



**For Immediate Release**

**June 17, 2020**

Local leaders from Portage County, the City of Stevens Point, the Village of Plover, the Town of Lanark and all local law enforcement met earlier today to complete the signing of a “Joint Statement on Racism and Marginalized Communities in Central Wisconsin.” The statement comes at a time when many individuals, businesses, and organizations are affirming their commitment to improving their strategies in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion because it is clear that taking serious steps in these areas creates a better community—across the board.

The statement was also issued the day after the Portage County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a resolution to create a Diversity Affairs and Inclusiveness Committee that, according to language in a draft ordinance that accompanied the resolution, “Shall work to foster cross-cultural understanding, dismantle institutional racism, and embrace our diversity through modeling, education, policy development, and celebration”.

Portage County Executive Chris Holman stated, “This statement is not a vague platitude, but rather the beginning of a much broader and longer-term conversation that will continue through bodies like the newly created Diversity Affairs and Inclusiveness Committee. I am looking forward to supporting their leadership in this area and listening to and learning from those who will be serving on the committee.”

He went on to say that, “When we discuss things like racism, the focus is usually put onto the explicit and intentional acts we hear about the most, but what many of us don’t realize is that we can unconsciously and unintentionally cause harm to others, and drawing attention to that and changing the ways in which we see and define something like racism can help people in our community stop talking past each other and to recognize that by building capacity for a greater, shared understanding of these issues in our community we can leave rancor and divisiveness behind and create the kinds of relationships we all want to have before we need them.”

While the statement started with these local leaders, Executive Holman made it clear that there is an open invitation to everyone in our community and across the region who is interested in signing onto the statement and committing to supporting the work ahead.

Anyone wishing to sign on to the statement can call the County Executive’s office at (715) 346-1997, send an e-mail to [countyexecutive@co.portage.wi.us](mailto:countyexecutive@co.portage.wi.us), or send a note to 1462 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481. The list will be updated every Friday and there is no deadline to send in your support.

The statement can be viewed at the following link:  
<https://www.co.portage.wi.us/home/showdocument?id=29894>