

There is skiing in Iowa, too

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Colorado doesn't have a stranglehold on the ski industry. Flatlanders can get some of their downhill ski ya-yas out closer to home — and for considerably less money.

There are about eight ski areas around Iowa, and their owners are hoping for more snow and colder weather than they got last year. Some areas, such as Ski Valley west of Boone and Oak Highlands near Waverly, did not open for skiing at all last season because it was too warm.

This year, the folks at Sundown, the state's largest ski area, are busy making snow and hope to be able to open sometime in the next few weeks. Adult lift tickets are \$15 on weekdays and \$18 on weekends.

Sundown, located 3½ miles west of Dubuque on Asbury Road, offers 17 runs with three chairlifts and three rope tows on its 475-foot vertical drop hillside.

Meanwhile, Fun Valley, 2½ miles west of Montezuma, has added another double chairlift and an additional snowmaking machine this year.

The ski area, which has a 240-foot vertical drop, now has two chairs, three rope tows and one cable. Lift tickets for adults are \$14 on weekends and \$9 on weekdays.

Night skiing is offered at several Iowa ski areas, but Mt. Crescent has taken it a step further. The ski area, two miles north of Crescent, Ia., near Council Bluffs, is offering all-night skiing on Saturday nights. People can ski from midnight until 6 a.m.

"We did it last year, and it went over real big," says Russ Lindeman, manager of Mt. Crescent.

Adult lift tickets there are \$17 on the weekends, \$13 on weekdays. Tickets for the overnight skiing are \$13 for adults. Mt. Crescent has a 300-foot vertical drop, and the longest of its 10 runs is about 2,000 feet.

Ski equipment rental for adults at many of Iowa's ski areas seems to range from roughly \$7 to \$15 a day. Most offer discounts on tickets and ski rentals for children.

Several Iowa areas have closed in recent years. This season, Oak Highlands near Waverly won't be opening unless the owners find someone to lease it, says co-owner Mary Mommer.

For more information about Iowa's ski areas and for snow condition reports, call the Iowa Tourism Information office at (515) 281-3100.

Across the state border in Galena, Ill., Chestnut Mountain Resort has added a quad chairlift and two new runs for advanced skiers. Chestnut Mountain is about 20 miles from Dubuque. Lift tickets for adults are \$20 on weekends and \$15 on weekdays. Chestnut hopes to open around Nov. 27.