

SNOW-MAKING
DEVICES OPEN
A NEW ERA

Add Patrols at
Three Sites

By Jack Hovelson
(Register Staff Writer)

CEDAR FALLS, IA. — Iowa may be on the verge of becoming a major Midwest recreational ski area, says a native Czechoslovakian who heads the Iowa section of the National Ski Patrol.

Since he came to the state six years ago, Karl Odwarka, an assistant professor of German at the University of Northern Iowa here, says he has seen the number of public ski areas in Iowa jump from two to eight. In addition, he says, there has been an unknown increase in the number of private ski slopes.



KARL
ODWARKA

Snow Machines

"The breakthrough for Iowa has been the development of snow-making machines, plus the realization that a substantial number of people have been going out of the state to ski," said Odwarka.

He estimated that on a given winter weekend, from 5,000 to 10,000 Iowans go skiing, with the largest share traveling to Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois.

"I have a feeling that more ski areas are going to develop in Iowa," said Odwarka.

"The northern half of the state is in a snow belt and we have enough hills. For example, the Central City area has a beautiful hill that would be ideal for skiers from Cedar Rapids."

Odwarka noted that Iowa has enough population centers, plus four universities and a host of smaller schools, to provide enough customers for several more public ski areas in the state.

For \$100,000

He estimated that a corporation could develop an adequate ski area in Iowa with about \$100,000 capital.

Odwarka said the daily fee for use of most existing Iowa ski slopes is \$2 to \$3 "depending on what uphill transportation they have." Rental of ski equipment will average about \$5 a day and skiing instruction in groups will run about \$2 to \$3 an hour per individual, he said.

"In Iowa, what can we do in the winter? During the summer, we have golf and tennis. Skiing is just the thing for Iowa winters. It's tremendous for losing weight and it's great for blood circulation," he said.

He said public ski areas will be in operation this winter near Crescent (north of Council Bluffs), Estherville, Humboldt, Fort Dodge, Webster City, Grimes, Decorah and Steamboat Rock.

As Iowa section chief of the National Ski Patrol, Odwarka oversees the setting up of volunteer ski patrol teams for the areas. The job of the patrols is two-fold: insure the safety of the skiers and rescue the ones injured on the slopes.

Six Areas

Odwarka said patrols operated last year at three areas, including one private slope. This year, they will be added at three more areas — Humboldt, Grimes and Decorah.

"We try to furnish at least two ski patrolmen at each area whenever it's open, said Odwarka. He said the patrolmen, before the skiers arrive, check safety devices on ski lifts, examine slope conditions, and mark dangerous spots on the hills.

Not Big Enough

Ski lodges haven't been established yet in Iowa, said Odwarka, because most of the existing areas have adequate overnight accommodations nearby.

Odwarka, 42, left his native Czechoslovakia in 1944 but remained in Europe until emigrating to the United States in 1967.