

The Beaver Valley Ski Club

New Avalanche Chairlift

Fresh snow and a brand-new quad lift at Beaver Valley

(by M.T. Fernandes, Local Journalism Initiative)

Four grinning boys took the speedy first trip at the grand opening of a \$3.2 million ski lift to serve three runs at the Beaver Valley Ski Club.

General Manager, Jed Fachnie and Assistant GM Cheryl Crowther of Beaver Valley Ski Club and others were on hand for the grand opening this Saturday.

"We've certainly jumped up a level in comfort and security," Mr. Fachnie said in an interview.

The Beaver Valley Ski Club brings lots of visitors, with resulting economic impact in the surrounding area from local spending spin-offs and seasonal employment.

The Leitner Poma quad chairlift is a major investment that will bring lots of benefits to skiers, Mr. Fachnie told the Advance.

There are about 2,600 badge-holders now, with "a robust waiting list," Mr. Fachnie, the new general manager, said. The club has no plans to increase membership, he said, not wanting hills to be overcrowded.

The lift serves three trails. There's a moving conveyor system

at the bottom for smooth loading for passengers, which is going to mean fewer stops and starts.

"Even novice skiers can get on the lift much easier," he said.

The state-of-the-art-lift has all the safety features, plus more attention to the rider experience, he said. "Older chairs weren't built for comfort necessarily."

The lift doubles the capacity, carrying four people rather than two, again cutting wait time. And the new machine gets skiers to the top "quite a bit faster," Mr. Fachnie said.

The club had a contest for the first riders on Saturday which was won by 10-year-old, and he and three friends enjoyed the first ride: Sean Chapman, Dawson Taylor, Ben Faught and Logan Mercier.

The mild weather in December affected Beaver Valley Ski Club. The club was able to open Dec. 16, its target date, "but certainly that first week for the holidays was a struggle."

Despite rain, the club did manage to stay open, and offered programs and activities. The second week was much better, he reported.

"Everyone becomes much

happier when it's snowing and cold and winter is finally here."

The lift takes a very similar path up the slope as the previous one.

There's a 100-horsepower electric motor Drive Station and large gear box moving the looped track that the chairs are fastened onto. Some temporary roads had to be put in this past summer for the installation.

The previous double chairlift was installed in 1979, and at that time was thought to be Ontario's steepest operational chairlift, Knute Dohnberg informed the Advance.

He said it's a huge project for the club and in Grey County - "I can't think of too many projects that are going to top \$3 million for one project.

Lifts at the club now include three quad, one triple one double and one beginner lift.

Mr. Dohnberg said that the club draws more from the area west of Toronto. - "we call it the 519 effect." He said the number of Family and single memberships is about 800.



NEW LIFT FOR BEAVER VALLEY SKI CLUB – It was up-up-and-away as the new \$3.2 million quad ski-lift was opened at the Beaver Valley Ski Club on Saturday, Jan. 20. L-R are: Sydney Foster - Social Events Assistant, Simon Gilmartin - Club President, Candice Trickey - Club Vice President.

Thanks
Paul