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A stock and cash transaction for Vail Resorts to purchase Whistler Blackcomb has been unanimously approved by the boards of Whistler and Vail Resorts. The deal, which still must be approved by Whistler Blackcomb shareholders and Canadian courts, is expected to close this fall. Vail says that it will include the Whistler Blackcomb in the Epic Pass and other season pass products for the 2017-18 winter and that Whistler's existing season-pass products will be honored for the 2016-17 winter season. Whistler is a four-season mountain resort sprawled between two side-by-side peaks that are connected by a world record-breaking gondola. Combined, they offer more than 8,000 acres of terrain on 200 trails, 14 alpine bowls and three glaciers.

SKI TRAIN RETURNS TO COLORADO

After 8-years, the ski train will come back in to service this winter using Amtrak and starting on Saturday 7th January 2017 from Denver's Union. The new service will run every weekend through to March 26th, 2017 and also on Mondays in January and February. The train will carry up to 500 skiers and boarders with tickets costing from \$39 for adults with children aged 2 to 12 paying half price. Trains will leave Denver at 7am, reaching the resort about 9 a.m. The new platform at Winter Park Mountain Resort which cost several million dollars to build was funded from the Colorado Department of Transportation, the city of Denver, the Town of Winter Park, the Colorado Rail Passengers Association and Intrawest -- the manager of the ski resort.

**SKIOWANS SELLING A \$700 TRAIN TRIP TO ASPEN**

While many ski clubs are paying \$1,600 to \$2,400 for ski trips, this Burlington, Iowa, club is offering a January 8-14th ski trip to Aspen/Snowmass for just \$700 for adults and \$325 for kids. Lodging is at The Villas in Snowmass, and the trip price includes Amtrak ticket, transfer to and from Glenwood Springs, 5 nights lodging, and a 4-day lift ticket.

POSSIBLE CROWDFUNDING TO BUY RESORTS: MT. ROSE AND RED MOUNTAIN

The Reno Gazette Journal reports that **Mt. Rose**, near Reno, announced that it will entertain offers for the resort and a Reno Technology consultant, Govind Davis, has established a crowdfunding Facebook page called One Reno to explore purchasing the resort to "keep its ownership local". However, the attorney for 95 year old Fritz Buser owner of Mt. Rose, said the sellers are unwilling to consider or deal with an offer that includes alternative financing nor will they deal with people with no experience running a ski resort -- probably because about two-thirds of the resort is on Forest Service land and the Forest Service has guidelines about financing and resort operational experience in their resort purchasing guidelines.

Red Mountain, located in Rossland, BC, is also looking to sell itself to local skiers in a crowdfunding project. Red Mountain is in the first stage of the whole deal, and they want to see who wants to play without asking people to get out their checkbooks...yet. If the resort finds that there's enough interest, they'll get into gear--and if you invest, you will become an actual owner of the resort. Money raised would go toward improving the mountain. Red started out as a community owned and operated ski club and, years ago, when the current owner, heard it was going to shut down, he bought the area.

**SUMMIT COUNTY COLORADO'S 50+ WINTER GAMES**

Summit County Colorado's 50+ Winter Games will be held February 12-14, 2017 Sunday through Tuesday with an opening dinner and silent auction on Sunday at the Summit County Senior Center, skating and Alpine events on Monday at Keystone and Nordic at the Frisco Nordic Center and an awards ceremony on Tuesday at the Senior Center. The National Covered this event a couple of years ago in a cover article and seniors from around the U.S. participated in the event. See <http://www.co.summit.co.us/1057/50-Winter-Games> for details.

NEW GONDOLA AND NEW TWO-MILE-LONG RUN AT GALTUR

The family-oriented resort of Galtür, Austria, the quieter neighbor located high above the better known -- and riotously lively -- Ischgl in the Tirol, has announced that it is installing a new 10-seat gondola for the coming ski season. The new 8 million-euro gondola will replace the existing Breitspitzbahn chairlift, serving the runs above the scenic Kopsee reservoir and will also extend Galtür's ski area, with the bottom station down by the dam at the far end of the lake and considerably lower than the present chairlift's bottom station.

For those who may be unfamiliar with Ischgl, that resort and Austria's St. Anton are both often mentioned as being the two biggest party ski resorts in the world -- due primarily to Ischgl's famous concerts and bars and St. Anton's Moosewirt and Crazy Kanguruh bars--plus four other large apres ski bars slopeside just above St. Anton.

VAIL'S EPIC PASS VALID IN FOUR EUROPEAN COUNTRIES FOR 2016-2017

Vail Resorts announced that it will add [Les 3 Vallees](#), [Paradiski](#) and Tignes-Val d'Isere in France, [Skirama Dolomiti Adamello Brenta](#) in Italy, [4 Vallees](#) in Switzerland, and [Arlberg](#) in Austria to the 2016/2017 Epic Pass lineup.

Check www.epicpass.com for details.

France

• France's largest ski areas, Les 3 Vallees, Paradiski and Tignes-Val d'Isere, offer six days of free skiing, but limited to two days of skiing at each resort area, and pass holders are required to present their valid Epic Pass hard card and a valid photo ID to the lift cashier in each resort to redeem their lift access.

Italy

Skirama Dolomiti Adamello Brenta is home to 150 lifts and 236 miles of ski slopes that make up resorts such as Madonna di Campiglio and Pinzolo in Val Rendena; Folgarida-Marilleva, Peio and Tonale in Val di Sole; Ponte di Legno, Andalo-Fai della Paganella, Monte Bondone and Folgaria-Lavarone. Where Epic Pass Holders get three days of free skiing. Pass holders must email info@skirama.it at least one week prior to arrival and specify the Dolomiti ski area where they will pick up their pass and show a valid Epic Pass.

Switzerland

Verbier, part of the 4 Vallees ski area, is offering five consecutive days of free skiing at Verbier, Nendaz, Veysonnaz and Thyon. Pass holders are required to present their valid Epic Pass hard card, as well as a valid photo ID, to the resort's ticket office. The offer is valid when booking in-resort lodging (details and participating hotels can be found at www.epicpass.com)

Austria

For decades, the mountain range between Tyrol and Vorarlberg, which is home to Arlberg. In December 2016, thanks to the opening of four new cable cars, Arlberg will be Austria's largest linked ski area. Epic Pass holders now receive three days of free skiing at Lech, Zurs, Stuben, St. Christoph and St. Anton.



The National Ski Club Officers' Newsflash is emailed each month to America's ski club officers by TheNational Ski Club Newsletter on a year-round basis. 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.