



NEWS RELEASE

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New Operators Reach Lease Agreement for Swain Resort

Agreement Signals Lease with Intent to Purchase by Experienced Ski Operators

SWAIN, N.Y. – The operators of Ski Denton in Coudersport, Pa. and owners of Swain Recreation Center, LLC announced today that they have reached an agreement to lease Swain Resort with the intention of completing an acquisition of the resort as soon as feasibly possible.

Under terms of the lease agreement, Ski Denton owners Scott and Jodi Carts and Shawn and Celeste Schoonover will continue ski operations at Swain Resort with the intention of completing the purchase of the resort in the near term and transforming it into a four-season family destination.

Ski Denton is located 65 miles south of Swain.

Swain Resort has been in business for 62 years and is one of the oldest continuously operating ski areas in New York State. In April of this year, Swain Resort operator Ski and Snowboard Area Management, LLC owners Philip Saunders and David Flaum announced that, due to economic concerns, they would close Swain resort if they could not find a buyer or reach a suitable operating agreement by August.

“The Ski Denton partners are a young, industrious, and capable group of experienced ski center owner-operators” current owner Philip Saunders stated. “However this will only be a success with the support and backing of government at the local, county, and state level. Swain is an asset to the region and the lease plan is a short-term one. To finalize the purchase and survive in the long run the various government entities need to team up and step forward with needed financial backing and tax incentives to make this work.”

“We at Ski Denton are very pleased with this agreement and are eager to help play an important role in keeping the Allegany County economy viable. This agreement makes great business sense and we cannot wait to get to work with the staff to grow and improve Swain,” Scott Carts said. “We are all very excited about the possibilities that will come along with operating both Swain

Resort and Ski Denton and we look forward to getting involved with the strong and loyal Swain skiing community.”

In Swain, the Carts and Schoonover families are taking over a well-regarded ski resort with good infrastructure. Swain was the first ski resort in New York to feature a quadruple chair lift. In recent years, Ski and Snowboard Area Management made investments to upgrade snowmaking to cover 90 percent of Swain’s 102 acres of ski and snowboard trails.

At Ski Denton, the slopes are as popular as ever with a 100 percent increase in the number of season passes sold in the past four year and a 60 percent increase in the number of school clubs visiting. Ski Denton has also built their race team program to a level where it is now a scheduled venue annually on the NCAA circuit. Carts believes that skiers will get the best of both worlds with Swain Resort and Ski Denton.

“Ski Denton offers the most technical and difficult terrain in all of Pennsylvania and Western New York, rivaled in the east only by areas in New England, while Swain offers the wider moderate and beginner terrain and a lodge facility,” Carts said.

Swain’s employment base, which peaks at around 350 employees during the winter months, should remain stable and potentially grow with new plans for the resort. Season passes already purchased and any school ski club contracts already in existence will continue to be honored.

Allegany County Legislature Chairman Curtis Crandall added, “Swain is the largest tourist attraction in the county, and we look forward to helping the new operators promote the great recreational experiences Swain provides.”

Mike Johnsen, supervisor of the Town of Grove, where Swain is located, said, “We’re excited about the potential for Swain Resort in the future and we’re equally thrilled about the future of the ski center and our town. We believe the new operators represent a new vision for the ski center and we plan to work with them to achieve success for both the ski center and the town.”

“Swain is a big part of our efforts to build on Allegany County’s recreational opportunities to help our economy, so the full-time professional positions and many seasonal jobs Swain provides are vital,” said John Foels, the county’s economic development director. “We would like to thank the current owners for their considerable investment and commitment to the vitality of Swain and its many patrons over the past decade and for their persistence in taking appropriate steps to ensuring the long-term viability of Swain.”

“The New York State Empire Development Zone program has been very helpful in securing needed tax incentives over the past 10 years. This combined with over \$4 Million in infrastructure investments over the past decade has set up the new operators for success provided continued community and government support,” added current owner Philip Saunders.

In addition to the focus on the ski areas, the new operators plan on making Swain Resort a destination throughout the year.

“We strongly believe that by adding some overnight accommodations to the Swain facility, we will create a family affordable ski destination that can offer an unmatched skiing experience and provide us with a year-round destination as well,” Carts said.

The new operators plan to make a variety of announcements in the coming months regarding plans to transform Swain into a year-round destination, including hosting additional festivals throughout the summer and fall season along with increasing the wedding and conference business.

Sherry Grugel, executive director of the Greater Allegany County Chamber of Commerce and director of tourism, said, “Today is a great day for Allegany County. Swain Resort plays an essential role in tourism in our area and we look forward to actively partnering with the new operators to market the resort as a key part of the outstanding four season recreational attractions that Allegany County has to offer.”

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