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SKIER DAYS ACROSS THE U.S.

Nationally, U. S. skier days were down

Skier visits nationally fell to 53.6 million in 2014-15, marking the second worst season in 16 years for visits, largely due to dismal snow conditions in the far West.

Colorado Skier days down by half a percent

Skier visits at the 21 member ski resorts of Colorado Ski Country USA (CSCUSA) totaled 7.1 million during the 2014/15 season, about one-half of 1 percent fewer than last year's record season and 6.5 percent more than the five-year-average. Vail Resorts is not a member of the organization and are therefore not included in the total. But, in Colorado, ski lodging revenue was up 4.6%.

New Mexico had almost one million skier days last season

The Ski New Mexico organization reports that New Mexico skier visits had 909,715 for 2014-2015, up 19.4% or 176,316 ski-days more than last season, and those skiers spent over \$500 in the state -- almost \$100 million more than last season.

Vermont Skier days up dramatically

The Vermont Ski Areas Association reported that ski areas in Vermont had a record-breaking 4,670,903 million visits during the 2014-15 season. Early openings at ski areas, recent capital investments in new snowmaking equipment, and a series of snowstorms that had Vermont leading continental U.S. in snowfall were all credited for boosting overall skier and snowboarder visitation. "A near-perfect winter in Vermont allowed for both early openings and extended season operations, leading to the best season on record," said Parker Riehle, president of VSAA. The season also generated nearly \$220 million in economic activity in the state, representing a 4 percent increase over last year. Room and meal taxes were up 8 percent, according to the association. The strong snow and record visits were also welcome news to the Vermont economy, netting nearly \$220 million for the state's coffers in winter season revenues from the sales tax and the rooms & meals tax. Overall, those revenues increased 4%, with the rooms and meals tax revenue alone topping last season by 8%.

VAIL RESORTS RAISES MINIMUM WAGE FOR ENTRY-LEVEL EMPLOYEES

Vail Resorts has announced that they are bumping the company's minimum wage for entry-level positions to \$10 an hour. According to a report in the Denver Post, the change will begin on September 26 and will be enacted in all eight states in which Vail Resorts operates. Vail currently owns or operates four ski areas in Colorado (Vail, Beaver Creek, Keystone, and Breckenridge), three in Lake Tahoe (Heavenly, Kirkwood, and Northstar), two in Utah (Canyons and Park City), one in Minnesota (Afton Alps), and one in Michigan (Mount Brighton). According to the Denver Post "In California, the company will pay \$1 more than the state's minimum wage. In Utah, Wisconsin and Wyoming, where they own lodging properties, it will pay \$2.75 over the state's minimum wage. Vail's entry-level wage is \$1.77 higher than the Colorado minimum of \$8.23 per hour."

Vail Resorts employs about 25,000 workers in the peak of winter, the vast majority of which are seasonal employees. Vail Resorts CEO Rob Katz said that the pay raise would help the company remain competitive in securing workers. "We are taking this step because it is incumbent on us to do the right thing for our employees as well as remain competitive as an employer".

PURGATORY IS PURGATORY AGAIN

The southern Colorado ski area of Purgatory – which has spent the past decade or so named 'Durango Mountain Resort' has a new owner who has decided to change the ski area's title back to its original name – Purgatory. Local businessman James Coleman is the resort's new owner and he is investing in a new high speed quad chairlift to replace chair #8 for the coming ski season – the resort's 50th season.

LOS ANGELES TO CRESTED BUTTE ON ALASKA AIRLINES NOW AVAILABLE

Crested Butte Mountain Resort Colo. Currently has direct non-stop flights from four major cities on two different airlines, has a new flight market, Los Angeles, and a new airline, Alaska Airlines, to its airport for the 2015-2016 winter season. The agreement will bring a twice-weekly direct, non-stop flight into the Gunnison-Crested Butte Regional Airport from Los Angeles International Airport. The new flight is scheduled for Wednesdays and Saturdays beginning December 16, 2015 through March 26, 2016.

NEW ZILLER VALLEY GONDOLA

A new gondola being installed at Fugen in Austria's Ziller Valley will improve access to the Spieljoch area and climb 1450 vertical meters from its base station at 650 meters up to 2100 meters on the mountain. Costing e million euro to build and due to open in December 2015 the new "Panoramabahn Geols" on Spieljoch will improve access to the area's slopes, currently reached via an old double chairlift, at the northern entrance of the Ziller Valley Both areas are included on the Ziller Valley Superski Pass which now includes 181 lifts and 506km of groomed trails.

NEW SMALLER AIRLINE BAG SIZE REQUIREMENTS DIDN'T LAST LONG

Citing "significant concerns raised in the media and by key stakeholders," particularly in North America, on Wednesday the International Air Transport Association (IATA) put on "pause" the "Cabin OK" initiative the global airline trade organization introduced on June 9. The Cabin OK program had proposed new "optimum" dimensions for carry-on bags that, at 21.5 x 13.5 x 7.5 inches, are generally smaller than what most domestic airlines currently allow. "We need to get it right," Tom Windmuller, IATA's Senior Vice President, Airport, Passenger, Cargo and Security, said in a statement announcing a "comprehensive reassessment" of the program along with plans "to further engage program participants, the rest of our members, and other key stakeholders." While IATA said "a number of major international airlines" planned to adopt the initiative, on June 7, Airlines for America (A4A), the U.S. airline industry trade organization, issued a statement saying there were no U.S. carriers in favor of the Cabin OK plan and that IATA was right in pausing the plan. "Airlines for America (A4A), the U.S. airline industry trade organization and said that its members reject the recent carry-on size initiative put forth by IATA because it is unnecessary and flies in the face of the actions the U.S. carriers are taking to invest in the customer experience – roughly \$1.2 billion a month – including larger overhead bins," said A4A president and CEO Nicholas Calio.



The National Ski Club Officers' Newsflash is emailed each month to America's ski club officers by The National Ski Club Newsletter on a year-round basis to augment our four printed issues which published in November, January, March, and May. If you wish additional club officers to receive the Newsflash, please email their names, club name, their office within the club, and email addresses to wilbanks@ski-club.net.



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