

Good afternoon residents!

It's Monday again, and time for the weekly City update. This week, we will discuss road projects such as Willowcreek and Fallen Timbers; Collective bargaining agreement updates, and upcoming activities. Let's get started.

Willowcreek Road intersections have seen a lot of work this past week with new the crosswalk installation. This project enhances the look of Portage, in addition to adding more security to the resident walking in the crosswalk. Central, Mulberry, Stone and Lute Road intersections will bring new life to the Willowcreek Road corridor. Regarding this North end of Willowcreek, from Central Avenue to the Toll Road inlet, bids for the project begin this fall, with plans to start construction in June 2020. Landscaping also continues along Willowcreek Road.

Discussions are beginning with property owners on the East side of Willowcreek Road just North of 700 N. South of Highway 6, for a retention basin project. This project is in conjunction with the Porter County Storm Water Board.

Speaking of Willow Creek Road I received an update from the Porter County Highway Department about the Crisman Road overpass. See, it is the responsibility of the county highway department to maintain all bridge decks and to inspect all bridges within the county. We have been ensured, that the two bridges which are part of the Crisman Rd., Willow Creek Road bypass or overpass are being inspected and will be maintained and repaired if needed by the Porter County Highway Department.

We are crossing our T's and dotting our I's in preparation for the reconstruction of the Willow Creek/Crisman Road overpass next year and funding for this project is being discussed at Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission this week.

I want to make sure everyone understands that the Willow Creek Crisman Road overpass and bridges have been inspected and are safe!

Next, Fallen Timbers. I visited the construction area and saw much more progress being made. The construction crews are working diligently to ensure this project is wrapped up before winter. Sidewalk and curb have begun placement, with the North side finishing up this week. The project did see an unforeseen complication with a water pipe rupture on the intersection of Hamstrom and Fallen Timbers. Indiana American Water has apologized for this inconvenience, and has also hired a crew to come and both fix the water line, and the curb and sidewalk damages due to the water line rupture. Hang in there, the plan is to have this work over soon.

Now on to Central Avenue. Crews working on this project have done an outstanding job. The project still remains on schedule, with plans to button up this project prior to November.

Route 6 is also seeing some new paving. This is an INDOT project, taking place from Scottsdale Road to Airport Road. I learned that the crews at this site are in fact using the same resurfacing materials as used on Willowcreek Road. This, from now on, should remain the standard for any re-construction of roadways throughout the City.

Starting today, Rieth-Riley Construction will start milling out and re-surfacing County Line Road. The project is slated to be done by Wednesday, weather permitting. This project is in conjunction with the City of Lake Station.

Also, Rieth-Riley Construction will begin a mill out and re-surfacing project of Crisman Road from the South side of Route 20 to Old Porter Road. This project is slated to begin on September 27, and the residents and businesses here have received notice this week via mail.

This past Saturday was Bacon Fest! A wonderful time, spent with wonderful Portage Pride residents. Don't forget that this coming Saturday at Founder's Square is Brewfest. Tickets are still available, see the link on the Brewfest Facebook page.

The collective bargaining agreement was signed this past week with our firefighters as well.

We have also been in internal discussion to reduce the City's IT costs. Looking for the most effective, and most cost efficient, system.

Park Board members, the park foundation, Portage Township Trustee Union leaders, and the superintendent of Portage Township schools met in my office to discuss a downtown location for a skateboard park and recreational area. We are just in the discussion phase, but all agreed this is a much needed amenity to the downtown area. The same leaders are going to their respective boards for funding of this project, that I hope to have complete within one year.

This week, in closing, I wanted to share a simple quote from American Actress Lily Tomlin, "The Road to Success is Always Under Construction." While I know there is a lot of things happening in Portage, they are for its future success.

Keep the Portage Pride high! God Bless, and see you next week.