

Tells How Gaylord Developed Alpine Theme Voluntarily

The City Manager of Gaylord told Petoskey Rotarians at their dinner meeting in Stafford's Bay View Inn Wednesday how this northern Michigan city has become nationally recognized as "The Alpine City" without specific ordinances, zoning or building restrictions.

Donald Hamond said that while an architect's plan was drawn for the 300 block of main street several years ago, the development of Gaylord into a city where most business places and public buildings have a distinctive Swiss style in design, has been on an individual, voluntary basis.

"Business places are encouraged to conform to the Alpine style when they build or remodel, but Gaylord does not really have a master plan -- a master architect," Hamond said. He reviewed how the Swiss style was first identified with Gaylord when the late Donald McLouth built the Hidden Valley Ski resort in 1941 near Gaylord. All of the buildings of this exclusive resort are in the true Swiss style and McLouth urged Gaylord to adopt the idea of Swiss architecture to make it a distinctive ski resort town.

Hamond said that with the development of the ski business and the big interchange of I-75 at Gaylord's doorstep the community had to do something different to attract the tourist off the freeway.

Gaylord has received national recognition for its cooperative community effort in developing the Alpine village theme. They even have been adopted as a "sister city" by Pontresina, Switzerland and they exchange ideas and proclamations from time to time.

"Before" and "after" slides of many of the buildings in Gaylord were shown. They graphically showed how many national corporations have deviated from their buildings in Gaylord to conform. As a result Gaylord has the only "Big Boy" with a Alpine Hat and the only Swiss Chalet telephone booth in the world.

The entire city gets into the Swiss spirit during the Alpine Festival which will be held next week. At this time everyone dresses in colorful Swiss costumes and join in the festivities of the annual celebration which is becoming one of the biggest summer attractions in the midwest.

Niles K. Hill was program chairman and introduced the speaker.

