

# Mount Charleston's frosty slopes within hour's drive of Las Vegas

By Margo Bartlett Pesek  
Special to the Review-Journal

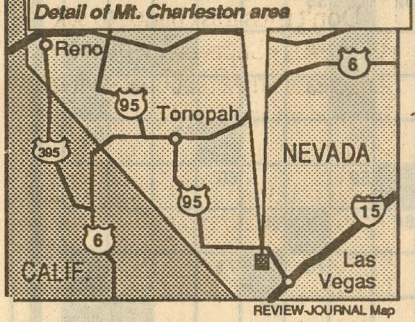
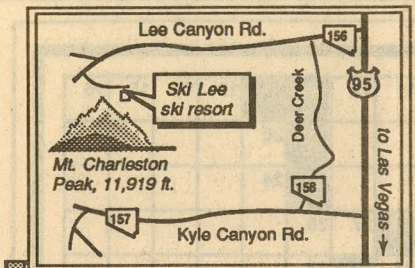
It is one of the pleasures of living in the desert that except in rare years you can have snow if you like it, or not, if you don't. Snow on the desert floor is rare, but there is always winter snow in the mountains just an hour's drive from the center of Las Vegas.

It will be winter for a long time yet on the frosted slopes of the mountains west of the city. Long after the first signs of the desert's early springtime have begun to appear, skiers and sledders still will be able to enjoy days spent upon snow-covered runs.

A wide range of winter activities awaits the visitor to Toiyabe National Forest with facilities centered in or near Kyle and Lee canyons. There are rustic lodges, a ski area, a snow play area, a winter-use campground, forest roads for snowmobiling and cross-country ski opportunities. Facilities there appeal to a broad section of our growing population.

The only problem is that so many Southern Nevadans think heading for the mountains is

## Trip of the week



a good idea that their very numbers on the roads cause hazards. Fresh falls of snow lure hundreds, many who are unaccustomed to icy driving conditions. It pays to be very careful.

Drivers should keep to posted speed limits and should observe posted road conditions.

Snow tires or chains often are required. Carry a shovel for emergencies. Help cut down on road congestion by consolidating your group into those vehicles needed to travel comfortably. When possible, park in open areas below the snow line and carpool up to the snow areas.

Do a little advance planning to ensure that your family or group has a great time. Call the U.S. Forest Service at 477-7726 for information on which facilities are open. The Nevada Department of Transportation has a road report at 486-3116. For the Lee Canyon Ski Area snow report, dial 658-1927. Use all this information to plan the timing, clothing, food and equipment for your outing.

When there is sufficient snow for safe sledding, the forest service opens the Foxtail Snow Play Area off the Lee Canyon Road. Although other forest areas are used informally for sliding, the Foxtail area is the safest, most easily accessible, and the most fun. Hillsides have been cleared of obstructions. The forest service rec-

ommends using equipment with steering like sleds or toboggans, rather than ungovernable inner tubes. Facilities include restrooms, tables, grills, cleared roads and group campfire areas. Bring your own firewood and take all your refuse home with you.

The Lee Canyon Ski area stays open as long as there is sufficient natural and man-made snow for its several runs. Facilities include ski school, rentals, lounge, snack bar, gift shop and ski lifts. The ski area is open daily with night skiing some evenings. On weekends, ski buses make runs to the Lee Canyon Ski Area. Find out about tickets and departures by calling 648-0008.

Snowmobilers are welcome within Toiyabe National Forest.

Two lodges serve visitors to Kyle Canyon. The "old lodge" is situated at the upper end of Kyle Canyon within the forest boundaries. It offers food, beverages, music and sweeping views. The newer Mount Charleston Hotel is located lower on the Kyle Canyon Road at the edge of the forested area.

The hotel has lodgings, a dining room and a lounge, often with music. Its windows command gorgeous views up-canyon. For more information, call Mount Charleston Restaurant and Lounge at (1) 872-5408, or the Mount Charleston Hotel at (1) 872-5500.

The old lodge also offers horse-drawn sleigh rides as long

as there is sufficient snow. The horses whisk up to six passengers along snowy lanes between pines and firs on rides which last about 20 minutes. Cost for the sleigh rides is \$4 for adults, and \$3 for children under 10; children sitting on an adult's lap ride free of charge. You'll return from the ride ready for something hot consumed in front of a blazing fireplace.