

The Outdoor

EVENING NEWS / Saturday

Riverview ski area opens

RIVERVIEW — A ski area located less than 10 minutes from the Monroe County line?

Local skiers may be shocked, but they no longer have to drive an hour or more to enjoy the slopes.

The flat-as-a-board terrain of southeastern Michigan has been transformed into a ski slope called Riverview Highlands. It is an active landfill owned by the City of Riverview.

It isn't Boyne Highlands by a long shot, but Riverview Highlands offers 90 and 125-foot slopes along with a chair lift and five rope tows. There are snow-making facilities and lights for night skiing.

Riverview Highlands started as a landfill in 1968 and skiing opened Dec. 16. It is located on Sibley Rd. east of I-75.

"Take I-75 to the Dix Rd. exit, the Dix service drive to Sibley Rd. and go a few miles east on Sibley. You can't miss it. It's the only hill around," Mike Shea said.

"We've had good crowds so far," continued Shea, Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Riverview. "This is the only municipally-owned and operated ski area in

Michigan and eventually it will be a major ski area."

Shea said a third slope and two more chair lifts are planned next winter. Riverview Highlands eventually will have five slopes, the highest reaching 225 feet.

"We have a restaurant, lounge and complete rental facilities with 350 pairs of skis, boots and poles," Shea said. "There is no overnight lodging, but plans have been approved to build a motel."

The complex also includes a 27-hole golf course now being used for cross country skiing.

"It's a four-season facility," Shea said with the sound of a northern Michigan lodge owner.

Riverview Highlands operates a pair of skiing sessions, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and 5 to 11 p.m. Fees are \$4 for the early session Monday through Friday and \$5.50 for later skiing.

Saturday, Sunday and holiday prices are \$6 and \$5.50. Rental equipment at all times is \$3.50.

"We also have half-session rates, something most ski areas don't offer," Shea said.

Lift tickets are half price for skiers using the slopes in 1 to 4:30 p.m. or 8 to 11 p.m. shifts.

SKIING AVAILABLE — Lodge Manager Lee Morris surveys the new Riverview Highlands ski area from inside the clubhouse (top). Swirling snow obscures most of the layout which opened Dec. 16, but there are two

slopes, a chair lift and five rope tows. Riverview Highlands is just minutes away from the Gibraltar home of nine-year-old Maggie Mackey (below).

Wildlife fund