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This is part of an occasional series by the Sanpete Country Travel and Utah Heritage Highway 89 Alliance on the people and places along U.S. Highway 89.

Snowkite 'Masters' Set to Soar Along Skyline Drive

Some of the world's leading snowkiters will be in Sanpete County March 25 & 26 for the Ozone Snowkite Masters being held along Skyline Drive.

The free public event will feature snowkite races, demonstrations, freestyle and backcountry riding, clinics and workshops, information on the latest technology and more. Activities get underway at 10 a.m. both days, with a barbecue lunch being held each day.

The Snowkite Masters is being hosted by France's Guillaume "Chasta" Chastagnol, one of the top snowkiters in the world. He is spending two months in Utah promoting the sport and exploring new snowkiting areas.

"This is the snowkite event of the season," says Brian Schenck, who is helping organize the event. He is an instructor and owner of a snowkite company, Windzup, one of the only companies in the country that makes kites especially for the winter sport. "It's a non-competitive event designed to showcase the sport, and everything is free of charge. It's an excellent opportunity for the general public to try out snowkiting, everyone rides together and shares the experience."

Snowkiting, one of the fastest-growing sports around, involves large kites pulling a skier or snowboarder across the snow. Recently, the sport was featured in news articles published in National Geographic's Adventurer magazine, the New York Times, Men's Journal and Utah's Deseret Morning News.

"But it is still a relatively new sport, only five to six years old," Schenck says. "We are still only at the beginning of where the sport can take us."

And one of the most popular destinations for snowkiting enthusiasts is Skyline Drive, which has an altitude of 9800 feet and is located up Fairview Canyon. "It's at the top of a mountain range, the snow and wind conditions are excellent, and it has mind-blowing terrain. It's ideal. Skyline Drive has quickly become known in snowkiting circles as THE best spot in North America," Schenck says.

He and his wife, Heather, "discovered" Skyline Drive for themselves a couple of years ago while searching for locations for good snowkiting. They were impressed by the acres of open flats and hills of every angle and direction. "It offered the perfect ride, no matter what," he says.



Schenck expects about 100 snowkiters to attend, as well about more than 100 spectators and people interested in learning more about the sport.

A special highlight at the Snowkite Masters will be the Winduro kite race, an endurance challenge that pits kites against the terrain and wind conditions. Kites will chase each other along a downwind course across the Skyline Drive ridge. If the wind fails or riders choose a "bad line," they must finish the race by kit or on foot.

For more information, visit the website: <http://www.snowkiting.com/snowkitemasters> .

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