026 - February 28, 2031					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Trash billed quarterly	\$14.04	\$14.60	\$15.18	\$15.79	\$16.42
Yard Waste billed annually*	\$10.50	\$10.92	\$11.36	\$11.81	\$12.28

*If resident subscribes to the seasonal service that runs April 1 – November 30

Billing will also be more transparent. Instead of navigating contracts and varying rates from multiple companies, all residents will receive consistent, predictable billing directly from WM. No extra fees or surcharges are permitted without City Council approval.

As part of the WM contract, residents will continue to receive single-stream curbside recycling services every two weeks. This service is paid for through property taxes as part of a voter-approved millage. In addition, residents may place one bulk (large) item at the curb for collection each week, with advanced notice to WM.

In **December 2025**, a group called “Take Back the Trash” submitted a petition to challenge the city’s single-hauler ordinance. The City Clerk verified that the petition met the legal requirements under the City Charter, which gave the City Council two options:

1. Adopt the ordinance language submitted on the petition, **or**
2. Place the issue on the May 5, 2026 Special Election.

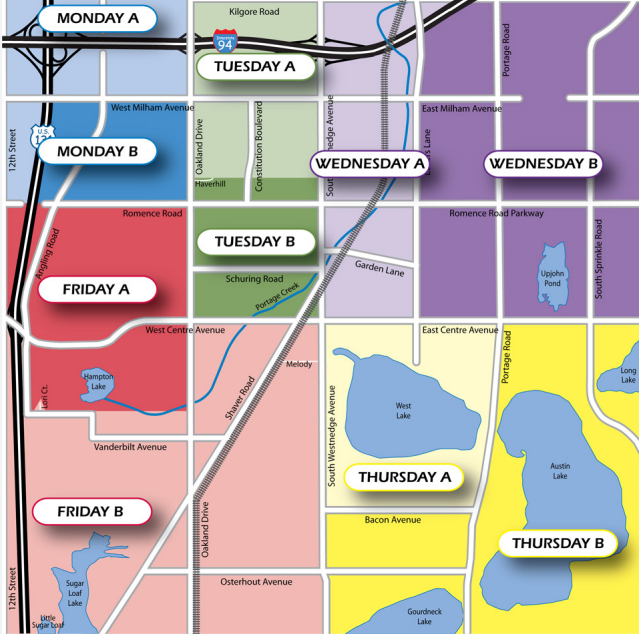
On **January 13, 2026**, Council voted to place the issue on the May ballot. The ballot question will ask whether the city should continue with the single-hauler model for residential trash, recycling, and yard waste services or return to an open market with multiple haulers and varied pricing household to household. To view the official ballot language, visit portagemi.gov/236.

Why Carts Are Being Delivered Now

The city signed a valid five-year contract with WM for residential waste services that begins March 1, 2026 – two months before the Special Election – and runs through February 28, 2031. The city is obligated to abide by the contract provisions and continue with implementation steps already in progress. As part of that rollout, new carts have been manufactured and await delivery to residents in February.

What Residents Will See Next

New trash and recycling carts will be delivered to Portage households in phases based on recycling zones (see map). On February 9, 2026, WM’s contractor will start delivering carts to households in Zone B. Once deliveries in Zone B are complete, the contractor will move on to Zone A, with delivery expected to begin midweek during the week of February 16. (Existing WM customers will not receive new trash carts.)



By the end of February 2026, weather permitting, Portage households will receive a new WM trash and recycling cart. An informational tag with service details will be attached to the recycling cart. Residents do not need to take any action to receive the carts or to initiate billing with WM. The first quarterly bill will be mailed to residents in early March. Residents may pay directly from the bill or go online to set up an account, manage payment options, or set up auto pay.

Existing carts will be collected by the current service provider later this month. (Existing WM customers will retain their current trash carts.) Residents with questions about their existing carts should contact their current service provider directly.

Trash and recycling collection by WM will begin on Monday, March 2. For most residents, collection days will remain the same – if your pickup is currently on Monday, it will continue to be on Monday under WM service. A small number of households may experience a change in collection day and will be notified directly by WM.

Residents who wish to subscribe to yard waste service must sign up with WM between March 1 and March 31, 2026, and prepay for the full season. Residents who miss this window must wait until next year to enroll; only new residents will be able to sign up after March 31, 2026.

For a comprehensive list of FAQs, visit home.wm.com/portage-mi and look for “What You Need to Know About Service in Portage” or call 1-877-814-2328.

Board of Review to Meet in March

The City of Portage Board of Review, appointed by the City Council, is responsible for hearing property tax valuation appeals from Portage property owners. The board may address property valuation (SEV), assessment roll classification changes, and Property Tax Poverty Exemption requests.

2026 Assessment Change Notices

The City of Portage will mail Annual Assessment Change Notices for all real properties the week of February 16, 2026. These notices contain critical information including:

- » Changes in assessed and taxable values from 2025 to 2026
- » The status of the Principal Residence Exemption (PRE)
- » Whether the property’s taxable value was uncapped due to an ownership transfer

Please note that delivery times may vary. If you do not receive your notice shortly after this time frame, contact the City Assessor for assistance.

Discuss Property Valuations With the Assessor

Property owners are encouraged to address any questions or concerns about their property assessments with the City Assessor before the 2026 Assessment Roll is certified. After the roll is certified and forwarded to the Board of Review, the City Assessor cannot make any changes to the property valuations for 2026.

Many concerns can be resolved before appearing – or without needing to appear – before the Board of Review. Certain questions, such as those related to assessment change notices, can often be handled over the phone. However, more detailed inquiries may require an informal review with assessing staff. To ensure ample time for discussion, property owners must contact the Office of the City Assessor no later than Friday, February 27, 2026.

Board of Review

If you believe your property valuation is inaccurate, and assessing staff were not able to address your concerns, you may appear before the March Board of Review to appeal the valuation. The board will meet on Tuesday, March 3 at 9 AM for their Organizational Meeting.

Appointments to meet with the Board of Review can be made on the following dates:

- » Monday, March 9, 9 AM - 12 PM & 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM
- » Tuesday, March 10, 9 AM - 12 PM & 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM
- » Wednesday, March 11, 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM & 6 PM - 9 PM
- » Thursday, March 12, 9 AM - 12 PM & 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM

The board will then meet on Tuesday, March 24 at 9 AM to finalize the roll.

How to Appeal to the Board of Review

Property owners wishing to appeal to the Board of Review can schedule an appointment by calling the Office of the

City Assessor at (269) 329-4433. Alternatively, appeals can be submitted in writing. Written appeals must be received in the Office of the City Assessor no later than 5:30 PM on Wednesday, March 11, 2026. These appeals must include:

- » A completed form L-4035: Petition to the Board of Review (available at portagemi.gov/156), and
- » Supporting documentation (see Preparing for an Assessment Review or Appeal)

You may submit written appeals by:

- » Mail to 7900 South Westnedge Avenue, Portage, MI 49002
- » Email to assessingdept@portagemi.gov
- » Drop-off at the Office of the City Assessor
- » Drop off in the 24-hour drop box at City Hall

All appeals, including written submissions, must be received before the final meeting of the March Board of Review.

Understanding Taxable Value Changes and Property Assessments for 2026

Taxable value change is limited by the Inflation Rate Multiplier (IRM) set annually by the State Tax Commission, unless new construction or a transfer of ownership has occurred. For 2026, the IRM is 1.027, meaning taxable values may increase by 2.7% unless:

- » New construction or physical changes have been made
- » Omitted property was discovered
- » Ownership of the property has transferred

Under Michigan law, the selling price of a property is not the presumptive true cash value. While the selling price is considered, it is not the sole factor in determining a property’s assessed value. The Assessor and the Board of Review rely on many factors to determine a property’s value, ensuring a fair and equitable assessment process.

Preparing for an Assessment Review or Appeal

Property owners meeting with assessing staff or appealing to the Board of Review are encouraged to provide supporting documentation to strengthen their case, such as:

- » Documentation of recent sales of comparable homes in the neighborhood
- » Current appraisals of the property
- » Receipts or invoices for recent construction or improvements
- » Photographs showing property damage or deterioration
- » Other information pertinent to the property’s assessment

The City Assessor may also provide evidence supporting the valuation listed on the assessment roll or use the information during the review process to make any necessary or required adjustments.

If property owners are unsatisfied with the results of the Assessor’s review process, they retain the right to appeal to the Board of Review for further consideration.

Questions? Call (269) 329-4433 to speak with Assessing staff.

Do You Qualify for a 2026 Property Tax Poverty Exemption?

The City of Portage Board of Review may approve a property tax exemption for residents who meet poverty income level guidelines. To qualify for this annual exemption, applicants must:

- » Be currently receiving the Principal Residence Exemption (PRE)
- » Meet the income and asset requirements outlined below

City of Portage Income Guidelines	
Household Size*	Maximum Income
1 person	\$19,563
2 persons	\$26,438
3 persons	\$33,313
4 persons	\$40,188
5 persons	\$47,063
6 persons	\$53,938
7 persons	\$60,813
8 persons	\$67,688

* For households with more than 8 persons, add \$6,875 for each additional person.

Applicants must provide proper documentation of income, such as:

- » Federal and state income tax returns for all individuals residing in the principal residence
- » An affidavit for any resident not required to file federal or state income tax returns for the current or preceding tax year

In addition, household assets (excluding the principal residence) must not exceed \$25,000 and must be reported on the application. A list of all required documentation is included on the application form.

The **Property Tax Poverty Exemption Application** form is available at the Office of the City Assessor or online at portagemi.gov/156. To ensure consideration at the March Board of Review, completed applications must be submitted to the Office of the City Assessor by March 2, 2026.

The Board of Review will evaluate applications based on the City of Portage income and asset guidelines. Applicants are not required to appear before the Board of Review in person. Exemptions granted are subject to audit by the Michigan Department of Treasury.

For questions or additional details, contact the Office of the City Assessor at (269) 329-4433.

Make a Splash This Summer: Lifeguards Wanted

Looking for a summer job that makes a difference and keeps you by the water? The City of Portage is hiring lifeguards for the upcoming summer recreation season, and we’re inviting you to join a team that helps keep our community safe at Ramona Park Beach.



The lifeguard season runs from mid-May through Labor Day, with flexible schedules ranging from 30 to 40 hours per week, including weekends and holidays. Applicants must be at least 16 years old. Red Cross Lifeguard Certification is preferred, and training opportunities may be available.

Pay starts at \$15.23 per hour, making this a great opportunity for students or anyone looking for a rewarding, active summer job.

How to Apply

Interested candidates should review the full job posting and apply online at portagemi.gov/200. Applications are also accepted at the Department of Human Resources at City Hall, 7900 South Westnedge Avenue.

Questions? Call Human Resources at (269) 329-4533 or text (269) 998-1385 for more information.

The City of Portage is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

YAC Winter Event: Valentine’s Day Fun!

Celebrate Valentine’s Day with creativity, connection, and community spirit! Join the Portage Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) for a free, family-friendly Valentine’s Day celebration filled with hands-on activities and an opportunity to support a meaningful local cause.

Heartfelt Activities:

- » Cookie decorating
- » Make-your-own Valentine’s Day cards
- » Carnation Station
- » Outdoor scavenger hunt



The YAC will also host a “Have a Heart” donation drive benefiting Hospital Hospitality House of Southwest Michigan whose mission is to make it easier for families to

support their loved ones receiving medical care by providing a homelike, comforting place to stay. Learn more at hhhz.org.

Have a Heart Wish List

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Garbage bags (13 & 30 gallon) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Laundry soap |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paper plates | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dishwasher pods |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plastic cups | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paper towels |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Toilet paper |

Donations can be dropped off at Portage City Hall (7900 South Westnedge Avenue) from February 9 - 13, or at the Valentine’s Day Fun event.

- » Saturday, February 14 | 11 AM - 1 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » FREE | No registration required

Black History Month Karaoke & Lip Sync Battle

Did you know that James Weldon Johnson (1871–1938), an accomplished author, poet, and civil rights activist, wrote the 1900 hymn “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” often referred to as the Black National Anthem? The music was composed by his brother, J. Rosamond Johnson (1873–1954). Written more than 125 years ago, the hymn’s words remain powerful and deeply relevant today:

*Lift every voice and sing,
'Til earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty*



Inspired by that same spirit of unity and expression, the City of Portage invites the community to its second annual Black History Month Karaoke event with a fun twist.

Last year celebrated Motown Hits. This year, we’re turning up the energy with Lip Sync for 2026. Show off your performance skills, hit the dance floor while our house DJ spins crowd favorites, and enjoy a variety of delicious dips provided at no additional cost. For more information call (269) 324-9284.

- » Saturday, February 20 | 5 - 7 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » FREE | No registration required

YOUR BACKYARD IS BIGGER THAN YOU THINK

Kalamazoo Book Arts Center Art Samplers

Linocut

Create your own unique artwork with instructors from the Kalamazoo Book Arts Center. Carve a unique design into rubber-stamping material with linocut tools. Students will practice reproducing their image on paper. This project uses sharp tools and is designed for participants ages 12 and up. Art supplies will be provided for each session. Participants may bring their own supplies, if desired.

- » Tuesday, February 3 | 6 - 7:30 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$40 per person | Registration required

Japanese Bookbinding

Learn to make your own journal using a soft cover Japanese binding technique. A Japanese “stab book” is a soft cover book featuring decorative stitching in the binding – and the best part is no glue required! Decorative cover pages will be available. Participants take home their hand-made journals for drawing, writing, or scrapbooking. This program is designed for ages 10 and up. Art supplies will be provided for each session. Participants may bring their own supplies, if desired.

- » Tuesday, February 17 | 6 - 7:30 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$40 per person | Registration required

Black History Month Presentation: Green Book

Presenter: Candacy Taylor

The 11th annual Black History Month Presentation will feature author, travel writer, and explorer, Candacy Taylor. Taylor is the author of, “Overground Railroad: The Green Book and the Roots of Black Travel in America.” The Green Book assisted African American travelers on the road with information, including safe places to eat and essential services during a time of institutionalized racial segregation.

Candacy Taylor is the leading Green Book expert in the country. “Overground Railroad: The Green Book and the Roots of Black Travel in America” made The New York Times’ most notable books of the year, Oprah Magazine’s top 26 travel books, and National Geographic’s top 10 list of books by women. After the program, stick around for autographs

YOU HAVE MORE FRIENDS THAN YOU KNOW

AARP Tax-Aide Assistance

AARP Tax-Aide Volunteers offer free tax preparation by appointment. All volunteers are IRS-trained and certified. This service is free, with a focus on taxpayers age 50+, low-income individuals, and those with disabilities. PZSC and AARP membership is not required. PZSC staff cannot provide tax-related guidance.

- » Tuesdays, February 3 - April 14 | 9 AM - 2:30 PM
- » FREE | Registration Required

Memory Café

A Memory Café brings together individuals with memory loss and their care partners to socialize, share experiences, and engage in meaningful activities. Sessions may include art, music, games, and storytelling, all in a safe and supportive environment. The goals are to reduce isolation, encourage connection with others facing similar challenges, and support well-being for both individuals with memory loss and their caregivers. This program is offered in partnership with the Memory Care Learning Center and is

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 and click

REGISTER NOW!

and book signing. A limited number of books will be available at the event (\$20 cash only) or bring your own copy.

- » Friday, February 6 | 6 PM
- » Air Zoo (6151 Portage Road)
- » FREE | No registration required

Valentine’s Day Skate

Celebrate Valentine’s Day with someone special at the Ice Rink at Millennium Park! Glide hand-in-hand to your favorite love songs and ballads at the Ice Rink at Millennium Park. Whether it’s a date night or a fun outing with friends, this charming outing is the perfect way to share the love.

- » Saturday, February 14 | 5 - 8 PM
- » Millennium Park (280 Romence Road)
- » \$5 Open Skate, \$3 Skate Rental | No registration required

Kalamazoo Nature Center’s Animal Ambassadors



Creature Features

Learn about the habitats, diets, and adaptations of Kalamazoo Nature Center’s animal ambassadors. Get an up-close look at different bio facts and meet a live animal handled by one of the KNC-trained educators. This program is designed for all ages. Participants under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a chaperone.

- » Saturday, February 7
 - » Session 1: 10 - 11 AM | Session 2: 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$5 per person | Registration required by February 6

Who Eats Whom?

Build a food chain from the ground up and follow the energy from producers to consumers, from sunlight to soil. Get active, meet a live animal, and discover who eats whom in the forest. Learn about the flow of energy, components of the food chain, animal traits, and survival. This program is designed for 1st - 5th grade students, but all ages are welcome. Participants under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a chaperone.

- » Saturday, February 21
 - » Session 1: 10 - 11 AM | Session 2: 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)
- » \$5 per person | Registration required by February 20

Animals that may be present at these programs include a corn snake, milk snake, eastern box turtle, frog, Madagascar hissing cockroach, or a curly-haired tarantula. The presence of specific animals is not guaranteed.

Winter Blast

Half Marathon, 10K, 5K

The highly anticipated Portage Winter Blast returns for its 13th year on Sunday, February 22, bringing together runners and spectators for a Half Marathon, 10K, and 5K celebration of health, wellness, and fitness. The weekend kicks off with a Health and Wellness Expo, and packet pickup will take place on Saturday, February 21, at Loy Norrix High School.



This signature event is a partnership between the Kalamazoo Area Runners (KAR) and the City of Portage and offers participants the opportunity to run through the scenic Portage trail system. Courses feature a mix of paved bike paths and roadways that wind through Portage’s picturesque parklands. All races start and finish at Loy Norrix High School (606 East Kilgore Road), where ample parking and runner-friendly accommodations are available.

After crossing the finish line, participants can enjoy post-race refreshments, sponsor tables, live entertainment, and an awards celebration. The Half Marathon is capped at 1,500 participants. Please note that local roads will experience intermittent closures during the event, with all roads fully reopened by noon.

- » Sunday, February 22, 2026 | 8 AM
- » Loy Norrix High School (606 East Kilgore Road)

Farmers Market Vendor Meeting

Are you curious about selling your products at the Portage Zhang Farmers Market? Come to this informational meeting to learn what is involved to become a vendor and what is new at the market in 2026.

- » Thursday, February 26 | 6:30 – 8 PM
- » Portage Parks & Recreation (320 Library Lane)

Portage Zhang Senior Center Events, Activities & Classes

Explore More. Have Fun. Live Well.

Find us at 203 East Centre Avenue | 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.

facilitated by trained staff and volunteers. Space is limited.

- » Wednesday, February 11 | 10 - 11:30 AM
- » FREE and open to the public | Registration required

Feature Presentation

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

Born with the appearance of an elderly man, Benjamin Button ages in reverse-experiencing love, loss, and the passage of time in a truly extraordinary way. Light refreshments provided. Rated PG-13.



- » Wednesday, February 18 | 2 - 4:30 PM
- » FREE | Registration required

Mac & Cheese Cook-Off

We’re gearing up for the ultimate comfort-food showdown at our Mac & Cheese Cook-Off and we’re looking for your entries! Chefs of all skill levels are invited to enter their best homemade mac and cheese – classic, spicy, loaded, baked, or wildly creative. All entries will be sampled by attendees,

who will vote for their favorite. To enter, call (269) 548-4052.

Don’t miss this fun, delicious, family-friendly event filled with good food, good company, and plenty of melted cheese. Come hungry and help us crown this year’s Big Cheese! Tasting will end at 4:30 PM.

- » Thursday, February 26 | 3 - 5 PM
- » FREE and open to the public | Registration required

Michigan Secretary of State Mobile Office at the PZSC



The Secretary of State Mobile Office visits the Portage Zhang Senior Center on a quarterly basis! This convenient mobile unit can help you:

- » Obtain or update a State ID
- » Complete driver and vehicle services
- » Renew license plates
- » Register to vote

For a quick, friendly experience, appointments are encouraged.

- » Thursday, March 19 | 10 AM - 3 PM
- » FREE (SOS fees apply) | Registration encouraged



Winter Reminder: Check on Neighbors and Loved Ones

As winter weather settles in across Michigan, the City of Portage encourages residents to check in on neighbors, friends, and family—especially older adults, those living alone, and individuals with limited mobility. Cold temperatures, snow, and icy conditions can quickly create unsafe situations.

- » Stay connected: Stop by, call, or send a message to make sure loved ones are safe and warm.
- » Offer assistance: Help with snow removal, grocery shopping, or transportation to essential appointments.
- » Share information: Make sure others know about local warming centers, emergency contacts, and utility assistance programs.
- » Stay alert: If someone appears disoriented, unusually tired, or their home feels cold, they may need immediate help.

Small acts – like clearing a sidewalk or delivering a warm meal – can make a big difference. By looking out for one another, we help keep our community safe all winter long.

Resources

- » Portage Public Safety
Emergency: 911
Non-emergency: (269) 488-8911
- » Portage City Hall: (269) 329-4400
- » Portage Community Center: (269) 323-1942
- » Consumers Energy: 800-477-5050
- » Twelve Baskets Food Pantry: (269) 532-4912
- » Milestone Senior Services: (269) 382-0515
- » Portage Zhang Senior Center: (269) 329-4555
- » Portage District Library: (269) 329-4544

New Columbarium Now Available at Portage South Cemetery

The City of Portage is pleased to announce the addition of a columbarium burial structure at Portage South Cemetery (10401 South Westnedge Avenue). Columbarium burials provide a permanent, above-ground, and cost-effective option for the interment of cremated remains.



The center, circular columbarium features 64 single interment niches, while the outer four “walls” include 192 double interment niches. Residents of the City of Portage may purchase a single niche for \$700 or a double niche

for \$1,000. Prices include the engraving of the niche cover plate; the cost of the opening and closing – between \$250 to \$400 – is separate.

This new structure complements the city’s traditional cemetery offerings. Portage maintains four municipal cemeteries, with Central Cemetery and South Cemetery currently accepting new interments. Burial services, including grave openings and closings, are coordinated by the Department of Public Works and arranged through the Office of the City Clerk. Fees vary depending on the type of burial and time of week, and plots can be purchased in advance.

The city also provides and pours monument foundations for headstones and regulates their placement to ensure safety and maintenance. Floral decorations and plantings are permitted within specific guidelines to preserve the beauty and accessibility of cemetery grounds.

For more information on purchasing a columbarium niche, traditional burial plots, or cemetery rules, contact the Office of the City Clerk at (269) 329-4511.

2025 Winter Property Tax Reminder

Payment for City of Portage 2025 winter property tax bills is due by 5:30 PM on Monday, February 16, 2026. If you did not receive your tax bill, please contact the Portage Treasury Office at (269) 329-4455. Property tax information is updated daily and is available at portagemi.gov; search Property & Tax Lookup. Failure to receive a tax bill does not exempt you from making timely payment. A 3% late fee is charged to all late payments.

Payment Options:

- » Mail payment to the City of Portage. Payments must postmarked by the USPS on or before February 16, 2026, to avoid a 3% late fee.

- » Use the 24-hour drop box at City Hall.
- » Call 1-844-943-3997 to pay by phone (fees apply).
- » Visit portagemi.gov and select “Bill Pay” to pay online or set up auto payment.
- » Visit the Treasury Office:
Mon - Thu: 7:30 AM - 5 PM and Fri: 8 AM - 12 PM.

Reminder: Payments for deferred summer taxes are due by February 16, 2026.

All 2025 real estate property taxes that remain unpaid on March 3, 2026, will be turned over to the Kalamazoo County Treasurer for collection, where additional fees will be added.

Questions regarding tax bills may be directed to the City of Portage Treasury Office at (269) 329-4455.

7900 South Westnedge Avenue
Portage, Michigan 49002-5160
portagemi.gov | (269) 329-4400

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
KALAMAZOO, MI
PERMIT NO. 33

ECRWSS

POSTAL CUSTOMER

Leaf Collection to Resume in the Spring

Heavy snowfall and prolonged cold temperatures shortened the fall leaf collection season. To ensure leaves are collected citywide, the Department of Public Works will collect both bagged and loose leaves this spring as part of the regular brush collection program, beginning the week of March 30, 2026.

All areas of the city will receive leaf collection. Collection will follow the brush collection schedule, which includes four zones, rather than the typical eight leaf collection zones. Visit portagemi.gov/282 to view the zone map, collection dates, and preparation guidelines for leaves and brush. For questions, please call the Department of Public Works at (269) 329-4444.

Once leaf and brush collection is complete, the Spring Cleanup Program for household bulk rubbish will begin on Monday, April 27, 2026.

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 (269) 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.

FEBRUARY 2025

5	7:00 PM	Planning Commission Meeting
9	7:00 PM	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
10	6:00 PM	City Council Meeting
19	7:00 PM	Planning Commission Meeting
24	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 Ice Rink at Millennium Park.

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