

Ice Skating In Los Alamos: Historical and Fun!

Before the Manhattan Project, the boys at the historic Boys' School Ranch had built an oval ice rink in the deep, shaded Los Alamos Canyon. The rink was created by flooding and damming a tiny canyon creek.

After the Manhattan Project ended, Los Alamos opened up as a city and became home to the world's foremost research and development laboratory in nuclear science. With the change from GI's to regular families, the community turned to recreational opportunities and enlarged the old skating oval to a hockey rink. An old dormitory was added to the site to serve as a warming hut.



The non-profit skating association, despite limited funds, looked around for a Zamboni, a machine for resurfacing and smoothing ice on skating rinks. With snow, rain and excessive use of the rink, the local hockey players had been maintaining their rink with an army-surplus tractor and lots of volunteer hours.

Finally in 1961, the association acquired a Zamboni from an Albuquerque rink for \$1,500. This Zamboni was special. Called No. 4, it was the fourth machine ever built by the machine's inventor, Frank Zamboni himself.

Years later in 1973, Ted Dunn from the rink's board of trustees received a frantic phone call: the rink was in flames. The garage that housed the Zamboni and an old Jeep and the loft above it was in flames when he arrived. The firemen drove the Jeep out on the ice, but just as they were ready to give up on the Zamboni, Dunn asked to get it out. Soaked by fire hoses, he ran into the garage, threw a dampened canvas on the engine, and got it started (but not before he quickly tightened the battery terminals). Dunn signaled to the fireman to push up the burning loft, and he drove the machine out the door. Burning

hockey sticks, pieces of the garage door and other debris came with him as he skated the machine out onto the ice.

Today, the machine has been replaced by a newer version at the ice rink. But No. 4 has its place in history, sitting in the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame in Eveleth, Minn., after the

Fast Facts: Los Alamos Ice Skating Rink

Schedule: Opens in November, closes in mid-March

Facilities: Warming hut, locker rooms, concession stand

Winter events: Annual hockey tournaments, local hockey teams and games; skating lessons for all ages; open skating; birthday parties

Summer events at the rink: Counselor in training program; summer day camp for K-6 grades May through August

For more information: Call (505) 662-4500 or (505) 662-8173

Lodging/Packages: Call Los Alamos Meeting & Visitor Bureau at 1-800-444-0707 or on the web at visit.losalamos.com

Zamboni Company restored the machine to its original condition.

The Los Alamos ice rink continues to delight visitors from late fall through the winter. Los Alamos County now runs the skating rink and offers lessons for all ages, holds open skating times, hosts hockey teams, and offers a special adult skating hour at noontime.

The hockey association has more than 200 players, and Los Alamos High

School fields a hockey team each winter.

In recent years, the skating season has been extended with the addition of a refrigeration unit and concrete base to replace the old sand base. A remodeled warming hut is complete with locker rooms and snack bar.

On your trip to Los Alamos, be sure to visit the ice rink and look for the plaque honoring Ted Dunn's more than 30 years of work on the Los Alamos ice skating rink and of course for his daring rescue of "Old No. 4."