

Hello, your Mayor here with some more straight talk. Today I will update you on the happenings in our City. In today's address, I will discuss Willowcreek Road, our new Open Air Pavilion, a possible announcement that we are working on, and my invite to the NWI Times Editorial board.

So let's get to it! Our Newly formed Portage Youth Council and I met to discuss their role in advising the Mayor's office of needs for our youth. Folks, I can tell you, our future looks very bright; our Youth Council members are smart, forward-looking, and yes, very bright. You will see them out and about doing community outreach and gaining momentum.

Speaking of Momentum, our New Open Air Pavilion at our LakeFront and RiverWalk Park is completed and ready for Rentals. This Open Air Pavilion was the old Training Facility for US Steel. We are proud of how it has turned out. It is another exciting amenity for our City. Contact our Parks Department at 219-762-1675 for more info.

Now moving on, to speak of more amenities for our City, our Economic Development team and myself sat down with our council members, two or three at a time, to discuss new strategies to attract new business, new retail, new industries and yes, new restaurants. I am happy to report most council members are in agreement with these new strategies. I am directing our Economic Development team to move forward with this exciting new vision. Soon, we will have a bigtime announcement.

Speaking of announcements, Willowcreek Road will be under construction for about 6 weeks going forward. This is a Wheel Tax Project. The last time Willowcreek Road was paved, was 1997; it is due for some upgrades, and I think you would agree. Since 1997, we have had 5 mayors, our population has grown 9.7%, and our median household income rose by 11%. Willowcreek Road once was a training road for CDL drivers, over the road haulers. Now, the Training Schools use State Highways. The project will be from Central Avenue south to Route 6. Please be patient and drive safe; there will be a lot of extra activity; safety is a must. Yes, it will be inconvenient; but in the end, it will be worth it all. Falling Timbers is under construction as I speak, and Hamstrom Road south of Central is near completion. Many more Paving and Reconstruction Projects will be on their way as well.

In my effort to be honest with you, I have had many questions about paving like, “Why do you always start new projects before you finish one?” Well, I don’t disagree; but there are a few months out of the year to complete projects, and there are only a few construction companies to do the work, so the end result is that the projects have to overlap. Once the equipment is in town, the companies do their best to get it done! I hear your frustrations, and I have them as well.

I am happy to announce as well, the collective bargaining unit for our Firefighters members and the Mayor’s office have had very productive talks, and soon we will announce the outcome. Our Firefighters are the best in our area; they deserve respect, and from this mayor, they have earned my respect. Our surrounding Communities in the Region, as well. Well done! And thank you, from a grateful Mayor. We will soon start other City Employee’s Collective Bargaining Agreements talks, and here again I am proud of our Employees; I am hopeful we can reach agreements with each bargaining unit very soon.

In a continued effort of transparency and straight talk, I was invited to answer questions before the Times of Northwest Indiana Editorial Board. I was happy to attend. The subject was my appointment of a Bipartisan Investigative Committee into the allegations of wrong doing in the Clerk-Treasurer’s office. I provided as much detail that was available at the time. I will insure you that your Mayor’s Office is looking out for the return of the money that was paid to three companies owned by someone close to the Clerk-Treasurer. The investigation is completed by my committee; the Bipartisan Committee will report to me recommendations that I will present to the City Council at their August meeting.

Did you know that we have Market, Music and Movie every Friday evening at Founder Square this summer? Well, we do; it’s a great time for our families to get out and about, and enjoy our amenities, weather-permitting. Our Market begins at 3pm; Music begins at 6pm; Movie begins at Dusk.

I would like to welcome my new appointment, Dean McBrayer to our Port Authority Board; our Port Authority Board, made up of Residents of our City, govern our Marina and our waterway to Lake Michigan. Our Sammie L. Maletta Public Marina is located just off State Highway 249 north of Route 20. Please go check it out; you will be impressed. Thank you to all board member for everything you do!

As you can see, your Mayor and his Office is at full throttle working for you. The longer I am in this office, the more that I am impressed with our Residents and the hard work that you do to make our Community thrive.

From your mayor, Thank you, God Bless you, and see you soon.