

In an effort to bring real and meaningful transparency to what is happening in YOUR city government here in Portage, Indiana, today's city address, as usual, will go over a few top activities happening within our city. As summer approaches, things here in your city government are in full swing. My personal goal for these city addresses are two fold...The first is to inform residents and visitors of important activity in Portage, Indiana and within our city government. The second goal is to keep city addresses short and sweet, under 5 minutes is ideal.; but with so many good things happening in Portage, with so many hard-working city Employees, Residents, Developers, Visitors keeping Portage on the right track, limiting these addresses to 5 minutes has been a challenge. I guess it's a blessing in disguise. So let's get started.

Today we will discuss the headquarters for a 225-employee organization that had an option to choose any location within Lake and Porter County; they chose Portage. In an effort to serve children and youth throughout Northwest Indiana, the Boys and Girls Clubs throughout Lake and Porter County have went from operating as separate entities to one entity which can share resources and programs, irrespective of city and county boundaries. As the result of the recent merger, effective Jan. 1, 2018, the new Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Northwest Indiana is the second largest Boys & Girls Club organization in the Midwest (only behind Milwaukee). The honest truth is a merger is only as good as the folks who work for the good of the organization. Their team had many options throughout Northwest Indiana for a new Headquarters. I am happy to know they chose Portage. The Boys and Girls Clubs of Northwest Indiana are headquartered right off of Willowcreek Road in the Lakeshore Bone and Joint Institute building, 2nd floor.

Now we are onto a new subject, Tuesday of last week I participated in the official grand opening of our National Park. While at the event, I had a great conversation with United States Senator Todd Young. Since then, we have had two telephone calls. His staff is doing what they can to get our Lakefront Park some temporary assistance with beach erosion...Sand!

In a prior city address I mentioned a program I am creating to recruit Illinois businesses to Portage. As a result of this new program, I met with the Northwest Indiana Forum. We plan on working together, putting a task force together to attract businesses from Illinois to Indiana. The overall goal is to attract career jobs with great pay and benefits.

Speaking of new employers in Portage, last week I was honored to welcome one of Portage's new businesses, BNutty. Relocating and expanding from their current Hobart facility, they noted Portage's access to rail and the interstate for shipping purposes.

In other news, we have the final scope of work for erosion along Willowcreek. Myself and my administration is pledging \$250,000 each and every year from our stormwater budget to address erosion along Willowcreek. This is a part of my administration's long-term plan to put resources towards erosion for our creeks and watersheds.

We also learned last week that Hannah's Hope Playground has been vandalized and hasn't been shown the respect that it deserves. Hannah's all-inclusive Playground, one of a few throughout our Country, is at Founders Square in our Downtown. In an effort of safety, new signs and cameras are coming to the playground and throughout the city.

I have invited adolescents, some middle schoolers, to City Hall for a round table to discuss how the City of Portage can accommodate the needs of youth, and to simply find out what our kids want when they say, “There is nothing to do in Portage.” We will meet monthly and will continue for months to come.

Ed Gottschling, a long-time servant to Portage, served on several boards and the City Council. Ed Passed away recently. His family asked that in the honor of Ed, a bench be placed in his honor. His family paid for the bench and asked the city to install it at the location they chose. It was installed and dedicated last week; the bench is at Founders Park in our downtown.

Finalized plans for the 2019 Independence Day Festival and Fireworks: Fireworks are strictly paid for by donations. Thank you to our sponsors that are involved.

Now on to the paving, I am excited to announce that Willowcreek Road from central to Route 6 will start being paved on or after July 15th, which is right after 2 of Portage's largest events, 4th of July and the Nativity Festival. This is a two million dollar Project.

Some other Paving and Project info: Hamstrom Road between Central Avenue and Defiance Avenue will be closed to through traffic until Monday, July 1, 2019, for road reconstruction. Detour routes will be marked. The 2019 City of Portage Streets Paving & Repair Project was recently awarded at 1.5+ million. Various streets around the city that have been identified and prioritized will be getting paved. The Bridge on Old Porter Road that goes over Salt Creek is being rebuilt/replaced. The project is expected to be finished by October 1st. The Central Avenue East and Fallen Timbers Projects were slowed by all the rain and will be addressed moving forward as the weather holds out.

Speaking of the rain, as you are aware, we have experienced a lot of it and there is a limited window to get road and stormwater projects done during the Spring, Summer and Fall months. So with all this paving and road repair, there will obviously be some inconveniences to residents as we try to commute around it. I ask for your patience and understanding.

As our city ages, these project will happen going forward. I am proud to be part of the progress when it comes to Jobs, Infrastructure and Safety. With our hard work, together we'll keep Portage on the Right Track for years to come.

Until next time, God Bless you, and see you soon.