

# WILL COUNTY WINTER

by: Ashley Montgomery, Head Assistant Editor

Thanksgiving has passed and finals are just around the corner, so we all know what that means. It's time to get that hot cocoa brewing, pull out your mittens and snowsuit and find your first winter adventure of the year. Ski resorts and glamorous winter getaways are merely a daydream to most of us, but don't get the winter blues just yet. There are plenty of intriguing activities for you to enjoy right here in Will County! Check out all the things you can do close to home, and keep flipping through the Encounter for more winter entertainment.

### **Ice Skating | Inwood Ice Arena**

What better way to kick off the season than with this winter classic? You don't even have to travel all the way to the city to find an enjoyable skating rink. Located just a few miles from campus at 3000 W Jefferson Street, the Inwood Ice Arena is open seven days a week and is an affordable getaway. The best part is, your Presence Inwood Athletic Club annual membership includes unlimited access to ice skating throughout the season (if you're a student at the University of St. Francis, you can sign up for a membership for FREE!). This can be a romantic date or a fun day out with your friends, siblings or family. For exact hours and pricing, visit [JolietPark.org](http://JolietPark.org).

### **Sledding | Forest Preserve District of Will County**

Snow angels, igloos and sledding – in other words, a throwback to everyone's favorite part of childhood. These are perhaps some of the best activities to do this time of year because they're fun, completely free and remind us of old pastimes and allow us to create new ones. Some people are lucky enough to have an awesome sledding hill in their own backyard, but there are a few around Will County that can't be beat. Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve and Forked Creek Preserve – Butcher Lane Access in Will County allow for hours of endless fun. They are open when "proper weather conditions exist after December 1," according to their website, and you can even rent inner tubes to slide down on if you don't have your own.

### **Christmas Tree Cutting | Will County**

If you haven't tried it already, cutting your own Christmas tree is one of the most satisfying experiences. You get to pick out the perfect tree for your space and turn it into a right-of-passage for each of your family members. It is something that could become a wonderful holiday tradition. Check out Bengston's Christmas Tree Farm in Wilmington, which has over eight varieties of trees to choose from, handmade decorated wreaths and delicious hot chocolate. Another option is Tammen Treeberry Farm, which has a flat-rate fee of \$50 for any tree you choose.