



# Information Station Specialists

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## The Source information radio communiqué

January 2010

### Helping Visitors See the Light

The City of Ludington, Michigan, is partnering with a historic lighthouse group to get visitors to "see the light" – using radio. In the summer of 2009 the Sable Points Lighthouse Keepers Association (SPLKA) installed a special "Information Radio Station," which broadcasts on the AM frequency 1610, atop the City's 3-story water treatment building. From this high point along the lakeshore the signal propagates across the City of Ludington, up and down the Lake Michigan shoreline and can be tuned in by visitors in vehicles within a 3-5-mile-radius range. (See more below, left.)

**Big Sable Point Lighthouse  
Ludington, Michigan**



The Big Sable Point Lighthouse, located on Lake Michigan, is one of three lighthouses touted by the new radio station. Designated a National Historic Site, its marker reads...

Called *Grande Pointe au Sable* by French explorers and traders, Big Sable Point was an important landmark for mariners traveling a treacherous stretch of Lake Michigan shoreline between Big Sable Point and present-day Ludington. In 1855, twelve ships wrecked in that area. Commerce linked to the burgeoning lumber industry required that Big Sable Point be suitably lighted. State senator Charles Mears pressed the legislature to ask the federal government for a light station at Big Sable. In 1866 the U.S. Congress appropriated \$35,000 for a lighthouse, which was built the following year. As the lumbering era waned, steamers carrying coal, foodstuffs, and tourists continued to rely on the lighthouse for navigation. The Big Sable Point Lighthouse is one of the few Michigan lights with a tower reaching 100 feet. Completed in 1867, Big Sable's tower measures 112 feet high. In 1902 the deteriorating brick tower was encased in steel. The keeper's dwelling, which once housed a single family, has been enlarged over the years, resulting in the present three-family residence. Indoor plumbing and heating and a diesel electric generator were added in 1949. In 1953, power lines were extended to the Point. In 1968 the tradition of light-keeping begun in 1867 by Alonzo A. Hyde and his wife, Laura, ended when the station was fully automated. Big Sable Point Light Station is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The broadcast, whose handle is "Light Talk 1610," tells travelers how to locate three 1800's era lighthouses, and gives them historic details as well as hours and dates that each is open for tours. SPLKA president David Hawley declares, "We've had nothing but positive feedback about 'Light Talk 1610.'"

To give the the broadcast spice and variety, the group worked with Information Station Specialists to conduct interviews with volunteers, visitors and Association management. Their voices can be heard, intermingled with informational messages.

The City also has access to the broadcast to insert current event information during the beach town's busy summer season. The content of the station's broadcasts are calculated to get people's appetites up for a visit to one of the lighthouses and to the many other attractions in the city of Ludington, which is strategically centered amidst them all.

The equipment employed operates by conventional audio files on flash drives; and, when a new broadcast is required, it only requires a quick change to get it done. Like the lighthouses it speaks of, the station is out there serving visitors and potential visitors 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



**Robert Sperling  
Lighthouse Director of Maintenance  
Posing with the Antenna**

"We value our partnership with ISS, Inc.; and we look forward to working with [them] more in the...future."

...David A. Hawley  
SPLKA President

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