

First Winter Of Tourism . . . Dells Year-Around Fun Spot

Changing from a summer vacation spot to a year-round vacation land, Dells Country has begun its first winter of tourism.

Plans started rolling at the Wisconsin Dells Regional Chamber of Commerce long before autumn, but that's when the actual promotions began. Soon people in Milwaukee, Chicago and other metropolitan areas began hearing about fall and winter vacations in Wisconsin Dells.

A close to zero allowance for wintertime promotions developed into nearly a \$10,000 budget for local Chamber officials. Publicity releases, highway signs, advertising brochures and radio commercials beamed out the message of "Snowmobiling in Dells Country."

The Lake Delton Businessmen spent \$500 on advertising signs for Mirror Lake State Park, Interstate highway service stations

and eating places were barraged with brochures that gave out the message, "Dells Country is snowmobiling country." That project also cost an estimated \$500.

Publicity releases handled by Joan Collins amounted to \$300 and additional news releases sent throughout the United States by the local Chamber staff cost from \$300 to \$500. These press releases included information on the Jaycees Fisherie, the dog sled races scheduled for this weekend, motel and restaurant accommodations, as well as the actual snowmobiling.

Another local promotion sponsored by the Wisconsin Dells Regional Chamber of Commerce was the production of 25,000 maps which were distributed to snowmobile clubs in Milwaukee and Chicago and to any individual requests sent to the Chamber.

Basic radio spot commercials cost the Chamber about \$3,500 for air time on Chicago's WGN and Milwaukee's WTMJ. The five and 10 word spots gave the messages: "Dells Country is snowmobile country," "Thank Dells for snowmobiling," and "Dells country for apres skiing."

In addition to promotions handled by the Chamber of Commerce, some local businesses are doing their own forms of advertising. New highway signs have been erected and extra newspaper advertising purchased.

Kahler's Inn Towne, for example, is taking advantage of the winter vacation aspect of Wisconsin Dells by offering a package ski holiday.

With reservations at the local resort motel, skiers may take one of three ski plans: mid-week, deluxe weekend or economy weekend. The price range per person

is from \$41.50 to \$48.50.

Included in the reservations are the nights' lodging, breakfast and dinner and lift tickets at either Skyline in Adams-Friendship or Cascade near Portage.

Kahler's heated swimming pool, cocktail lounge, sauna bath and snowmobiles for rent make the offer even more attractive.

Dell View hotel is offering a ski package to bring tourists to town and is advertising the Lake Delton hotel as a complete winter vacation land by itself.

The "Fun for the whole family" vacation at Dell View is a collage of skiing, tobogganing, sleigh rides, ice skating and snowmobiling on the grounds. A ski instructor at Dell View is an additional attraction as well as the heated swimming pool, sauna, cocktail lounge and dining.

Specialty businesses are also

getting in on the new winter business. Thirty motels are open this winter, compared to the usual 12 to 15. And, according to Eugene Carmin and Mel Koehler, business is very good.

Eight supper clubs have stayed open for business this year and are experiencing the onslaught of large snowmobile groups descending en masse for dinner or lunch. In the past only three supper clubs have remained open.

The number of restaurants and gift shops remaining open is about even with past years.

As John Dixon, snowmobile operator at the Lower Dells explains, "There was a time when no businessman in this popular summer recreation area wanted to see winter arrive. Everything was geared to handle the close to two million summer visitors, and winter meant a depression."

Today the depression is over.