

# *The Source*

## Information Radio Newsletter

December 2018

Published by Information Station Specialists ([theRADIOsource.com](http://theRADIOsource.com))

# The "Old Fort" tells its story in a new way.

## Adds "History Station" to Invite Visitation, Participation & Donations

FORT WAYNE, IN: There is an old fort in Indiana that's trying some new tricks when it comes to promotion and community engagement. Built in 1976 and located in the heart of downtown Fort Wayne, the Old Fort is a replica of the final fort to stand in Fort Wayne, originally constructed in 1816. Operated by Historic Fort Wayne, Inc., the Old Fort is reaching out to locals and out-of-town visitors using a special radio broadcast. No, they are not buying time on local stations. The group recently took it a step further and bought their own radio station.

Drive through downtown Fort Wayne now and you can tune into a "History Station" named "Fort Radio – AM 1640" ([sample broadcast](#)). The new service provide updates on coming events, a thumbnail of the structure's history and details on where to park when you get there. The broadcast even instructs listeners how they can volunteer during historic events and how they can donate to keep the Fort's programs vital and functioning.

Because the Old Fort is located in a city park and its broadcast license is in the name of the city's parks and recreation department, one plan is to promote the broadcast to park visitors within 2-3 miles to encourage them to tune in, get engaged and plan a visit. Street signs with a unique logo have been created, above left, that can be installed as riders on existing street signs. A more rustic version, above right, has been designed to be installed at the Old Fort itself.

Public information liaison Malinda Pagel tells *The Source* that a History Station functions like a "point of purchase" display at a retail store. "A large number of people drive by our site daily in their cars. We're not open every day and our large events occur over random weekends throughout the year. So, we've struggled to let people on the ground know who we are, what we're about and when we're open. This History Station on 1640 is a great way to communicate with potential visitors on the spot instead of sending them to a website for more information."

Since most every destination has a website, a History Radio Station adds an element of uniqueness to a site's communication mix that can set it apart. It tells the site's story using human voices to add character and nuance to the presentation. An oral delivery can be especially valuable for the very young, seniors and the visually impaired – groups who may not be able to take full advantage of traditional text-based communication methods such as brochures, on-site displays or the web pages.

History Stations are in use around the US at well-known historic sites such as Gettysburg and Fort Donelson National Battlefields, Mount Rushmore, along the Natchez Trace Parkway and to interpret structures such as the Zane Grey home in New York, plantations in Tennessee and at lighthouses such as Big Sable Point in Michigan ([examples](#)). Some stations, like the Old Fort's, are FCC licensed **Information Stations** and have a range suitable to cover a city. **Unlicensed versions with a shorter range** are utilized to tell the story of historic homes and districts.

Malinda Pagel continues, “Historic Fort Wayne, Inc., is a donation-only organization, and it takes a lot to maintain our Fort in a way that is period-correct and historically accurate. Increasing our number of visitors may also result in an increase in our donations, which in turn allows us to stay open and keep the Fort in good shape for generations to come.”

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## Lighthouse preservation requires information.

POINT REYES STATION, CA: With the \$5,000,000 restoration of one of the most picturesque light stations in the US in full swing, the National Park Service’s (NPS) Point Reyes National Seashore is reaching out to approaching visitors by radio (listen) to keep them apprised of the status of the project and to tell them how they can navigate construction work.

Beginning late this month, NPS is setting up a shuttle bus service on weekends and holidays, so the public can continue to have limited access for whale watching while the lighthouse area remains closed. Because the construction affects various roads and public facilities, the Park Service is employing an [EventCast portable radio system](#) to deliver to visitors specifics regarding the shuttle schedule, its route and its cost prior to their arrival. The broadcast also stresses key safety information for riders who plan to disembark.

“Our preference is to get the [radio] system up and running before the shuttle starts to give visitors a heads-up,” says John Dell’Osso, the National Seashore’s Chief of Interpretation and Resource Education.

EventCast Portable Systems were first utilized by the National Park Service at the Grand Canyon ([The Source newsletter, March 2017](#)) to provide details about their shuttle bus system, which operates at the South Rim throughout the main visitation season.

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## History Stations

### Listen On-Air

- [Natchez Trace Parkway, TN, AL, MS.](#)
  - [Rippavilla Plantation, TN.](#)
  - [Fort Leavenworth, KS.](#)
  - [San Jacinto Battlefield, TX.](#)
  - [Old Fort, Fort Wayne, IN.](#)
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## Hoover's History Station.

### His history is a headliner on a heartland highway.

WEST BRANCH, IA: What former president grew up in a family of five and lived in an Iowa house smaller than a two-stall garage? It was none other than Herbert Hoover himself, who would be humbled to hear how the National

Park Service has honored him with one of the first History Radio Stations (**TIS**). The radio service is available to motorists whizzing along on Interstate 80 in Eastern Iowa as they approach Hoover's historic hometown – West Branch, Iowa.

Recent **upgrades** have allowed the Hoover Presidential Foundation to take over the production of the radio programming, and the result is one of the best-sounding interpretive **Information Stations** heard anywhere. The Foundation's Brad Reiners told *The Source* that the 22-minute repeating broadcast includes multiple voices and interviews to be more engaging – and so the broadcast will sound more like a live radio program.

"We hope that people who listen but don't stop the first time they pass us will come by on their return trip across I-80," states Reiners. The signal range is such that travelers moving between Davenport and Des Moines at 70 miles per hour can listen for 10-15 minutes, as they go by.

Creating an engaging program such as Hoover NHS's can also be contracted out. **Information Station Specialists**, the historic site's equipment provider, offers a service called "**InfoRadio Format**" in which multi-voice programs of this type are written, produced and delivered to operators to air on their stations. A number of **National Park Service sites** have utilized the InfoRadio service – historically.

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## Related Link

**Making Waves with Information Radio** - get a free cd of first-person accounts and real-life visitor-use examples created under the auspices of the National Park Service and Oregon State University.

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