

## Ski Slope Planned

# Kellyville: The Sun Valley Of Oklahoma?

By MIKE LEDNOVICH

Selling Oklahomans to the idea of a ski center is like trying to sell a Cadillac to a native of Zambia.

Willis and Yvonne Barrows are going to try anyway when they open their Snow Valley Ski Area in Kellyville in December.

It will be the only known ski area in the state of Oklahoma.

"It's hard to sell the people of skiing in an area where its never been before," said Barrows, a skiing enthusiast since 1938.

"But I feel that it will be a success in this area. We have

the weather to make snow, all we need are the people."

Barrows plans to make snow on his three-sloped area just off the Heyburn Dam road with a gun type unit than can lay six inches of snow on a five acre section in about eight hours.

The making of the snow is the biggest factor in the operation of the ski area.

"Three things must be present to make snow," explained Barrows, who has been making snow for over 12 years. "You must have freezing temperatures, wind protection and a

valley if possible."

Barrows feels that he has all three in the ridge he will lease from J. D. Goodman of Kellyville, that can be seen from either Route 66 or the Turner Turnpike.

The ski area will feature ski tows, a ski school, exhibitions, rentals, and a toboggan area and rental.

"We'll have parking for 300 cars," said Barrows. "The area will also have a qualified ski patrolman at all times, a huddle house equipped with a fireplace, and three different degrees of

skiing slopes."

The beginners slope will have a gentle downhill track of about 450 feet, the beginners-intermediate slope will run 500 feet, and the intermediate-expert will stretch between 750 to 800 feet.

Barrows traveled 3,000 miles in one week searching for just the right spot for the ski area.

His odyssey took him from Oklahoma City to Ada, Guthrie, Sand Springs and finally to Kellyville. It was by accident that he found the ridge in Kellyville.

"I was going out to look at some land by Heyburn Dam and I got lost," Barrows explained. "Well, there I was, looking at this fine ridge and I asked someone around if they knew who owned it. I got together with Mr. Goodman and we were able to work the whole thing out."

Barrows has all the credentials to make the ski area a success. He has managed ski areas in Vermont and California, directed his own ski schools, cut and laid out ski trails and made artificial snow for over 14 years.

"We hope to attract the people who like winter sports," said Barrows. "We know we're not going to get the expert skier who travels to Colorado. We want to get the average person in here and teach them how to ski."

Barrows stated that with ten freezing nights of weather he could operate 30 days excluding rain.

Barrows is a certified ski instructor in both the East and West coast associations, and is a member of the Professional Ski Instructors Of America.

He started skiing at the age of

six and went on to compete for seven years on the U.S. and Canadian circuit with the Austrian ski team.

The ski area will have two ropes ascending to each of the slopes and Barrows hopes to operate from December to late March.

"I know it's something new and that it will take time to build up here," said Barrows. "But I'm sure that the interest is here to support the ski area."

Don't be surprised if the next thing Barrows does is open a Cadillac dealership in Zambia.