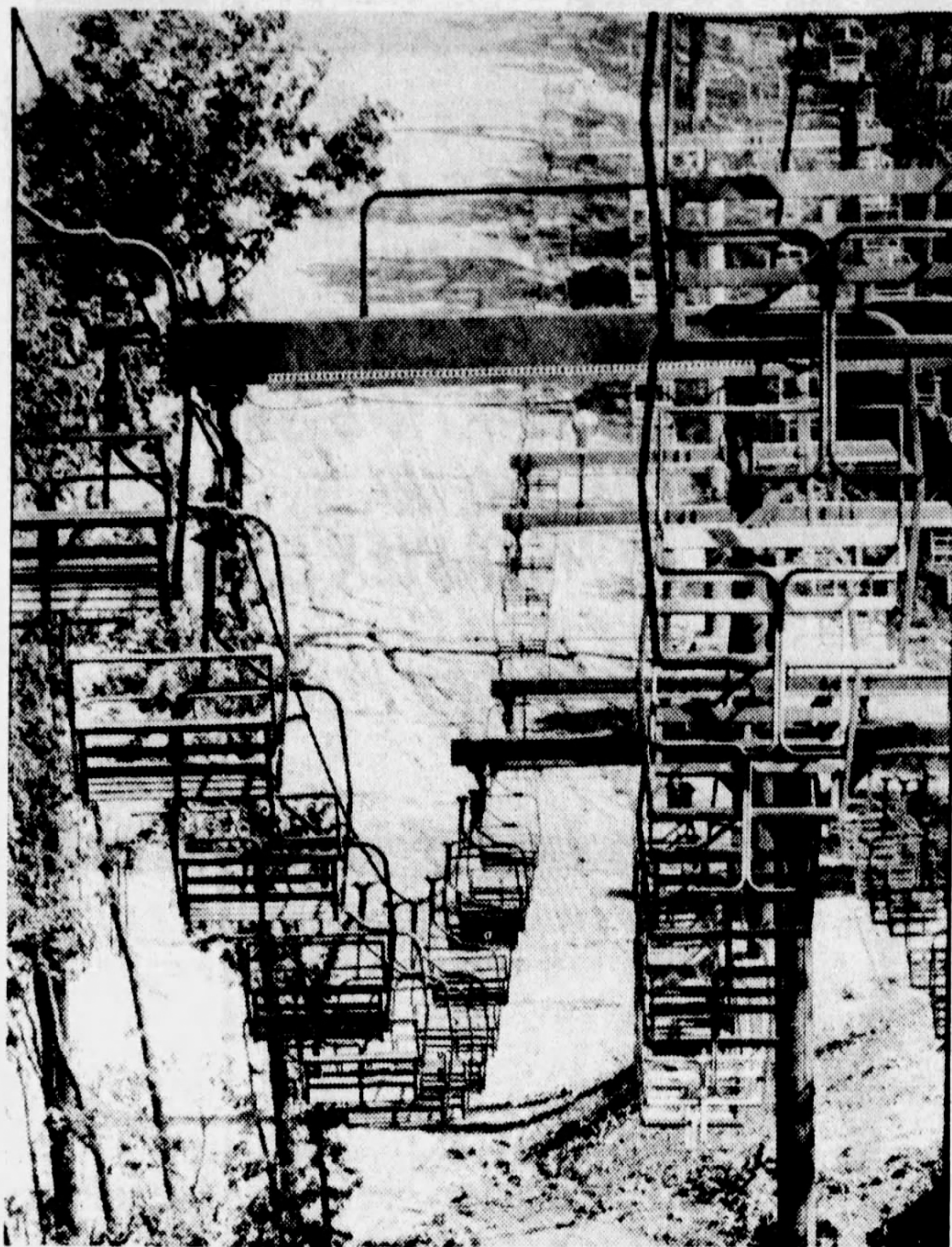




Pictures by Tim Vizer, Sunday staff photographer

View from "junior mountain" panoramic

# Huge ski resort six weeks away from its opening

By **BILL GREER**  
Business editor

**SELLERSBURG, Ind.** — The Midwest's largest ski resort will open here six weeks from now, offering at least 10 runs and a "double double" chairlift capable of transporting 2,400 skiers an hour to the top of the slopes.

Ski Starlite has been under construction for two years on a 500-acre junior mountain in southeastern Clark County, with projected completion cost estimated at \$7 million.

Developers say the facility will be "three times" as large as any similar resort in Indiana, have permanent snow-making machines capable of blanketing any trail when the temperature drops to 34 degrees and year-round activities are planned for those who love their nature better green than white.

"Ski Starlite will be the ultimate in Midwest skiing," according to marketing director Joyce Senzig.

"Our 5,000-square-foot lodge with restaurant and lounge will open this month, with live entertainment nightly.

"Initially, we will open with 10 slopes, the highest being a 540-foot vertical drop 6,000 feet long.

"The snow system is the most sophisticated available — it makes a foot of snow an hour and will be permanently installed on the mountain."

Construction coordinator Rick Dreyer said the "Blue Sky Blizzard" machine will pump water at 600 pounds pressure per square inch and air at 100 pounds psi into T-bars lining the trails.

"It comes out as a mist, then freezes into snow," he said.

Current construction includes a seven-acre lake to supply the snow-equipment, while the resort has an acre of water already impounded nearby to feed the blowers until the larger lake level begins to rise.

Dreyer said the snow-equipment has involved laying five miles of pipe, with installation 85 percent complete.

"The chairlift will have two cables going up and two coming down at any time, with a total 236 double seats," he said.

"A lot of people have asked if they could just ride up and down for the view, but that hasn't been determined. We do plan further development for the warm months, like water slides, and so on.

"Three ski slopes will be open all the way to the top this year, with lower runs and 'bunny' slopes making about 10 in all during our first season."

Resident engineer for Ski Starlite is Babette Sienicki, a Purdue University graduate who, incidentally, was 1978 cow chip hurling champion.

She said the resort's ultimate goal is 20 trails, skied upon by visitors whose cars are expected to fill a parking lot for up to 5,000 vehicles.

Resident manager is J. Kirby Overman, a former basketball coach at New Albany (Ind.) High School and Indiana University-Purdue University in Indianapolis. He said long-range plans for Ski Starlite call for development of a theme amusement park "similar to King's Island," a popular resort near Cincinnati.

Ski Starlite is being built by Brown County Ski Mountain Resort Inc., whose principal investors are Greencastle, Ind., real estate executive Russell Murphy, president; Dr. Donald E. Hedrick, senior vice president of PAC Financial Corp.; and Overman. Stock for sale to the public is registered with the Securities and Exchange commission, according to Overman.

Presently, Ski Starlite is holding open house on weekends, with free public four-wheeler tours of the slopes.

"Everywhere, we have saved every single tree possible," Dreyer said. "They are part of nature, and we intend to preserve as much of the beauty as possible."

Ski instruction will be available, there'll be a pro shop for rental or sale of equipment, season passes for the chairlift will range from \$75 to \$425, one-day tickets will start at \$7 and numerous large motels in the Clarksville-New Albany-Louisville area have already arranged "package" vacations that include rooms and skiing privileges.

Formal opening ceremonies are being scheduled for later this month, Miss Senzig said.

## *Taco John's restaurant to be constructed soon*

Evansville's third Taco John's restaurant will be constructed soon at St. Joseph Avenue and Iowa Street, formerly residential property which recently was cleared for business development.

Spokesman William Ross, manager of Taco John's in North Park, said dates have not been established for either the start of work or opening.

"Once construction gets under way, though, there'll be a given number of days until the new restaurant opens for business," Ross said.

The facility will seat 66 persons and feature "all types of Mexican-American food — tacos, softshells, chili, burritos, and so on," Ross said.

A second shop currently in operation is at 2008 Washington Ave.