

Pure Ludington

Ludington Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

PRESS RELEASE

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LUDINGTON OFFERS WEST MICHIGAN'S LARGEST NEW YEAR'S EVE BALL DROP PLUS OUTDOOR BEER FEST AND LANTERN-LIT SNOWSHOEING FOR WINTER FUN

LUDINGTON, Mich. – Dec. 21, 2016 – The weather outside may be frightful, but Ludington will be delightful this winter with plenty of festive events for every type of reveler – from the New Year's Eve Ball Drop and Fireworks, to Pure Ludington BrrrewFest Michigan craft beer festival, to lantern-lit snowshoeing.

"Ludington is a year-round visitor destination, with many winter weekends just as jam-packed with activities as our summer months," said Kathy Maclean, executive director of the [Ludington Area Convention & Visitors Bureau \(LACVB\)](#). "Anyone looking to add some one-of-a-kind events to their winter traditions should book a weekend in Ludington. And many hotels are offering great rates to boot."

New Year's Eve Ball Drop - West Michigan's Largest NYE Ball

Ludington's biggest annual celebration takes place on New Year's Eve. And it's not just big for Ludington – it's big for West Michigan, as the region's largest New Year's Eve ball in terms of size and number of lights. The [New Year's Eve Ball Drop](#) features a ball with 6,000 LED lights dropping in the heart of downtown, fireworks, and an outdoor beer garden with DJ. Activities begin at 9 p.m. when the entertainment tent and beer garden at James Street Plaza opens for music and dancing. Domestic and craft beer, wine and champagne are available for purchase. At midnight, the ball drops from above the intersection of James Street and Ludington Avenue, open only to pedestrians that night. At the stroke of midnight, fireworks launch over the downtown. The event is free, though alcohol can be purchased, as well as commemorative light-up glasses (\$8 in advance or \$10 that evening). Visit downtownludington.org/nye.

"New Year's Eve is one of our highest-attended events of the year," said Jen Tooman, communications and marketing manager of Downtown Ludington. "It's one big street party, with downtown businesses staying open late, our main street blocked off to vehicle traffic, and area restaurants and bars offering great menus and warm-up spots."

As an added bonus for revelers who want to be safe if they plan to consume alcohol, Ludington businesses are sponsoring free rides and towing service. Ludington Mass Transportation Authority will provide free rides to and from downtown from 9 p.m. Dec. 31 through 4 a.m. Jan. 1. Rides must be reserved by calling [231.845.6218](tel:231.845.6218) between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Dec. 31 or from 8 p.m. Dec. 31 to 3:30 a.m. Jan. 1. Those wishing to have their car towed home can call one of four towing companies (Abrahamson Towing: [231.843.2990](tel:231.843.2990); Quinn's Tires & Tows: [231.757.9262](tel:231.757.9262); Oceana Auto: [231.843.6500](tel:231.843.6500); and Fiers Towing: [231.757.4479](tel:231.757.4479)). Towing and driving services are available in Ludington city limits, North Jebavy Road to Jagger Road, south to Pere Marquette River, all of Pere Marquette Township, and east on U.S. 10 to Scottville.

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Related New Year's Eve events in Ludington include:

- **Light up the Lake Family Party**, Dec. 31, 7 - 11:30 p.m., Mason County District Library. masoncounty.lib.mi.us/ Crafts, games and activities for partygoers of all ages – including board games, Legos, and video games. At 11:30 p.m., the party closes so everyone can stroll downtown to enjoy the ball drop. Free. Children under age 12 must be accompanied by an adult.
- **New Year's Eve Balloon Drop and Stomp**, Dec. 31, 5 - 8 p.m., Sandcastles Children's Museum. sandcastleschildrensmuseum.com. Families with young children can ring in the New Year a few hours early with a balloon drop featuring more than 500 balloons. The party also will feature live music, food, favors, ice cream sundaes, crafts, photo booth and more. \$10 per person or \$35 per family.
- **Resolution 5K**, Jan. 1, 11 a.m., Ring in the New Year for your health with a 5K through downtown. \$25 entry fee includes a custom die-cast finishers medal. Presented by Spectrum Health Ludington Hospital Win With Wellness. Register online at downtownludington.org/runludington or on race day at Ludington Pub from 10 to 11 a.m.

Pure Ludington BrrewFest with Craft Beer, Live Music

Ludington also is hosting its third annual **Pure Ludington BrrewFest** this winter, Jan. 28 from 1 to 6 p.m. at Rotary Park, featuring 30 Michigan brewers plus live local music in an outdoor setting. Andy Thomas will open with an acoustic music set, followed by headliner American Hairband dedicated to the glam and hard rock movement of the 70s, 80s and 90s. Tickets (\$25 in advance [online](#) or \$30 at the door) include a 5 oz. sampling glass plus six drinks tokens. Proceeds benefit the Friends of Ludington State Park, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving, enhancing and promoting the wise use and conservation of Ludington State Park. Information is at pureludington.com/beer.

Confirmed brewers include Austin Brothers, Bell's Brewery, Blake's Hard Cider, Brewery TerraFirma, Brewery Vivant, Big Lake Brewing, Dark Horse Brewing Co., Dutch Girl Brewery, Ellison Brewery, Farmhaus Cider Co., Fetch Brewing Co., Jamesport Brewing Company, Love Wines, LLC, Mountain Town Brewing Company, Perrin Brewing, Petoskey Brewing Co., Ridge Cider, Roak Brewing Company, Rochester Mills Brewing, Short's Brewing Company, Starving Artist Brewing Company, Storm Cloud Brewing Company, The Mitten Brewing Company. Check the [Facebook event page](#) for the final list of brewers.

Brrewfest-related events also are part of the weekend fun, including:

- **Boozy Breakfast**, Jan. 28, 9 - 11:30 a.m., Barley & Rye. facebook.com/barleyryebar. A special "boozy" breakfast will kick off the day of BrrewFest with drink specials like \$3 beer-mosas, \$7 mimosas and \$6.50 Irish coffee. Food specials (all \$7) include breakfast burritos and burrito bowls, breakfast quesadillas and biscuits & gravy.
- **Winter Fat Bike Trail Open House**, shorelinecyclingclub.org/winter-fat-bike-rendezvous. The Shoreline Cycling Club will show off the Ludington area's groomed fat bike trails while offering demo bikes at this free event, weather permitting. No registration needed, but interested participants should fill out a [short form](#) in advance. Contact dave@spindriftcyclesports.com or andyklevorn@gmail.com for questions.
 - **For beginners**: Jan. 28, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., Ludington School Forest Trails. Meet at the warming tent at the corner of Sherman Road and Tinkham Avenue near the entrance to the School Forest Trails. Opportunity to try a fat bike on 7-8 miles of groomed trails. No experience necessary; bikes and helmets provided.
 - **For experienced riders**: Jan. 29, 11 a.m., Manistee National Forest. Meet at the corner of West Forest Trail and Cooper Creek/Morton Road near Lake Michigan Recreation Area. Members of the Shoreline Cycling Club will lead riders on a fat bike tour of the trails through Manistee National Forest. Different ride options available based on ability between 1 and 3+ hours long. Must bring your own bike and helmet.

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Lantern-Lit Snowshoeing/Guided Snowshoeing and Cross-Country Skiing

Ludington boasts a number of excellent snowshoeing and cross-country skiing trails – and one of the most popular places for a winter sojourn is at 5,300-acre [Ludington State Park](#). Several miles of trails are groomed for cross country skiing, and snowshoers can explore all the other trails. The park also hosts a series of snowshoeing events on weekends in January and February starting at the Warming Shelter, weather permitting:

- **Lantern-Lit Skiing/Snowshoeing** – Jan. 7 and 21, Feb. 4 and 18; 6 - 8 p.m. The park is again hosting its popular lantern-lit snowshoeing. Visitors can bring snowshoes or cross-country skis or borrow one of 50 pairs of wooden snowshoes for free on a first-come, first-served basis – walking a short lantern-lit, groomed trail with a bonfire at either end to warm up and enjoy a hot beverage. Staff can help trekkers get started. No reservations needed. Participants should dress warmly and bring a flashlight. Free.*
- **Guided Snowshoe Hikes** – Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28; Feb. 4, 11, 18 at 2 p.m. This 1.5-hour guided snowshoe hike highlights the park's nature and history. Fifty pairs of wooden snowshoes are available to borrow for free on a first-come, first-served basis. No reservations needed. Staff can help trekkers get started. Free.*

* A Recreation Passport is required for entry

In addition to snowshoeing and cross-country skiing at Ludington State Park, [Ludington School Forest Trails](#) offer five miles of trails. Other cross-country trail systems in the area include [Big M Cross-Country and Mountain Bike Trail](#), [Crystal Valley Ski Trail](#) and [Pentwater Pathway](#) . Fat bike trails include [Big M](#), [Manistee Non-Motorized Trail Park](#) and [Ludington School Forest Trails](#). For trail information and maps, visit pureludington.com/MasonCountyTrails.cfm.

Lodging Discounts

Many of Ludington's hotels, motels, bed & breakfasts, resorts and cottages offer discounted room rates and enticing packages during the winter. Find seasonal discounts, coupons and packages at pureludington.com/visitors_packages.cfm.

ABOUT LUDINGTON

Located on the shores of Lake Michigan with miles of beachfront and water access, Ludington offers a quintessential "Up North" experience close by. Ludington and surrounding Mason County deliver the perfect combination of unspoiled natural resources and unrivaled outdoor recreation with quaint, small-town charm. And it's all within easy reach, located at the intersection of U.S. 31 and U.S. 10. For information on the Ludington area including lodging, events, and other tools to help plan a Ludington getaway, visit PureLudington.com or call (800) 542-4600.

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