

Interpreting Rises and Falls

NPS's New Hawaiian Information Station: Up at Dawn, Down on the Shore

HALEAKALA NATIONAL PARK, HI: The word "Maui" is associated with luxury travel, if you live on the Mainland. But in Hawaii, locals know that the name originates from the folklore of the island, some of which will be interpreted by a new pair of Information Radio Stations <http://www.theradiosource.com/products/information-station.htm> (TIS) being installed there this month.

The mythological "Maui" was a figure who stood atop the island's 10,000-foot Haleakala Peak and found a way to slow down the sun's transit in order to benefit agriculture. Today, thousands of visitors travel to that peak at dawn each year to witness the magnificent sunrise that awaits the early riser. The National Park Service operates a visitor center at the summit, and intends to use the Information Radio Station to slow down early morning congestion by helping visitors find available parking — or not to ascend to the summit if lots are filled.

A second station is being installed a world away at a visitor center on the lush island coastline at the Kipahulu to advise visitors of opportunities there. Its wet shoreline environs, replete with waterfalls, pools and panoramas could not be more different than the volcanic summit only 17 miles to the northwest.

Both stations will feature PBS/National Geographic voice talent Jeff Laurence to describe and interpret the flora, fauna and folklore that await the adventurous who make the trek. Laurence's delivery features a lushness of its own, perfect for painting word pictures that play to radio's long suit. (Listen to message sample at <http://www.theradiosource.com/sounds/haleakala-hi-message.mp3>.)

"The creativity that goes into these projects gives each station's broadcast a special character," asserts Laurence. "Haleakala's are two of the most unique that I've been associated with so far. Visitors really benefit from this service." The announcer's voice can be heard at various NPS locations coast to coast, including seven locations along the 400-mile Natchez Trace Parkway managed by the National Park Service.

The American Association of Information Radio Operators (www.AAIRO.org) began making recordings by Jeff Laurence (as well as four others), available at no charge, in 2009 for member operators (see <http://www.theradiosource.com/services/recording.htm>).

Why Not Arcola?

You can pick any exit to stop at. Why not one that's fun?

ARCOLA, IL: Mile after mile of Interstate whisks past your window as you endure another crossing of the Prairie State enroute to Chicago. With 150 miles to go and dozens of highway exits to select from, why not take a break at one that invites you to visit? Why not exit at Arcola, Illinois?

Arcola is an example of a rural community that's mastered virtually every medium in an effort to seduce passers-by with its charm.

Do you know where Raggedy Ann and Andy come from? Arcola.

Want to see Amish life up close? Arcola.

Restored train depot/visitor center? Arcola.

New wildlife park and performance theater? Arcola.

Festivals, parades and events around the year? Arcola.

Mark Spainhour, director of the Chamber of Commerce uses an Information Radio Station in his communications mix.

“With thousands of potential visitors passing by on I-57 each day, we use every tool at our disposal to reach out to them to let them know what’s going on here.” Spainhour affirms that their radio station, which was installed in 2015, is working well to attract travelers. “The staff at our visitor center is telling us that they meet lots of motorists who say that the reason they pulled off here is the radio station’s message (<http://www.theradiosource.com/sounds\arcola-il-message.mp3>).”

The Arcola Chamber creates their unique broadcast using a format called “InfoRadio” provided by Information Station Specialists (www.theRADIOsource.com). The service provides both creative writing and a multi-voice, professional production. Additionally, Arcola is the first chamber in the US to broadcast at a full 5000 Hz bandwidth, so the overall sound is on par with a standard broadcast station.

Arcola sees advantages for reaching motorists via radio. Though considered by some an “old fashioned” method, radio fits well with Arcola’s historic theme. More importantly, the key demographic that is likely to stop and visit Arcola is also likely to use radio when prompted by signage. Radio also provides a way to speak to drivers without the distractions inherent in visual forms of communication; and it has the ability to “tell the story” of a community with a human touch — impossible to do with text alone.

When telling the story of Raggedy Ann and Andy, the human touch is kind of important.
