

Hello residents, it's great to speak to you again on this Monday evening. I want to take some time to share some updates to various city projects currently in the works.

This week will discuss street name signs, Crisman Road, Central Avenue East and an update on reducing the City's I.T. costs, the upcoming commissioning event for the USS Indianapolis, some exciting Portage Pop Warner information, and the recent passing of a beloved member of Porter County. Let's dive in.

Throughout the developing history of Portage there have been many changes. Many may not know, but Portage was only first recognized as a City in 1968- not that old at all! In the 51 years since its inception, the City has started to take shape. In an effort to bring unity to the City's look, we began a project many years ago. As you drive around you will notice that street signs are both red in color and white. The current accepted look, is white and black.

The utility department and the street department have been working hard to change the signs and to fall in accordance with the Federal Highway Administration guidelines. In addition to the color, the signs are to be on a pole, known as a break-away pole.

The project is going to take some time, as there are currently 300 signs that are still red, or missing, across the City. I don't find it acceptable that the City streets look this way, it's time to get it fixed.

Next, in efforts to reduce the City's I.T. (Information Technology) costs, we began our due diligence in getting varying quotes from local businesses to figure out a way to save tax-dollars. Currently, the City spends \$400,000 per year on I.T. The goal of this endeavor is to reduce this cost by half or more. In doing so, we will be able to spend the saved portion in appropriate areas for misc. projects throughout the City. This includes things such as printer leases, document management software, and significant hardware changes; all for the betterment of making your City work both smarter, and harder for its citizens.

The Crisman Road project is shaping up quickly. As you visit this area, you will see new curb placement and new infrastructure in the median area of Crisman Road just south of Route 20. As I mentioned before, this is setting up for the new "Welcome to Portage Gateway." Bringing fresh life to the northern area of Portage.

Central Avenue East also saw some work progress this past week. As you know this intersection temporarily closed for the project. This project is still moving forward, with its expected completion prior to the harshness of November's weather.

This Friday is the City's Annual Trunk-Or-Treat event. Thousands of kids come each year, and participate in the occasion. The event is held downtown, at Founders Square and will be mapped out soon for you to see. Our Youth Council will be present this year selling hot dogs, chips and water all for \$1 each. The event begins at 5pm and finishes at 8pm; Three hours of guaranteed family fun! Also, some spots are still open, call City Hall and get your booth place today!

This coming Saturday is the Commissioning Event for the USS Indianapolis ship. Many are expected to show up at this event, and participate in this once in a life time occasion. The ship will be stationed in Portage for several days, and finally make its way to its permanent location in Florida.

The Portage Pop Warner Football team also shared some very exciting news with me. The team, consisting of 20 players, dominated the region and were invited to play in the 2019 Super Bowl in Florida on December 6-14th at the ESPN Dome. This is the first time that Portage Pop Warner has been invited, and I want to first congratulate each player and commend the hard work of each coach and individual who played a role in getting to this great achievement.

This past week I also learned of some bad news. Mrs. Debbie Reynolds past away, the husband of Porter County Sherriff Dave Reynolds. Debbie was a very active member of Porter County, and shared her time, heart, and soul with each of those she met. The region cannot help but mourn the loss of such a great member of its community. Debbie will be greatly missed, and our thoughts and prayers go out to the Reynold's family.

Thanks for taking the time to watch again this week. As always, keep your Portage Pride strong, and I'll talk with you soon.