

BRIEFS

Dance party at MTU

From human-centered computer research to the performing arts, dance is alive on the Michigan Technological University campus. As part of nationwide International Education Week celebrations, the University is throwing a community dance party.

Michigan Tech International Programs and Services invites everyone of all ages to learn the stories and steps of traditional dances of Africa and India, along with Latin salsa, at the international social from 6-9 p.m. Tuesday, in the Memorial Union Ballroom.

The free lessons are hosted by the Indian Students Association, NOSOTROS (Latino and Hispanic culture), and the African Students Organization. No experience required.

Safety urged during deer season

ESCANABA — Michigan's 2017 firearm deer season starts on Wednesday. Hunting accidents have steadily decreased over the past few decades — partially due to the introduction of hunting safety classes.

In preparation for this season, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR)-certified hunting safety instructor Tim Kobasic offered some hunting safety tips as a "refresher course" for hunters venturing out to bag their buck.

Kobasic said knowing how to safely handle firearms is essential for people who will be using them while hunting.

Snowmobile sales rebound, but less snow slows recovery

By CARL STODDARD

LANSING — Warmer weather and a cool state economy have teamed up to mean fewer snowmobile riders on state trails — and less money in the pockets of those who rely on them.

A snowy winter at the peak of the snowmobile era could pump nearly \$1 billion into economy of the state, with its nearly 300,000 registered snowmobiles and thousands of miles of snowmobile trails.

But snow hasn't always been a sure thing in Michigan's winter wonderland recently.

And, according to the Secretary of State's office, registrations have been falling over the past decade.

In October, 283,884 snowmobiles were registered in Michigan, said Laura Lehman, a communications representative for the Secretary of State. That's down from October 2007, when 390,168 snowmobiles were registered.

A three-year registration costs \$30, the Secretary of State says.

Snowmobilers need an annual state-issued trail permit sticker to ride on public roads "where authorized," and on public lands and trails, according to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

An annual trail permit is \$48. Snowmobile trails officially open Dec. 1 and close March 31.

During the 2016-17 winter season, about 130,000 trail permit stickers were issued, said Paul Gaberdiel, a trails specialist

with the DNR in Newberry. That's down from about 200,000 issued in the 2006-07 season, Gaberdiel said.

He said he blames the downturn on the cost of snowmobiling, inconsistent temperatures and snow, and the Great Recession of 2007-09, which hit Michigan especially hard.

"It just hasn't rebounded from there," Gaberdiel said.

Bill Manson, executive director of the Michigan Snowmobile Association, says snowmobiling depends on disposable income, and there has been less of that since the recession.

But he is optimistic about the future of snowmobiling in Michigan.

"We'll come back," said Manson, whose 17,000-member organization is based in the Grand Rapids suburb of Wyoming.

In the late 1990s, sales of new snowmobiles in Michigan reached about 20,000 a year, he said. By 2008, sales had plunged to about 3,000 units a year, he said, but rebounded to about 6,000 last year.

"There's a good feeling among hard-core snowmobilers that this is going



Shawn Thill of Marquette breaks in his newly purchased ski-doo snowmobile Tuesday evening along a trail near the Crossroads along County Road 553.

Andy Nelson-Zaleski/Mining Journal (Marquette)

be a good winter," said Manson, who counts himself among those hard-core riders.

"We've stabilized. If we have a good winter, I think we'll see permits, sales, registrations all go up," he said.

Back in 2007, before the recession hit, snowmobiling was a \$1-billion-a-year industry in the state, he said. These days, the industry has slipped but still contributes about \$800 million a year to the state's economy, he said.

Sales, permits and registrations account for much of that impact. In addition, the average snowmobiler out on winter trails will spend about \$150 a day for gas, food, lodging and

other expenses, he said.

State officials don't break down how much is spent on snowmobiling but do know how much vacationers spend overall in the state in the winter months.

Last winter, leisure travelers in Michigan spent nearly \$3.9 billion, out of the \$15.3 billion for the entire year, said Michelle

Grinnell, director of media and public relations for the state's Economic Development Corp. Travel Michigan program.

At Copper Country Rentals in Calumet, about 10 miles north of Houghton and Hancock, snowmobile rentals have been on the rise, said owner Susan Bushong.

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Expecting? Many labor and delivery options available at Aspirus



Aspirus Keweenaw Hospital's board certified OB-GYN specialists (back row, left to right) James Feeley, MD, and Lance Maki, MD, and Certified Nurse Midwives (front row, left to right) Cindy Beale and Christiann Rosemergy are with you every step of the way.

Laurium, Mich. — Having a baby is one of life's most exciting times and you want to know you're doing everything you can to ensure a healthy pregnancy. At Aspirus Keweenaw Hospital, expecting moms can take comfort knowing they have many options to choose from to make their delivery as special as it can possibly be.

"Childbirth is such a special experience and you have your own expectations for how you want it to go," said Christiann Rosemergy, Certified Nurse Midwife with Aspirus Keweenaw. "Our goal is to offer as many choices as possible to help every mom have the happiest, healthiest birthing experience in the way she chooses and deserves."

Expert OB-GYN doctors and certified nurse midwives

Board certified OB-GYN doctors and certified nurse midwives are with you every step of the way — before, during and after childbirth. They provide personalized care customized to your needs, and specialize in traditional deliveries to holistic, including water birth.

"I love delivering babies. That goes back to the vision I saw when my wife delivered and I never get over that," said OB-GYN specialist Lance Maki, MD. Bringing life into the world is just a miracle. Providers are supported by the most advanced technologies, and are directly linked to world-class care at the neonatal intensive care unit at

Aspirus Wausau Hospital. Many comfort options for labor and delivery

Expecting moms have all kinds of comfort options for labor and delivery to choose from. Comfort options range from pharmacological methods, including epidural and intrathecal, to more natural techniques like water birth and midwifery care.

Aspirus Keweenaw is the only hospital in the Upper Peninsula that offers nitrous oxide as an alternative pain reliever. Some of the attractive benefits of nitrous include having individual control over pain relief, no residual side effects for mom or baby and having the ability to transition to other pain relief options, such as an epidural, if necessary. The Birth Place also has

and private birthing experience and recovery.

Childbirth classes and baby care

Childbirth classes are provided by an experienced Nurse Educator to help new moms and dads transition to parenthood before their new baby arrives. Classes cover a wide range of topics, such as: what to expect during labor and delivery; postpartum; baby care; breastfeeding; and more.

Because the first days after childbirth are a time of learning, nurses provide one-to-one teaching for new parents. The Birth Place Lending Library also offers a variety of helpful educational resources for families.

Aspirus Keweenaw also has a designated Child Passenger Safety Technician who specializes in car seat safety checks and provides edu-

cation for parents and caregivers on the proper installation and use.

Culture of caring

The Birth Place combines the best of the best in comfort, support, staff and services to deliver a comprehensive bundle of care close to home. Everything is in place to help make labor and delivery the most comfortable and meaningful moment. Families are welcome to visit the Birth Place before their baby's due date to meet the team, tour the birthing suites and ask questions.

For more information about the Birth Place at Aspirus Keweenaw Hospital, or to schedule an appointment with a provider, call 906-337-6560.

Editor's note: This feature is part of an advertising package for Aspirus.



Aspirus Keweenaw offers nitrous oxide as a safe alternative pain relief option during labor and delivery.