

# How Gaylord got its Alpine smile

GAYLORD — The city's name and the "Alpine look" are nearly synonymous today. But it wasn't always that way.

The theme architecture emerged with the establishment of Hidden Valley, home of the Otsego Ski Club.

Don McClouth of McClouth Steel led a group of Detroit industrialists in forming the private club in 1938. It has expanded over the years from a few hundred acres and just one employee to about 3,200 rolling acres at the headwaters of the Sturgeon River and more than 100 employees today.

The Alpine or Tyrolean motif, adopted by downtown Gaylord businesses beginning in the 1960s, originated with Hidden Valley's buildings and chalets east of the city.

Though a private club, Hidden Valley has played an important role in community and commercial growth. Club members were influential in establishing the popular Alpenfest celebration held each June in downtown Gaylord.

Keith Hardin Gornick, Hidden Valley resident director and member of the board of directors, has a goal of seeing Alpenfest

develop more cultural attractions.

Renovating the face of the downtown area involved several factors. First, the Gaylord / Otsego County Chamber of Commerce was reorganized. Then in 1958, more than 100 businessmen formed the Gaylord Industrial Development Corporation, a subsidiary of the chamber.

Announcement of a US Plywood Corporation (later Champion International) plant in 1963, completion of Interstate 75 around the same time further set the stage for sweeping architectural change.

In 1963, a chamber committee realized after study and discussion with local businessmen, the value of a Swiss theme modeled after Hidden Valley's designs.

The storefronts were changed one by one. To date, more than 100 Alpine projects have been completed with millions of dollars committed to one of the most successful programs of its kind in the nation.

The tale has been capsulized in "The Gaylord Story," a slide film commentary made in 1967 and shown to more than 200 communities in the midwest since that time.

## Two radio stations serve area

GAYLORD — Two radio stations serve the area from Gaylord.

WATC is an AM station founded 30 years ago as Gaylord's first station. Broadcasting at 900 on the dial, the 1,000-watt daytime station and an NBC affiliate and an outlet for Detroit Tiger baseball.

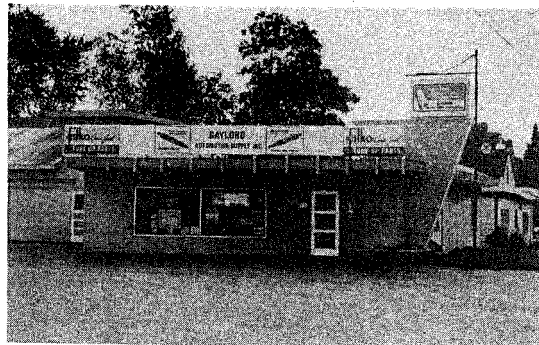
The station changed hands this past spring when Bill Barr, who formed Barr Broadcasting, purchased WATC from Midwestern Broadcasting. Its studios, office and tower remain on M-32 East.

At 106.7 on the FM dial, WWRM first beamed its 100,000 watts of stereo FM power in November 1972.

Alpine Broadcasting Company owns the 24-hour station served for news by United Press International. Offices are located at 308 W. Main Street, while the WWRM tower is west of town.

President of Alpine Broadcasting and general manager of the station is John DeGroot.

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