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## New manager settling in

By *TOM THELEN*  
*Editor*

PORTLAND - Patrick Reagan has one main goal that he would like to achieve as Portland's new Main Street program manager: Make Portland the premier Main Street community in Michigan.

Reagan has been learning more about Portland and its progress under the Main Street program since he started as the Main Street manager/Downtown Development Authority director on April 15. So far, he is very pleased with what he has found.

"This is just a fantastic community," said Reagan. "The people here really care about the city and the business owners are some of the best that I have worked with. It is a great community."

A native of Coopersville, Reagan received a bachelors degree in history from Grand Valley State University and also earned a masters degree in public administration from GVSU that including specialties in public management and urban & regional policy & planning. That education helped him earn the position of Main Street manager for the city of Iron Mountain in the Upper Peninsula.

"Iron Mountain was a great community with some of the nicest people you will meet," said Reagan. "However, it had a different political climate. The city manager had just left and there were some city council members being recalled."

Taking the same position in Portland allows Reagan to be closer to his hometown and , more importantly, be with his wife Karen.

"My wife is a teacher at Grand Rapids Forest Hills Northern," said Reagan. "So for the past year we have been separated by a time zone and an eight-hour drive.

Now we are together and living in a nice downtown apartment that has a view of the Grand River."

While Reagan is holding the same job in Portland that he had in Iron Mountain, he said the job will still be different.

"In Iron Mountain, there was US-2 running right through the middle of downtown," said Reagan.

"To be a successful downtown you need to be compact and walkable and that is hard to do with a major roadway running right through the downtown.

"Meanwhile everyone has done an outstanding job here in Portland," added Reagan.

"You have one of the best looking downtowns that I have seen with the facade improvements. Plus you have the rivers, a riverwalk as well as the boardwalk.

And you have some great volunteers and a great city staff that have helped make it all happen."

Building on past successes is one of Reagan's goals as Main Street manager.

"Being as close as Portland is to the Main Street headquarters in Lansing, we should be the finest Main Street program in the state," said Reagan.

"We should make it so that the state leaders bring folks to Portland to show them how the Main Street program is run successfully.

And we have everything already here to make that possible.

"I also want to get the vacancy rate in the downtown to 5 percent," said Reagan.

"You want some openings so you have an opportunity for an entrepreneur to move in and be successful. In Traverse City, they have such a waiting list for downtown spots that some people just go elsewhere.

And my final goal would be to continue the work that has been done by the volunteers here over the past five years."

Reagan said that he looks forward to meeting more people in Portland and sharing their ideas for the downtown.

"That is one thing that I like most about this job is being able to meet a lot of people because different people have different viewpoints as well as different ideas on how to accomplish a goal."

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