

Plenty of space awaits snowmobilers

While Michigan's trail system remains basically unchanged for the third straight season, it already is so vast that owners of the state's nearly 250,000 registered snowmobiles need not worry about running out of new trails to explore.

"Michigan's state forests are crisscrossed by nearly 2,300 miles of marked trails, and its four national forest systems add another 1,300 miles of trails and routes," says Auto Club of Michigan Touring Manager Joseph Ratke. "In all, it's enough to almost stretch from Detroit to Alaska."

With such a mammoth trail system already in place, this year's state budget cuts and other economic factors may force the end of major new trail construction, Ratke adds.

The three-year snowmobile registration fee will rise from \$9 to \$15 in 1981, and all of that \$6 increase is earmarked for new trail construction.

"However, because of Michigan's present economic situation, the added money will replace funds for new trail" already cut from the budget, meaning no new money actually will be available for major construction," says Ratke.

IN ADDITION, some State Department of Natural Resources officials feel that if trends toward rising gasoline costs and closer-to-home travel continue, trails will need only minor changes to meet future demand.

"There already are paths to match every driver's ability, ranging from the two-mile-long Camp Nine Trail near Connoville in the western Upper Peninsula, to the 100-mile Huron Trail through the pines of northeast Lower Michigan between Oscoda, Hale and East Tawas," Ratke says.

Snowmobilers also can ride over 2.7 million acres of state forest land, on more than 95,000 acres in 76 state parks and recreation areas, and along rights-of-way on thousands of miles of roads in 37 counties.

Riders are reminded that off-trail travel in the state's four national forests is prohibited or restricted. Check with ranger offices for rules in each.

All state land is closed to snowmobiling when snow depth is under four inches. Southern state game areas listed on Jan. 1 through March 31.

All snowmobiles in Michigan must be

registered to travel on public land. Children under 12 must be supervised by an adult to ride on public property. Youths aged 12 to 16 must pass an eight-hour, state-approved snowmobile safety course to drive unsupervised across public land.

AUTO CLUB urges snowmobilers to follow seven safety rules to help ensure a trouble-free season:

- Dress properly. Avoid loose-fitting clothing which may tangle in moving parts.
- Carry tools, spare parts and extra fuel.
- Always carry a survival and first aid kit containing at least a compass, maps, waterproof matches, food and extra clothing.
- Never travel alone, even near home.
- Stay on marked trails. Watch for fence lines and guy wires concealed by snow.
- Never litter and always respect others' property.
- Make sure ice is at least six inches thick before attempting to cross lakes or rivers. Avoid ice at river mouths and old fishing holes and stay alert for stumps or pilings hidden by snow.



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Hills group performs at Fisher Building

The Kingswood/Cranbrook School Madrigal choir from Bloomfield Hills will perform in the arcade of the Fisher Building, Detroit, on Dec. 15.

High school choirs from throughout the metropolitan area will perform at

noontime throughout December. This is the first year the Kingswood/Cranbrook Madrigals have performed at the Fisher Building. The group has been invited to sing at Cranbrook, Kent, England.

Solar financing facts offered

Michigan residents interested in solar energy installations for their homes can get information on financing from a publication of the Michigan Department of Commerce and Energy Administration.

A free directory describes programs that offer financial incentives to buyers of solar and other renewable energy systems. Called Sun Dollars, the booklet lists gov-

ernment-related sources for loans and grants and describes state and federal tax credits available.

These help offset the cost of a renewable-energy system. Single copies of Sun Dollars may be obtained by writing to the Michigan Department of Commerce and Energy Administration, P.O. Box 30228, Lansing 48909. It is also available by calling: 1-800-292-4764.

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