Information Station Specialists Preps New AM Broadcast Antenna

At less than 50 feet in height, it supports up to 1 kW of power

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PUBLISHED: JANUARY 8, 2026

Engineered in the U.S. heartland, the pending Magnum k1 antenna, Information Station Specialists said, will offer AM station operators a path for an affordable antenna with a “fly under the radar” footprint.

The Michigan-based company said the model is pending the completion of full-power tests. The company anticipates it will begin taking orders in the spring.

But Bill Baker of Information Station Specialists told us that the antenna is designed to specifically support up to 1,000 watts of power on middle and upper AM frequencies.

Information Station Specialists' Magnum K1 antenna.

He has heard from interested station owners early and often who crave an antenna that can reduce their land footprint — or better yet, be installed on a building roof.

"It can absolutely save an AM license when a broadcaster is forced to move their antenna because of a land sale, loss of lease or the sudden requirement for a tower replacement," Baker said.

The Magnum k1 stands less than 50 feet tall and only a modest, flat area of ground or rooftop is required, Information Station Specialists said. It recommends a 100 ft. x 100 ft. flat installation surface with the antenna and its supporting mast installed in the center.

"Testing thus far proves it has the efficiency to be a full-time antenna for many Class B, C and D stations that operate on frequencies 900 kHz and above," Baker told us.

The Magnum k1 package includes the antenna itself, as well as mounts, a support mast and pole, guy lines, hardware and electronics in a weatherproof cabinet.

“Because the antenna’s design is series-resonant with a matching network, an antenna tuning unit is not needed,” he said.

The idea was hatched about seven years ago. The company’s HPR.0990 AM antenna for travelers’ information station broadcasters could handle more wattage than the standard 10 watts of TIS power in an emergency under a special temporary authority with the FCC.

AM stations began to use the model for STAs and even full-time applications for power levels under 300 watts.

Baker pointed to Emmis’ 1070 WFNI(AM), which has been operating with the HPPR.0990 from a downtown Indianapolis rooftop site with around 200 watts while the company seeks to find a prospective purchaser, according to WFNI’s STA. (WFNI filed for a silent STA this past December.)

One station in Connecticut is also using the HPPR.0990 and hopes to move back to its licensed 1 kW with the Magnum k1.

“We are being real careful to get this product right,” Baker said. Upcoming field tests to prove its power worthiness, he believes, will prove that.

Additional options, including a preassembled ground plane, roof installation kit, tuning analyzer and engineering support, will also be available.

Operators can request an estimate of signal performance with the Magnum k1, Baker said, and also whether the antenna is likely to be efficient enough for commission approval on their frequency from any site in the U.S., prior to purchase.

The Magnum k1 joins other antennas and tuners offerings from Information Station Specialists, including “The Lowdown”, a 630-meter amateur radio antenna, “The Range Extender,” a Part 15 antenna and tuner and the Matchbox impedance matching network.

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The author is a content producer and staff writer for Radio World, having joined the editorial team in 2024. He has a lifelong passion for long-distance FM radio propagation and is a faculty advisor for 89.1 WXVU(FM). He is also the creator of RadioLand, an FM radio location mobile app, which he completed for his Villanova University graduate thesis.