

## Martin County's Ski Resort

Jackson Hole, Aspen, Squaw Valley, Vail, and even Mount Kato are all popular destinations for winter sports enthusiasts. Ironically, Martin County at one time entertained the possibility of developing a recreational area for winter sports aficionados. However, the slippery slope encountered to bring it to fruition involved a number of obstacles that eventually created a blizzard of concerns during the course of this rather short lived venture.

This local ski resort was named "Fair Mount." Its location was to be about two miles east of Fairmont on what was at that time, in the mid 1970s, the old Fairmont dump site. In 1975, the Fairmont Park Board appointed a committee to determine the feasibility of constructing a hill that could be used for sledding and skiing on that site. Subsequently, in 1976, the project got the go-ahead. This created a flurry of activity including earth moving machines piling up dirt to form a ski slope slated to be as tall as the incinerator's smoke stack.

The project progressed and the slope was completed and ready in December of 1978. However, several obstacles developed that impeded its progress. The first was the concern regarding liability that the city would encounter should someone be hurt on the site. The second concern involved getting adequate supervisory help to maintain and groom the slope and to oversee the renovated warming house that included a fireplace built to keep skiers and sledders warm. Although other ski slope operators were contacted for assistance, it became crystal clear that their rather frigid responses demonstrated their unwillingness to help. That was likely as a result of being busy at their own facilities in addition to the fact that Fair Mount was no doubt seen as competition for their courses. The final roadblock encountered by the developers of this project was a result of "Old Man Winter." He failed miserably in providing blizzards, snow storms, snow squalls, or even good old snow flurries. Consequently, with such a meager amount of snow available for their inaugural season, city plows were utilized to truck snow out to the site in an attempt to provide a base for skiing. Eventually, as a result of the many pitfalls encountered, the entire project was found to be impractical by the city council of that era and was consequently scrapped.

The dream of a local ski slope encountered some tough sledding. A veritable blizzard of setbacks coupled with a flurry of road blocks created a slippery slope the city was unwilling to navigate or circumvent. Thus, with less than a snowballs chance in July of surviving, plans for the Fair Mount Ski Slope slowly drifted away.

For more information, or to become a member, visit the Pioneer Museum in Fairmont.



Afternoon sunshine peeks around the chimney. A new fireplace was built inside what would have been the warming house or chalet, if you will, near the summit of Fair Mount. *Jan 1984*



Fair Mount sits on a rolling hill two miles east of Fairmont by the old garbage incinerator. In 1975, the Park Board decided to pile up dirt to make the hill.

*Jan 1984*