Porter County

The maps and tables in this publication were prepared using PCensus 7.06 for MapInfo and MapInfo Professional 7.0.
Porter County is located in Northwestern Indiana and is bordered by Lake Michigan and the following Indiana counties: La Porte to the east, Starke to the southeast, Jasper to the south and southwest, and Lake to the west. Interstate Highways 94, 80 and 90, and U.S. Highway 30 cross the county. Elevation is 650 to 850 feet.

There is a wide variation in terrain with nearly flat land along the border with Lake Michigan and in the south, and slightly sloping landscape from west center to northeast. The landscape features hickory, beech, maple, and oak trees. The central part of the county pertains to the Northern Illinois and Indiana Heavy Till Plain land resource area; and areas in the north and in the south pertain to the Southern Michigan and Northern Indiana Drift Plain land resource area.

Porter county is in the Eastern Time Zone and observes DST. Average daily temperatures are 14/31 ° in January and 60/85 ° in July. Annual precipitation is about 39 inches and snowfall about 30-50 inches. Because of the warming effect of the lake, the first freeze actually occurs earliest in the south (October 5-10), next in the central region (October 10-20), and last along Lake Michigan (October 20-30). Likewise the last freeze occurs first along the Lake (April 20-30), later in central area (May 1-5), and last in the south (May 5-10). The growing season lasts 153-193 days.

Agricultural activity is diversified, with 53% in farms, and about eighty-five percent in commercial crops. Primary crops include hay, corn for grain, soybeans, and winter wheat. Cucumbers and tomatoes are important vegetables, and popcorn is a special crop. Livestock include cattle/calves and hogs/pigs. Main natural resources include construction sand/gravel, industrial sand/gravel, petroleum and forestland. Water resources include lakes/reservoirs (including Flint Lake, Lake Eliza, Lake Louise, Lake-of-the-Four Seasons A and B, Lake of the Four Seasons C, Long Lake, Loomis Lake, Mink Lake, Rice Lake, and Schneider Lake), the Little Calumet and Kankakee Rivers, and streams (Salt Creek, Wolf Creek, Crooked Creek, and Cornell Ditch).

Communities include the cities of Portage and Valparaiso, the county seat; the towns of Beverly Shores, Burns Harbor, Chesterton, Dune Acres, Hebron, Kouts, Ogden Cunes, Porter, and Town of Pines.

Sources: Map from PCensus for MapInfo; Geographic Notes from Indiana Facts: Flying the Colors by John Clements, 1995.
Porter County is not a tobacco-producing county, according to the Strategic Development Group’s “Alternative Agricultural Strategy” (Bloomington, March 15, 2001) report, which is part of Governor Joseph E. Kernan’s “Recipient Final Reports for Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture Grant Programs” (http://www.in.gov/oca/grants/valueadd/VAFinalReports.html):