

COPPER PEAK: THE MIDWEST'S PREMIER VISTA



Have you ever visited the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Arch in St. Louis, the Sears Tower in Chicago, or the IDS Building in Minneapolis? The views from these historic landmarks are impressive!

If, however, you want to see a view unencumbered by endless buildings and cities, then you'd want to visit Copper

Peak, the only International Ski Flying facility in the Western Hemisphere. This unique panoramic vista, from atop the world's largest ski jumping-ski flying structure, surveys more than 2,500 square miles overlooking the Western Lake Superior Basin and the beautiful hardwood-conifer forests of Michigan's Western Upper Peninsula. You may occasionally see a building here and there, but not very many. The fall color scene is as beautiful as any place in this country.

But this is only part of the Copper Peak experience. Take an Adventure Ride which starts with a slow, exhilarating journey on the 36-story, 810 foot chair lift to the crest of the hill. A short four-minute walk brings you to the base of the 18-story elevator for a two minute ride to the main observation deck of this unique, iconic structure. This open well-protected viewing area wraps around the giant ski jump allowing you to view the surrounding terrain and numerous historic sites from every direction. See such historic areas as the Apostle Islands, the Porcupine Mountains, Isle Royale National Park and

across Lake Superior. On a clear day see the north shore of Minnesota near the Canadian border.

Read about the numerous nearby historic sites which showcase the iron mining era to the south which led to the development of area communities. The Keweenaw Copper Mining District extends from this site to the tip of the Keweenaw Peninsula, a distance of 150 miles, and the area's Native American history.

If you want to get the heart pumping and the adrenaline flowing take the 8-story walk up the open-grated staircase to the very top---1,782 feet above sea level---of this cantilevered 26-story structure. From the very top start-gate the view provides you with the ski-flyers perspective. There are two words often used to describe this experience, "wow" and "awesome". It is impossible to grasp the concept that ski flyers strap on a pair of 8-foot skis, accelerate down the 469 foot inrun to speeds approaching 70 mph, soar through the air for distances in excess of 600 feet down the landing slope, and come to rest in a journey that takes only about 20 seconds.

Ski Flyers are the finest athletes in the world and they know exactly what they're doing. There may be one casualty from this experience: If you've had the opportunity to witness a ski flying event, watching the Super Bowl may appear to be as exciting as watching a game of "hop-scotch".

An 84-year old, very tentative and anxious young-at-heart woman, who had never rode a chair lift, came to Copper Peak two years ago, took the Adventure Ride and summed up her experience this way: "I never had so much fun in all my life".

GEOCACHING...THE NEW TREASURE HUNT

If you haven't heard of Geocaching yet...you're sure to soon since it's becoming a popular adventure game for GPS users. The basic idea is to have individuals, businesses, or organizations set up caches somewhere and share the locations of these caches on the internet. GPS users can then use the location coordinates to find the caches. Once found, a cache may provide the visitor with a wide variety of rewards. All the visitor is asked to do is if they get something they should try to leave something for the cache.

A cache can come in many forms but the first item should always be the logbook. In its simplest form a cache can be just a logbook and nothing else. The logbook contains information from the founder of the cache and notes from the cache's visitors. The logbook can contain much valuable, rewarding, and entertaining information. A logbook might contain information about nearby attractions, coordinates to other unpublished caches, and even jokes written by visitors. If you get

some information from a logbook you should give some back. At the very least you can leave the date and time you visited the cache.

Larger caches may consist of a waterproof container with a logbook and a number of items. These items turn the cache into a true treasure hunt. You never know what the founder or other visitors of the cache may have left there for you. Remember, if you take something, it's only fair for you to leave something in return. Items in a bucket cache could be a variety of items (maps, books, software, hardware, CD's, videos, pictures, money, jewelry, etc.).

There are variations to the traditional caches too. Some examples include offset caches, multi-caches, virtual caches, and educational caches. Upon doing a little investigation on geocaching.com, I found there to be several caches in our surrounding area. Visit the site prior to your visit to get some area cache information. Happy treasure hunting.