

In an effort to keep open and transparent dialog with Portage residents and our many visitors, today's city address will focus on current activity happening within the Portage, Indiana Community and your city's government.

Last week met with the CEO of the Indiana Toll Road. During this meeting, we had a candid conversation regarding our up and coming truck routes which will be going into effect soon. His organization will be helping our city with 6 drainage issues that affect our city, our residents, and visitors. It's a project that will benefit both Portage and the Toll Road. Our Storm Water team will keep you updated on their website and Social Media Accounts. Two days after our meeting, the CEO's team submitted detailed plans, including a timeline, to our Storm Water team. I'd like to point out that as Mayor I have had several conversations with the Governor, INDOT and the Indiana Toll Road. Not only will this project help drainage within our city, but it will be a project that happens at no cost to our city.

I have recently spent time surveying progress of the US-6 paving project. The timeline for this repaving project, as long as weather cooperates, is less than two weeks. That's right, less than two weeks.

I have tirelessly and firmly advocated for what is in Portage's best interest since taking office just three months ago. This US-6 project was not on Portage's timeline until the week before they broke ground. While no confirmations can be given, I believe having a good relationship with our Governor and the INDOT commissioner played a role into having US-6 addressed. As a reminder, our wheel tax funds will pay for the paving of Willowcreek Road from Central Avenue to US-6 this summer, starting right after the Nativity Fest.

My newly-established Youth Council met last week here at City Hall. The intent of the Youth Council is for our city's youth to advise city and community leaders on opportunities that are either lacking or unavailable for Portage's Youth. We brainstormed together. Their group's ideas ranged from mentoring, volunteering, and increased opportunities for indoor and outdoor recreation. The Youth Council will work directly with me, the Mayor, and I encourage any youth to join the group. If you're interested in joining, please contact my office directly.

Onto other announcements within your city Government...

Like any other community across our beautiful country, the City of Portage has a Planning Commission. Planning Commissions are just one step in the building process approval, but it is an important one. It happens to be one of the first steps. Here in Portage, members of the Planning Commission are residents of our City. Last week we welcomed a new member of the Planning Commission. Hortencia Moreno has been asked to join. When looking at her qualifications, she is a great fit to be a member of the commission. Hortencia has been in the development and real estate business for many years, and I feel she will be a strong asset to the commission, a strong asset to Portage. For those in the community who know Hortencia, please give her a big congratulations.

I recently met with Porter County Prosecutor Germann. It is his office that brings charges to criminal suspects within Porter County. While the exact details of our conversation were meant to be private, what I can say publicly is that the Portage Police Department will work with him hand-in-hand. My administration will ensure all crime will be prosecuted and punished at the fullest extent of the law.

Miller's Merry Manor recently had a ribbon cutting for the opening of their new rehabilitation center. At the event, I met a really special American Hero who, during his military service, earned two very special awards, purple hearts. His name is Everett Gasper, and he will be celebrating his 100th birthday on our Nation's Birthday - [July 4th](#).

In a prior city address, I mentioned I would be putting together a Workforce Development Roundtable with a goal to learn the Workforce needs of our employers. The meeting takes place this week.

I'd like to now take a brief jump into Recreation here in the City of Portage. In the past, I have advocated for a sound system in our new downtown area at Founder's Square. I am happy to announce this week I will be requesting proposals for a sound system for this downtown area.

This coming Saturday at the Sammie L. Maletta Marina, we have a cookout and meet-and-greet for customers of the marina. Details are available at your City Marina. As a reminder, there are just a few slips remaining.

Last week I swore in our newest firefighter, Tyler Rosenbaum. I've said it to him in person, but I'd also like to say it here, "Tyler, welcome to our team."

The last thing on today's agenda is the annual Fire Department Memorial and Awards Ceremony held last Friday Evening. Many folks from our community honored Portage's 63 uniformed members. At the event, I shared my thoughts I have about firefighters. It takes a special kind of person to be a firefighter. Firefighters put their lives on the line to protect us, our homes, and our loved ones. Their job begins with a different sense of direction. When an area becomes too dangerous for others, they take over. When others are looking for the exits, our firefighters are looking for the way in. Please do me a favor if you will: When you walk by a firehouse or see an ambulance parked at a local grocery store, take a moment to go up and say thank you.

And I thank you for being engaged and watching. Until next week, God Bless and see you soon.