

Portage County Today

Located conveniently in the midst of northeastern Ohio's urban centers, Portage County offers excellent accessibility to a well-developed transportation network, major urban markets, a well-educated and experienced labor force, and some of the finest educational, cultural and recreational opportunities available anywhere.



From its gently rolling pastures, to its industrial parks and city centers, Portage County has something to offer everyone. Portage County, the home of more than 152,000 people, encompasses a land area of approximately 322,000 acres (500 sq. miles). The convenient access to Greater Cleveland, Akron/Canton and Warren/Youngstown metropolitan areas makes Portage County an excellent business location.

Portage County's proximity to these metropolitan areas also means that business owners and employees alike can enjoy all of the cultural, recreational, educational and social amenities these areas have to offer while enjoying the benefits that a more rural, less congested setting provides.

In Portage County businesses discover that tax rates, labor costs, rents, the price of land and building construction costs are extremely competitive. New residents find diverse and affordable housing, quality education, excellent shopping, a multitude of recreational options and a quiet drive in the country only minutes away. Residential development continues to provide a multitude of housing options. In 2005, new construction added 806 dwelling units.



Once noted for the high quality of its manufactured glass and for the output of its more than 50 cheese plants, Portage County's growing business base now hosts a range of industry producing an array of products, from toys to lamp bulbs to aircraft components to personal care products. Metalworking, Plastic & Rubber Products and Printing/Publishing lead the county's manufacturing sector.



All the measures of economic performance are up--retail sales, housing starts and business ground breakings. New and expanding manufacturing and distribution firms invested over 999.9 million dollars in Portage County during the period 1992 - 2008. These investments added over 7300 new jobs to Portage County's job base and retained 6000 existing jobs. New construction added 8.7 million sq. ft. of new industrial space.

Seventy stores at the Aurora Premium Outlets and new retail development throughout the county continues to add to the county's economic base.

In October 2001, Portage County received an upgrade on its bond rating from Moody's Investor Services and Standard & Poor's. The services each upgraded the county's long-term credit ratings by one level: Moody's to Aa3 and Standard and Poor's to AA-. The change should result in the county paying lower interest rate to redeem the bonds, and lower insurance costs to guarantee the bonds an AAA rating. The county also received upgrades on its short-term credit rating from both agencies. Portage County has maintained these ratings for 5 years. The ratings put Portage in the top 20 percent of all counties that are rated in Ohio.

The upgrade was based on several criteria, including the county's continued residential and retail growth and its strong commercial/industrial base. Another strong point is the county's growing investment portfolio, which has grown from a \$50 million average in 2003 to \$75 million in 2006.