

North Girding for Big Ski Year

Michigan's winter resort areas are gearing for their biggest winter sports season in the state's travel history. For in six short years this Great Lakes vacation state has become the ski capitol of the midwest and a predicted \$14 million industry this year.

And this winter Michigan will have 69 organized winter sports centers in operation—more than any state east of the Rockies, according to the Michigan Tourist Council.

Six new centers will open for the first time this winter, while other records will offer skiing enthusiasts expanded and improved facilities, said Robert J. Furlong, Council executive secretary.

Snow-making machines will be in operation at nine of the ski areas, he said, assuring a longer skiing season and more reliable conditions in marginal snowfall areas.

INTEREST IN Michigan skiing has been booming since 1953 when there were 38 ski centers in the state hosting some 65,000 skiers. This year ski resorts will dot the map from the Copper Country of

the upper peninsula to Kalamazoo and Pontiac in southern lower Michigan.

With today's trend toward family recreation, all of Michigan's resorts are equipped for beginners as well as experts and in-betweeners. Ski slopes vary in length from 300 feet to 5,300 feet, the longest at Cliffs Ridge Ski Resort in the western upper peninsula.

OTHER SKI CENTER offerings include cross-country trails, slalom bowls and ski-jumps. Toboggan runs and skating rinks are featured at many areas. And for indoor enjoyment, there are restaurants, snack bars, lounges and warming shelters. Skiing equipment can be rented at most centers and several resorts offer "ski week and weekend" packages which include lodging, meals, equipment and instruction.

Besides skiing, snowtime sports in Michigan include skating, tobogganing, ice-boating, hunting and ice-fishing. The booming popularity of cold weather outdoor recreation has boosted winter vacation travel to an all-time high, Furlong said.

"This season, for example, more than a half-million sportsmen (and their families) will travel to Michigan's expanding winter sports areas," he said. "With a helping hand from the weather, this should be our most successful winter season."

The six new ski centers include one in the upper peninsula, one in west Michigan and four in east Michigan.

The U. P. now has 15 ski centers including the latest addition, Mt. Joy, at Wakefield.

West Michigan has 24 centers with the addition of Nub's Nob, five miles northeast of Harbor Springs.

Four of East Michigan's 24 ski resorts make their debut this winter. They are: Mt. Frederick, at the village of Frederic; Mott Ski Area, at Farwell; Mt. Christie, five miles north of Oxford; and Dryden, 18 miles north of Rochester.

Six ski centers are located in Southeast Michigan.

Both the Dryden and Mt. Christie areas have snow-making machines, and this equipment also

was added this year at Holiday Hills, east of Traverse City. Snow machines were in operation at six resorts last winter.

Pine Mountain has added a new three-story Swiss type chalet, three new slopes and a 2,350-foot double chair lift. A Pomalift has been installed at Avalanche, and Boyne Mountain added a double chair lift. Caberfae completed installation of its double chair lift as part of a \$60,000 improvement program this year.

IN EAST MICHIGAN, new installations include a chair lift at Otsego Ski Club; a T-bar lift at Snow Valley; a snack bar and ski shop at Lovell's Winter Playland; two new toboggan runs at Silver Valley; and double the number of ski runs at Grayling Winter Sports Park.

Furlong said the Tourist Council now is preparing a new edition of its statewide ski map and winter sports guide which pinpoints each of Michigan's 69 ski areas and lists their facilities. The map is expected to be ready for free distribution by December 1.