

COLORADO SKIER VISITS SHOW RESILIENCE, STRENGTH IN THE FRONT RANGE

Contributed by The Editors
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Boulder, CO - Colorado Ski Country USA (CSCUSA) announced today at its 46th Annual Meeting, that its 22 member resorts hosted an estimated 6.79 million skier visits during the 2008-09 ski season. This represents a decrease of 6.9 percent, or approximately 500,000 skier visits, compared to last season, which was the second best season on record. Compared to the five year average, CSCUSA member resort skier visits are down only 3.9 percent.

Colorado Ski Country USA Sees Strong Season Amid Bumpy Runs

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"The travel industry as a whole was put to the test this past year," explained Melanie Mills, president and CEO of Colorado Ski Country USA. "But visitation numbers show not only the enduring value of a Colorado ski vacation, but the strong commitment our resident skiing and riding community has to our state's signature sports."

Research shows that Front Range in-state visits were up 2.5 percent, which is a new record. This increase in skier visits by Front Range guests speaks to the dedication of the Colorado skier over all the challenges this season.

The steadfastness of this season's skier visits may be attributed in part to the snowfall across the state this winter, which was right on track with Colorado's 10 year average. Colorado is known for having consistently good snow conditions and as snow fell in the early and late season, not only did every resort open, but some extended their seasons and others re-opened for several weekends after officially closing.

CSCUSA's member resorts maintained their commitment to quality and service that distinguishes Colorado skiing and keeps the state's lure as the premier destination for skiers and riders. Momentum from a string of record seasons fed visitation with resorts reporting robust numbers in late December and early January. "We saw skier visit numbers that were close to the record seasons we experienced over the last several years," continued Mills. "A number of resorts reported being up in skier visitation over the course of the season or just slightly behind their record year."

Amid an economic downturn, visitation patterns indicated that skiers and snowboarders see skiing and riding as a necessity. CSCUSA and some member resorts experienced pre season pass sales that exceeded expectations. Resorts also reported seeing a trend for guests to book close-in to travel dates, while many skiers and riders opted to visit mountains closer to home.

"With all things considered, we're very happy with where visitation is for this season," said Mills. "Our members saw an uptick in the percent of visits from in-state skiers and riders, and others saw an uptick in overnight visits."

Total Colorado skier visits for the 2008-09 season, including non-member resorts, are approximately 11.85 million. This estimation shows Colorado being down 5.5 percent, or 690,000 visits, compared to last season. On a national level, skier visits overall are down 5.5 percent with the Rocky Mountain region seeing a decrease of 7.2 percent.

Skier visits are the metric used to track participation in skiing and snowboarding. A skier visit represents a person participating in the sport of skiing or snowboarding for any part of one day at a mountain resort.

These numbers are preliminary results and subject to final adjustments by the individual resorts. The decision to release individual numbers is up to each individual resort. Skier visits from previous years can be found at www.media-coloradoski.com in the Media Center.

About Colorado Ski Country USA

Colorado Ski Country USA (CSCUSA) is the not-for-profit trade association representing Colorado's 22 ski & snowboard resorts. CSCUSA is the global voice of the Colorado ski industry. The Association's primary functions are concentrated in marketing, public policy and public relations. Information about CSCUSA and its members can be found at www.ColoradoSki.com. This release and other press information can be found in the online press room at media-ColoradoSki.com.

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