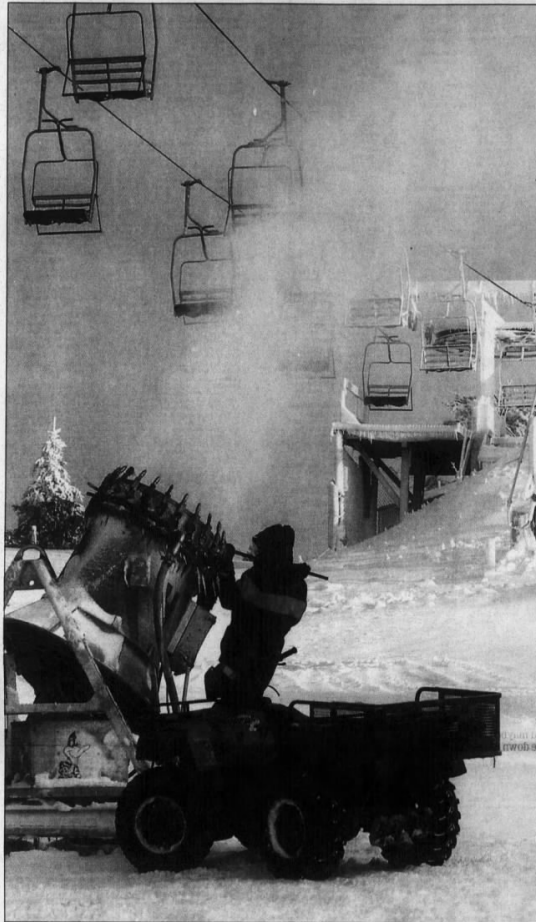


SKIING

It's time to ski



Dubuque Telegraph-Herald photos

Now that the weather is cooperating, things can look pretty much like this scene from last November at Sundown Mountain in Dubuque. The ski resort starting making snow this week and is hoping to open for the season Nov. 28.

Sundown's Dietz ready for cold weather to arrive

By Jeff Johnson

DUBUQUE — Mark Dietz is probably one of the only guys in Eastern Iowa who can't wait for the weather to turn consistently cold.

Let's explain. Dietz is the general manager at Sundown Mountain ski resort near Dubuque, and Sundown can't open until the temperature dips below freezing and stays there. So it's time to feel the "tetter," as far as he's concerned.

"We're getting there," the always-energetic Dietz said this week. "We made snow here for the first time at 8 o'clock (Monday). We had a real good night of snow making."

Now if only that snow stops melting. Dietz said the tentative opening date at Sundown is Nov. 28, the day after Thanksgiving. That could change, of course, according to what Mother Nature does.

Dietz is excited about the ways things are going at Sundown, which touts itself as having "a greater top to bottom vertical than all resorts in Illinois, Missouri, Iowa and Minnesota resorts south of Duluth."

He said his resort had "a great year last year here ... One of the best years Sundown has had in its 38 years." He knows the economy is tight this winter but doesn't think it'll affect his business too much.

That hypothesis is backed by Sundown's selling more season tickets than ever this year.

"I think the mega-resorts are the ones who are a little nervous," Dietz said.

Sundown's motto this winter



Snowboarding continues to be popular at Sundown Mountain. This snowboarder was in action last January.

is "Discover Skiing." It has a top-notch promotion in which beginning skiers can get a free 90-minute lesson and ski rental from Dec. 1 through Dec. 21. Contact Sundown by phone at 1 (888) 747-3872, extension 0, or at its Web site, www.sundownmtn.com, to get in on the offer, which has limited spots available.

Snowboarding also is very popular at the mountain. Dietz estimates 35 to 38 percent of Sundown's customers to be snowboarders, most of them youths.

Lessons are available, with special classes for fourth, fifth and sixth-graders new this season. "This year, one of the things we really are focusing on is getting people to just come out to try the sport," Dietz said.

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Last winter presented a paradise for area ski enthusiasts, including this skier performing a 360-maneuver off a last January at Sundown Mountain in Dubuque.

SKI THE MIDWEST

The temperatures are dropping, and area ski resorts are starting to make snow. Some are shooting for an opening as early as the day after Thanksgiving. Here's a guide to Iowa ski facilities and a few in Illinois and Wisconsin:

CRESCENT HILLS

■ **Location:** 17034 Snow Hill Lane, two miles north of Crescent
■ **Trails:** 10 downhill, two tubing chutes
■ **Longest run:** 2,200 feet
■ **Lifts:** Two chair lifts, two "handle toes"
■ **Snowmaking:** 100 percent
■ **Season:** Mid-December to mid-March
■ **Price:** Lift rates \$32 M-Th, \$39 Friday-Sunday and holidays; juniors \$22 and \$27
■ **Hours:** 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday-Thursday, Friday: 9 a.m. to midnight Friday and Saturday; 9 p.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday
■ **Information:** (712) 545-3850
■ **From Cedar Rapids:** About 4:30, south on I-380 to I-80 west to I-680 west to 183 south
■ **Web site:** www.skicrescent.com

RIVERSIDE HILLS

■ **Location:** Highway 4, southwest of Estherville
■ **Trails:** Six downhill
■ **Lifts:** Three
■ **Snowmaking:** 100 percent
■ **Longest run:** 1,400 feet
■ **Season:** December 1st to mid-March
■ **Prices:** Call for prices
■ **Hours:** 3:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesdays-Friday; 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday; noon to 9 p.m. Sunday
■ **Information:** (712) 362-5376, (712) 362-5948; snow phone, 1 (800) 286-5376
■ **From Cedar Rapids:** About 4:15, north on I-380 to 218 north to 18 west to 4 north.

SEVEN OAKS

■ **Location:** Boone
■ **Trails:** 8 (snowboarding and tubing available)
■ **Longest run:** 1,800 feet
■ **Snowmaking:** 100 percent
■ **Lifts:** Three surface lifts, one triple chair
■ **Season:** December to mid-March
■ **Hours:** 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday; 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday; 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. holidays
■ **Prices:** 12 and younger, \$16-23; adults, \$20-30; snowtubing \$18 first two hours, \$6 each additional hour
■ **Information:** (515) 432-9457
■ **Web site:** sevenoaks.com
■ **From Cedar Rapids:** About 2:30, west on 30

SLEEPY HOLLOW

■ **Location:** Des Moines, east of state fairgrounds
■ **Trails:** 13 (also terrain park for snowboarding and skiing and snow tubing area)
■ **Snowmaking:** 100 percent
■ **Lifts:** Three rope tow, one chair lift
■ **Season:** Early December to mid-March
■ **Hours:** 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesdays-Friday; 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday; noon to 8 p.m. Sunday
■ **Prices:** Lift tickets, 12 under \$12.22, adults \$17-27; Ski packages, 12 under \$19-32, adults \$24-39; Snowboarding packages, 12 under \$24-37, adults \$29-43; Snowtubing, 12 & under \$11-18, adult \$13-20
■ **Information:** (515) 262-4100
■ **Web site:** sleepyhollowsports.com
■ **From Cedar Rapids:** About 2:00, south on I-380, west on I-80

SUNDOWN MOUNTAIN

■ **Location:** 16991 Asbury Rd., Dubuque
■ **Trails:** 21 alpine and snowboarding
■ **Season:** December through mid-March
■ **Snowmaking:** 100 percent
■ **Longest run:** 4,000 feet
■ **Lifts:** Two double chairs, one triple chairs, one quad chair, two ski carpets
■ **Uphill lift capacity:** 9,600 per hour
■ **Hours:** Opening through Dec. 20: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday; 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday; After Dec. 20: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday through Thursday; 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday; Fridays Jan. 2-Feb. 27 9 to midnight
■ **Lift passes:** Ranging from \$27 to \$39, adults; \$20 to \$29, youth (6-11); \$10 ages 70 and older; \$10 to \$20, beginners area; season pass, \$365; 5 and younger free with an adult
■ **Information:** (563) 556-6676
■ **Snow report:** 1 (888) SUN-DOWN
■ **From Cedar Rapids:** About 1:15, north on Highway 151

IN ILLINOIS ...

■ **Chestnut Mountain Resort** near Galena offers skiing and snowboarding. Located on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River, Chestnut has 140 acres for skiing, a seven-acre terrain park, 19 downhill runs ranging from beginner to expert, two quad chairs, four triple chairlifts and three surface lifts. Expecting to open Nov. 28. Call 1 (800) 397-1320 or go online at www.chestnutmtn.com

AND IN WISCONSIN ...

There are several ski resorts located just a few hours from Cedar Rapids:
■ **Cascade Mountain**, 30 miles north of Madison; information: 1 (800) 992-2754, www.cascademountain.com
■ **Devil's Head**, south of Baraboo; information: 1 (800) 472-6670, www.devils-head.com
■ **Mount La Crosse**, south of La Crosse on Highway 35; information: 1 (800) 426-3665, www.mtlaacrosse.com
■ **Tyrol Basin**, five miles west of Mount Horeb (full schedule starts Dec. 20); information: (608) 437-4135, www.tyrolbasin.com

FIGURE SKATING

Figure skaters shine in sectional

SUGAR LAND, Texas — Two Eastern Iowa Figure Skating Club pairs teams earned silver medals at the recent U.S. Figure Skating Midwestern Sectional Championships.

Lauren Gifford and Carson Bodnarek placed second in novice pairs, and Anya Cockerell and Mark Krutzfeld were runners-up in juvenile pairs.

Gifford and Bodnarek qualified for the 2009 U.S. Figure Skating Championships at Cleveland in January, and Cockerell and Krutzfeld next will compete Dec. 8-13 in the U.S. Junior Figure Skating Championships at Lake Placid, N.Y.