



Portage County Board of Commissioners Newsletter Winter 2024

County Update

County Administrator – Michelle Crombie

As the County Administrator for Portage County, I have the opportunity to partner with a team of dedicated professionals who share the mission of providing innovative and high quality government services in an economical, fair, professional, and courteous manner.

The Portage County Board of Commissioners, County Administrator, Directors, and Team Members work together to open communication lines between Departments, Elected Officials, and Members of the Public. Our partnership strategy included communication, coordination, and collaboration. We draw upon team strengths, resulting in unified leadership within county government, and an overall increase in morale both in the workplace and the communities we serve.

As public servants we have an important role to play in the successful operation of the County; it is an honor to be able to contribute to such a worthy mission and cause. Together, we have accomplished a multitude of system upgrades that have enhanced efficiency in the workplace and increased the quality and availability of services for the citizens of Portage County.

We look forward to partnering with you!

~ Michelle Crombie



Commissioners' Department Updates

Department of Budget and Financial Management – Director Jaclyn Petty

The Department of Budget and Finance successfully completed the next ARPA report in October. The next one is upcoming in January, 2024. Local food pantries that received ARPA funds continue to utilize the funding for distribution of food to local communities.

The County received the Ohio Department of Aging Healthy Aging Grant in the amount of \$451,873.62, to be managed by the Portage County Department of Job and Family Services.

We successfully completed the annual assessments of Water/Sewer and Recycling utility bills to property taxes. The Utilities subdivision of DBFM was moved to Water Resources, to increase efficiency for County Water and Sewer billing. This subdivision is now housed at the Rootstown Office of Water Resources.

We collaborated with Enterprise Fleet Management to conduct the first fleet management meeting with all department contacts. This meeting brought together new and experienced fleet management coordinators, as an orientation or refresher for the fleet management system's functionalities.

On the December 14th 2023 Board of Commissioners meeting, the BOC approved 2024 General Fund Appropriations in the amount of \$67,342,359.00 and 2024 Non-General Fund Appropriations in the amount of \$182,975,351.00. The County closed 2023 with General Fund expenses of \$68,049,594.93 and General Fund revenues of \$69,301,262.83, which resulted in a surplus of \$1,251,667.90.

Human Resources – Director Tami Soltis

The HR Department continues to be proactive on recruiting viable candidates to join our Team Portage County mission. In November, we attended a job fair at Reed Library that provided us the opportunity to be connected to motivated job seekers.

Our HR Team is committed in hosting training seminars throughout the entire year. In November, HR Generalist, Heather Echelberry provided a Reasonable Suspicion Training. This training provided valuable insight to our Department Directors on this important topic. More exciting news to come as the team is currently developing new HR trainings and finalizing the 2024 training schedule.

November was also Open Benefits Enrollment for our county employees. Our Benefit and Leave Administrator, Susan Lynn worked to make sure every eligible county employee had the ability to manage their health benefits during this annual enrollment timeframe.

Our HR Team has partnered with three county departments throughout this year to provide guidance and support during their collective bargaining negotiation in 2023.

The HR Department looks forward to 2024 as we continue to provide the best service to our county employees.



<https://www.portagecounty-oh.gov/human-resources/pages/job-opportunities>



<https://www.facebook.com/hrdportageco.com>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/human-resource-department-portage-county-ohio>

Internal Services Department – Director Shannon Kautzman

The Internal Services Department has been busy closing out for 2023 and getting ready for 2024! In Purchasing we ended the year processing over 660 contracts and completed/agreements/MOUs. We are proud to say that we have completed 23 large projects in 2023. The Shipping and Receiving Department receive over 3800 packages over the year. Currently we set up a log-in for Independence Business Supplies and digitalized the Purchase Order Maintenance (MOD) form to be utilized in 2024. Special welcome to our new Procurement Manager, Michelle Smith who started with us in January 2024.

The Records Center has made some great building improvements, such as a new roof, landscape maintenance and new driveway/ entrance. Glenn and Kayleigh have been working diligently on organizing and cleaning the interior of the building as well, it's really shaping up.

The Maintenance team has been working hard with over 1090 Facility requests that were made in 2023. Samantha Payne celebrates her 2nd year in Maintenance, Mark Gilly celebrated his 38th year with the County and Sonny Tilden celebrates his 44 years here with the County. They all do great work, and it is greatly appreciated.



Water Resources Department – Director Daniel Blakely

In the last quarter, Water Resources completed the Atwater Wastewater Treatment Plant Clarifier #1 Improvements including removing existing flights, chains, shafts, sprockets, tracks, supports, wear strips, wall bearings, motor, gearbox, hardware, and new anchor bolts. This was required to put essential equipment back in service which had been out of operation since October 2022. Streetsboro Wastewater Treatment Plant Biosolids Dryer Repairs were complete including disassembly and inspection of Biosolids Dryer components and replacing or rebuilding of parts that are no longer within design parameters. The Well Test Bore at the Brimfield Water Treatment Plant was completed and entails drilling test bores to find potential sites for future wells to supply additional water for the Brimfield area. This test bore was performed on 01/02/24. Preliminary results of the drilling operation look promising.



The Director of the Ohio EPA, Anne Vogel presented a \$1,000,000 grant to Portage County Water Resources from the H2Ohio Fund. County Commissioner, Sabrina Christian-Bennett and Water Resources Director, Dan Blakely were in attendance to accept the grant. The grant is to be applied to the Chinn Regional Sewer Improvement Project slated to begin construction later this year.

We are excited to announce that as of January 1st, 2024 the Portage County Water Resources billing office relocated to the Rootstown Water Office on 4973 South Prospect Street. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Solid Waste District – Director Dawn Collins

In the 4th quarter we launched our Household Hazardous Waste collection program. This program is on the first Monday of the month from 2-6pm (excluding federal holidays). Both the CHaRM Facility and HHW programs provide residents with convenient drive-thru drop off service to recycle materials that are not able to go curbside. A few examples of these materials are electronics, tires, paint, and appliances with freon.

Solid Waste District also launched their new website at portagerecycles.com which provides more information about disposal options and is easier to navigate.

The CHaRM Facility which opened on September 18th has recycled 1130 tires, 95 TVs, and 59 appliances. Solid waste also has a flag retirement drop box located at the Brimfield Drop off site that is open to residents 24/7.



Building Department – Director Joseph Bodnar

In November we opened the cloud based permitting and licensing software for Contractor Registrations. Since opening that portion of the platform, we registered 367 Contractors to-date for the 2024 registration portal platform. Thank you to all the Contractors who have embraced and support this new technology platform!

Our dedicated Department staff has worked diligently through the remaining implementation of the cloud based permitting and licensing platform, and on January 22 2024, we officially opened the cloud based permitting and licensing portal to the public, including, but not limited to, the homeowners, business Owners and Builders/Contractors. In the first week of having the portal open, we had nearly 70 applications entered into our Department via the portal.

<https://portagecountyoh.portal.opengov.com>

Job and Family Services – Director Kelli Jo Jeffries

Portage County Job and Family Services coordinated and participated in a number of fall and winter activities to promote programs and services to help improve the lives of our Portage County residents. Ohio Means JOBS, Kent State, and our local manufacturing companies helped to graduate another class of manufacturing interns. Child Support, Passages and Kent State School District hosted the annual Father's Day Walk. The team members in our Adult Protective Services area participated in Wii Bowling with members of the Portage Senior Center. The Public Assistance and Adult Protective Services Divisions collaborated in our annual Senior Citizen Forum where speakers educated about senior scams and spotlighted the new guardianship board in Portage County. JFS provided Halloween goodies to a number of youth in care. Team members celebrated Portage County JFS foster families at our annual bowling party and the agency hosted the best Present for Kids Campaign ever, where each child in foster care received six gifts at Christmas as a result of the overwhelming generosity from Portage County residents. We closed 2023 administering the Healthy Aging Grant provided by the Ohio Department of Aging which makes one-time supportive services available to seniors 60 and older through June 30, 2024, to best meet their health and wellness needs.

Portage County Job and Family Services is dedicated to our mission to provide children, adults, and families an effective support system to assist in obtaining self-sufficiency and a safe, stable, healthy living environment.

 <http://www.facebook.com/pcjfs>



Airport- Director of Airport Operations Robert Hartigan

At the Portage County Airport, we have made great strides to improve efficiency. Airport Operations has connected to the Federal Aviation Administration's Notice to Airman Manager Software (NOTAM). The improvement allows for rapid Internet reporting of airfield surface conditions during inclement weather. An airport worker can use a computer or smartphone to report airfield conditions critical to flight safety, instantly. It is a giant leap forward compared to the old system which required calling a toll-free number and waiting for an available staffer to record our reports.

Portage County Regional Airport is the lead agency in a partnership with Baldwin Wallace University's Northeast Ohio Flight Information Exchange (NEOFIX). Together we have applied for a U.S. Department of Transportation Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grant to study the application of unmanned aerial systems for medical, logistics, and other advanced air mobility scenarios.

Along with exploring advanced air mobility and gaining operational efficiency, we have been busy aligning strategic plans towards sustainable growth. We have re-engaged with stakeholders like our partners at the Federal Aviation Administration and the Ohio Department of Transportation's Office of Aviation. Our Airport Capital Improvement Program is on track to reconstruct the North Taxiway and possibly build a new building with up to 13 T-Hangar units, thanks to generous grant opportunities in 2024. And there are more grant opportunities for airport expansion in the future.

These are significant strategic plans because Portage County Regional Airport brings the benefits and values of national connectivity by air transportation to the local level. An estimated 65 percent of general aviation flights are conducted for business and public services that need more flexible transportation than the airlines can offer. Investing in the airport infrastructure will modernize facilities, making it more attractive for business aviation, public charter flights, and private aviation. Improved facilities will attract new businesses looking for well-connected locations and spur further development in surrounding areas.

It is easy to think of the Portage County Regional Airport as the front door of Portage County for many important visitors. A case in point is that we recently hosted Nagesh Palagurth, CEO of Angstrom USA. Last month, Angstrom USA acquired Park-Ohio's aluminum products business in Rootstown for a reported \$53 million. Mr. Palagurth and his executive staff arrived in the early morning via a small business jet to tour the Rootstown facility. Before he left in the afternoon, Mr. Palagurth shared with Commissioner Mike Tinlin and Airport Director Robert Hartigan the importance of having an airport close to his properties.

The Portage County Regional Airport catalyzes economic growth in the region, not just the County. It attracts businesses, investors, and tourists, bolstering local commerce. Enhanced connectivity encourages frequent travel, benefiting residents and businesses by reducing travel time and costs. Increased air traffic means more visitors, which, in turn, translates to higher demand for local services, like manufacturing and logistics, plus amenities such as hospitality, dining, and ground transportation.



Homeland Security and Emergency Management – Director Ryan Shackelford

Working with GPD, Portage County EMA with a partnership of the Portage County Commissioners, Ohio DAS MARCS office, Ohio Department of Transportation, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Wingfoot Bowhunters Club & James A. Garfield Schools finalized the engineering and design of three 330 ft. lattice towers to be erected in Garrettsville Village, Deerfield TWP and Suffield TWP. The purpose of the towers is to provide public safety and service radio communications coverage throughout the rural portions of Portage County. Following an RFP process with Internal Services, Speelman Electric was chosen as the general contractor to erect the towers and they are expecting to break ground the week of January 22nd, 2024.



In August of 2023, Summit Construction broke ground on the new EMA Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and renovations to the existing Station 30. The renovations to Station 30 will ensure emergency supplies are maintained and increase our response capabilities. The new addition to Station 30 enhances our EOC to accommodate 25+ positions, a larger and more capable joint information center and media room and an executive room to ensure our policies makers have the adequate space to make decisions during inclement times. We look forward to moving our administrative offices to Station 30 in September of 2024. This opportunity was funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) in support of the Portage County Commissioners and County Administrator.

Public education was a hot topic for the Portage County EMA this year! Throughout 2023, EMA Staff had the opportunity to educate community partners as well as the general public on a variety of emergency management topics. These topics include but are not limited to emergency management 101, disaster recovery, solar eclipse planning and preparedness, as well as the Portage County LEPC's Site Assisted Visit program.

In 2023, Portage County EMA hosted two Skywarn Classes and trained 100+ new volunteers. Skywarn is a volunteer program that trains civilians to be trained storm spotters. These volunteers serve as the first line of defense in reporting severe weather to our partners at the National Weather Service.

Throughout the year EMA staff attended and facilitated a number of trainings throughout the county and the State of Ohio. Some of these trainings include: Portage County EOC Training, Pre-Disaster Recovery Training, Active Shooter, Building Closure, Evacuation, and Lock-down, and Evacuation for Special Events.



Dog Warden – Chief Dog Warden David McIntyre

During the late fall early winter months as shelter operations slow down a little, we were able to focus on some renovations and improvements including a fresh coat of paint on the main office, clinic, restroom, and laundry room as well as new epoxy flooring that is designed to better hold up to the office needs. This project was completed by the inmates at the Portage County Justice Center.

In partnership with Veteran’s Services and Portage County Auditor Matt Kelley, we are initiating a program called “Collars for Callsigns” a program that enables Veterans to adopt a shelter dog with the adoption fees waived. They will also be able to get a one-year dog license (free) paid through the Veterans Service Office. Veterans who are not looking to adopt and already have a dog at home are also eligible for a one-year dog license. Licenses are limited to one per Veteran (including adoption or existing dog collectively). The Veteran will need to secure a Veteran Status certificate from the VSO before they are eligible to adopt and/or redeem their free license.

We also participated in events including Adopt-A-Thons, Dog Days of Summer, Randolph Fair, Touch A Truck, Safety Town’s, Paws for a Cause, Girl Scout, and several Trunk or Treat events. Over the holidays, the shelter ran a \$25 Christmas adoption promotion to find good dogs a home for Christmas. We also received donations such as dawn dish soap, laundry detergent, blankets, and office supplies from dog lovers throughout the County. We are extremely grateful for our partners who do everything from donating to volunteering and everything in between. Without the incredible network of individuals and organizations that help us, we would not be nearly as successful as we have been in finding homes for these dogs. A side note- still after 16 years, I am extremely proud to announce that we have not had to buy any Dog Food! On another note, we are in the bottom 1/3 of all Ohio Counties for the price of a dog license.

2023 Statistics and Highlight

The Portage County Dog Warden’s Office handled 2,315 calls for service in 2023

- 54 of those calls were for serious Dog Bites
- 430 of those calls were from Ravenna City and Ravenna Township.
- 328 Total dogs came into the shelter

286 Stray dogs came through our doors

- 27 Agency assist
- 7 owner surrenders
- 3 adoption returns
- 5 dogs were trapped and brought in

Dog Dispositions 2023

- 152 dogs were returned to their owners
- 61 dogs Adopted
- 37 dogs were sent to rescue Organizations
- 13 dogs sent to the Animal Protective League
- 6 dogs Euthanized per Owner
- 17 dogs euthanized from being Sick
- 34 dogs euthanized due to being Vicious
- 23 dogs in the kennel at the year end



Please look at the pet finder link below and see if your next best friend might just be sitting here at the shelter!

 https://www.petfinder.com/search/dogs-for-adoption/us/oh/44266/?distance=Anywhere&shelter_id%5B0%5D=OH184

 <https://www.facebook.com/Portagecountydogwarden>



Photos by Precious Pet Photography.

Meet Your Portage County Board of Commissioners



**Commissioner
Anthony J. Badalamenti
President**



**Commissioner
Sabrina Christian-Bennett
Vice President**



**Commissioner
Mike Tinlin
Board Member**

Mission Statement: “As the principal executive organization of county government, the Board of Commissioners, along with its departments, is committed both to providing efficient government and to promoting the welfare and strategic development of the Portage County Community.”

The Board of County Commissioners consists of three members who serve four year terms. Two County Commissioners are elected in an even numbered year, and the third County Commissioner is elected two years later. The Board of Commissioners fiscally oversees the General Fund Budget of the County, and is the appropriating authority for all County tax dollars. Each County Elected Official is charged to perform the duties of their individual elected office, but the Board of County Commissioners performs administrative and fiscal duties that coordinate total County operations. There are ten departments that fall under the direct jurisdiction of the Board of Commissioners, including the newly added Airport, Budget and Finance, Building Department, Dog Warden, Emergency Management Agency, Human Resources, Internal Services, Job and Family Services, Solid Waste, and Water Resources.

 Monday-Friday 8:00am-4:30pm; Weekly meetings on Thursday with public comment at 11:00am.

 449 S. Meridian Street, Ravenna, OH 44266
7th Floor

 330-297-3600

 www.portagecounty-oh.gov/portage-county-board-commissioners

 <https://www.facebook.com/PortageCountyCommissioners>

 Watch live streams of the Board of Commissioners meetings:
<https://www.youtube.com/@portagecounty-oh>



COFFEE WITH COMMISSIONERS

BRIMFIELD FAMILY RESTAURANT

1198 Tallmadge Road
Kent, OH 44240

February 27, 2024 @ 9:00AM

The Portage County Board of Commissioners invite Portage County Residents to Coffee with the Commissioners! We would love the opportunity to share about work underway in the county over coffee. Opportunities will be given for the public to ask questions or provide comments.





Partnered with the Portage County Veterans Service Office,
the Dog Warden's Office and Shelter, and Auditor Matt Kelly

Collars & Callsigns

Connecting shelter dogs to Veterans

•Free Dog License •Free Registration •Free Companion •Unconditional love

Veterans Service Office: 330 297-3545 Dog Warden: 330 297-6924

Auditor's Office: 330 297-3561

- Bring your DD-214 to the Portage County Veterans Service Office
- Acquire signatures from Veterans Service Office and Auditor's Office
- Take your signed certificate to the Portage County Dog Warden Shelter
 - If you adopt before Jan 31, 2024, your annual dog license will be free

[Pet Finder](#)

Adapted from Lucas County's [Dog Tags to Dog Tags Program](#)



Food Pantry Recognition Event



February 8th, 2024, at 2:00



Portage County Administration
Building
449 South Meridian Street
Ravenna, OH 44266
7th Floor Board Room



RSVP: Please reply to this email by
February 1st if you are able to attend.
Please indicate in your reply how many
people from your pantry plan to attend.

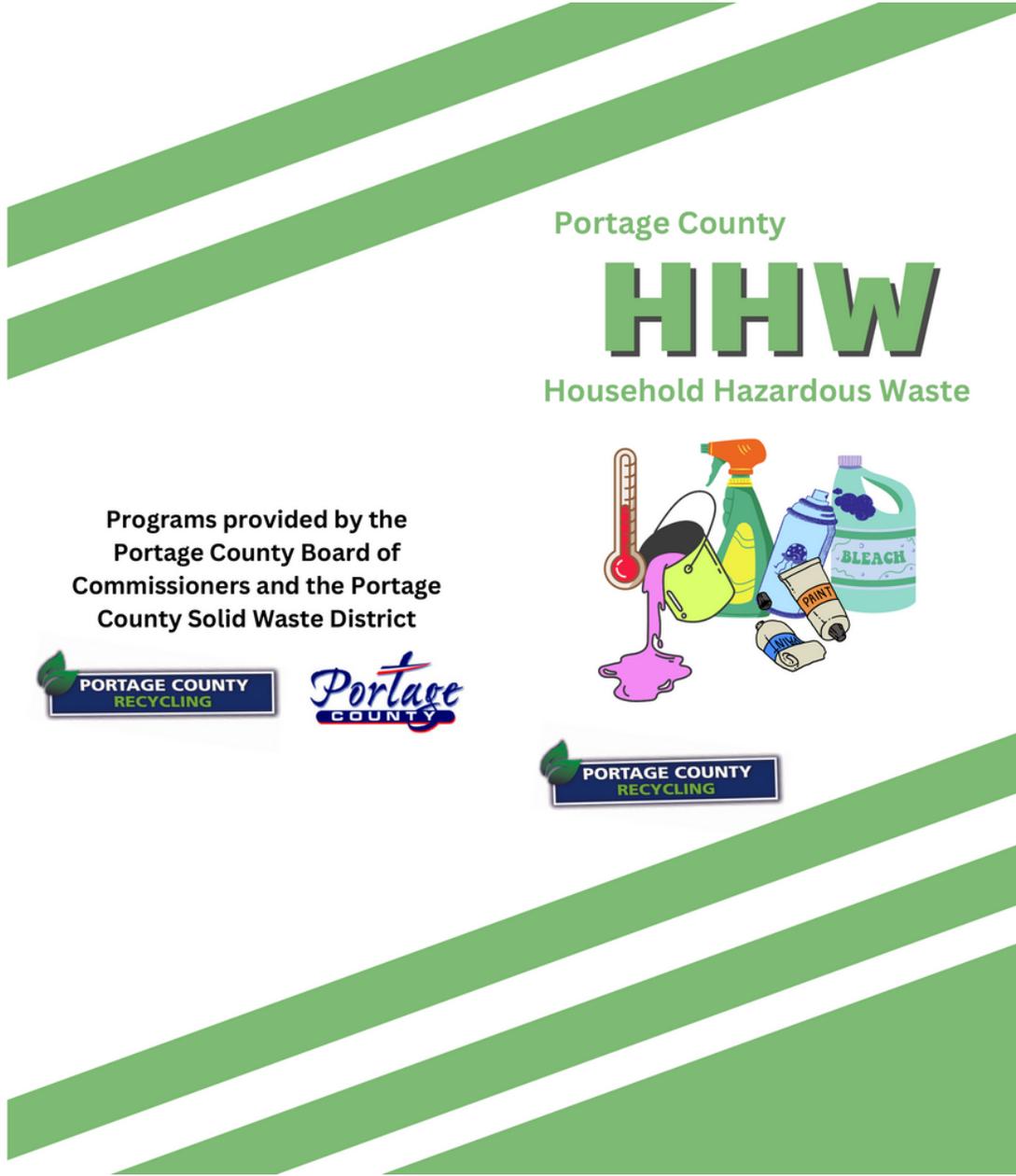
Join us for our Food Pantry Recognition Event. We are excited to meet with all of you and recognize your efforts in providing food and basic necessities to our community. Photos will be taken at this event; we encourage you to wear something that represents your food pantry (i.e., a t-shirt, hoodie, hat etc.) We will serve light refreshments.

**PORTAGE COUNTY SOLID WASTE
MANAGEMENT DISTRICT -
DISTRICT RECYCLING CENTER**



3588 Mogadore Road
Kent, OH 44240
330.678.8808
portagerecycles.com

HHW Collection:
First Monday of the Month (excluding
federal holidays)
Hours: 2:00-6:00



Portage County

HHW

Household Hazardous Waste

Programs provided by the
Portage County Board of
Commissioners and the Portage
County Solid Waste District



HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE (HHW)

COLLECTION GUIDELINES

- Portage County Residents **ONLY**, MUST provide ID
- Residential waste only, NO BUSINESSES
- NO SMOKING
- Drive in, follow instructions and **stay in your vehicle.**

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HHW Hours:

First Monday of the Month 2:00-6:00
(excluding federal holidays)

CHaRM facility is also open during
HHW collection

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All hours & dates are subject to change.

ACCEPTABLE MATERIALS

- ACIDS
- ADHESIVES
- AEROSOL CANS
- FLUORESCENT LIGHTS
- FUEL
- HERBICIDES, PESTICIDES, INSECTICIDES, FERTILIZERS
- HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS
- MERCURY- * **MUST BE DOUBLE BAGGED* IF LIQUID MUST BE IN JAR**
- OIL BASED PAINT, STAINS, THINNERS
- POOL CHEMICALS
- SOLVENTS



UNACCEPTABLE MATERIALS

- WEAPONS
- EXPLOSIVES
- CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS/DEBRIS
- RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS
- STANDARD HOUSEHOLD TRASH
- COMPRESSED GAS CYLINDERS
- MEDICAL WASTE
- PROPANE TANKS

Accepted materials subject to change.

HHW COLLECTION DATES

2023 DATES

OCTOBER 2,
NOVEMBER 6,
DECEMBER 4,



2024 DATES

FEBRUARY 5,
MARCH 4,
APRIL 1
MAY 6,
JUNE 3,
JULY 1,
AUGUST 5,
OCTOBER 7,
NOVEMBER 4,
DECEMBER 2

1ST MONDAY MONTHLY
HOURS: 2:00 - 6:00

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CLOSED ON NEW YEARS
DAY (1/1/24) AND LABOR
DAY (9/2/24)

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LATEX PAINT

LATEX PAINT IS NOT HAZARDOUS
BUT IS COLLECTED DURING THE
SAME HOURS AS HHW COLLECTION

IS IT LATEX?

Look for the one or more of
the following terms on the
can label: Acrylic, Latex,
Water-based, Soap and
Water Clean-up.



QUESTIONS?

Visit: portagerecycles.com
Call: 330.678.8808