

Lifts 2004— An Overdue Rebound

It was a busy summer as resorts across North America gave themselves a little boost in uphill capacity. While not a record, it was a rebound.

by David Rowan

OK, so last year's four new lifts installed in the Mountain states looked like some sort of an aberration. Oh no, that just couldn't be! But this year's thunderous response of 25 new lifts in that region—a 525 percent increase over last year's four new lifts—gives new meaning to the word rebound.

But, I'm getting ahead of myself. The whole North American ski industry scored extremely well on the new lift construction index. Overall, there were 54 lifts installed new for the 2004-05 season. That's the highest number since 1999 and a significant 54 percent increase over last year's total of 35. In total VTFH, the increase was a solid 16 percent.

Winners and losers? Well, there were no real losers. Investment in lifts was widespread. Among those who invested in significant lift work are Sil-

ver Star and Big White in B.C., and Saddleback, Me., Sugar Mountain, N.C., Brighton, Utah, Mt. Rose Nev., and Ski Butternut, Mass.

The East dropped from 13 to 9, but that merely put it in its five-year average position of 10 new lifts per year. Next to the West, the other big winner was the Pacific, which zoomed from 3 new lifts to 8. Canadian resorts, with 10 new lifts, coasted in its four-year average zone of 10.

The Midwest? Well, those old Borvigs and Halls were built to last and their owners know how to keep them humming and operating safely. This seems to make the replacement lift market in the Midwest less than compelling—at least for now. The actual numbers? The Midwest added two (down from last year's four): a Partek fixed grip quad and a Leitner-Poma detachable quad.

The type of lift being installed this year is about what one might expect. The consumer love affair with what he sees as "high-speed lifts" guarantees that many resorts simply must deliver, despite the price premium over fixed grip. Thus for 2005, 21 installations are detachable, representing almost 40 percent of all lifts, and a whopping 70 percent of total VTFH.

The belle of the ball is the quad detachable, which accounted for 34 percent of all new lifts and an impressive 56 percent of total VTFH.

The double rebounded afresh from last year's goose egg and accounted for three lifts.

Exotica? Last year there was a chondola to catch the eye—a hybrid chair and gondola at Mt. Orford, Quebec. This year, the most eye-catching is Doppelmayr-CTEC's fixed-grip quad at Mt. Washing-

New Lifts by Region

Region	New VTFH	Surface	Chairs	Gondolas/ Trams		Total
East	11,065	-	9	-	9	
Midwest	1,130	-	2	-	2	
Mountain	25,750	7	18	-	25	
Pacific	15,860	-	8	-	8	
Canada	11,675	-	10	-	11	
Totals	65,600	7	47	-	54	

Lift Comparison with Preceding Years

Region	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
East	13	11	12	10	13	6	12	10	13	9
Midwest	4	1	10	3	4	2	0	2	4	2
Mountain	12	24	24	21	25	11	14	5	4	25
Pacific	5	10	9	17	10	10	2	6	3	8
Canada	7	7	6	13	11	21	9	10	11	10
Totals	41	53	61	64	63	50	37	33	35	54

New Lifts by Manufacturer

Manufacturer	Surface	Chair	Gondolas/ Trams		Total Lifts	Total VTFH
Doppelmayr CTEC	3	28	-	31	45,741	
H.S. Fabricators	1	-	-	1	120	
Leitner-Poma	4	14	-	18	17,490	
Partek	-	4	-	4	2,249	
Totals	8	46	-	54	65,600	

VTFH Comparison with Preceding Years

Region	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
East	31,781	15,890	32,123	19,453	33,695	11,358	16,881	14,891	12,431	11,065
Midwest	1,069	95	5,929	2,185	4,373	1,070	0	1,744	3,120	1,130
Mountain	19,676	59,195	71,199	69,922	52,591	21,999	25,625	12,906	13,376	25,870
Pacific	11,916	28,549	22,088	46,357	17,952	28,521	4,091	11,296	6,425	15,860
Canada	15,430	16,444	15,232	28,265	22,142	32,424	18,042	26,244	21,294	11,675
Totals	79,872	120,173	146,571	166,182	130,753	95,372	64,639	67,081	56,646	65,600

East

Location	Type	Manufacturer	Installed HP	Length	Vert.	Cap.	Speed	VTFH (000)
MAINE								
Big Rock	3C	Doppelmayr CTEC	60	1348	229	1500	500	344
Black Mountain	3C	Doppelmayr CTEC	200	4385	1136	1200	500	1363
Saddleback	4C	Doppelmayr CTEC	75	2760	346	1050	400	363
NEW HAMPSHIRE								
Loon Mountain	4C-Det	Doppelmayr CTEC	800	4820	1563	2800	1000	4376
NORTH CAROLINA								
Sapphire Valley	4C	Doppelmayr CTEC	30	920	140	1200	350	168
VERMONT								
Stowe	4C-Det	Leitner-Poma	500	3769	865	2400	1100	2076
Stowe	3C	Leitner-Poma	50	980	127	1500	300	191
VIRGINIA								
Wintergreen	6C-Det	Leitner-Poma	500	3612	991	2000	1000	1982
WEST VIRGINIA								
Oglebay Park	3C	Partek	40	832	168	1200	400	202

Midwest

MINNESOTA								
Hyland Ski & Snowboard	4C	Partek	60	611	146	2100	400	307
WISCONSIN								
Alpine Valley	4C-Det	Leitner-Poma	200	2360	343	2400	433	823

Mountain

COLORADO								
Aspen Mountain	2C	Leitner-Poma	125	1519	602	1200	500	722
Beaver Creek	4C-Det	Doppelmayr CTEC	800	8591	1482	2600	1000	3853
Beaver Creek	4C-Det	Doppelmayr CTEC	600	6416	905	2400	1000	2172
Buttermilk	4C-Det	Leitner-Poma	500	5743	1171	1200	1000	1405
Crested Butte	4C	Leitner-Poma	200	2507	544	1170	450	636
Crested Butte	T-Bar	Leitner-Poma	67	1560	476	1000	650	476
Steamboat	3C	Leitner-Poma	300	3490	939	1800	500	1690
Winter Park	Platter	Leitner-Poma	6	720	49	400	300	20
Winter Park	Platter	Leitner-Poma	5	772	82	350	299	29
IDAHO								
Tamarack ①	4C	Doppelmayr CTEC	30	1009	105	1200	275	126
Tamarack	4C-Det	Leitner-Poma	800	8061	1839	1200	1000	2207
Tamarack	4C-Det	Leitner-Poma	400	3694	996	1200	1000	1195
Tamarack	Platter	Leitner-Poma	67	1051	78	300	350	23
MONTANA								
Big Sky	4C-Det	Doppelmayr CTEC	500	6055	1250	1800	1000	2250
Great Divide	Platter	H.S. Fabricators	15	600	200	600	400	120
Moonlight Basin Ranch	4C	Doppelmayr CTEC	152	1665	600	1500	450	900
Yellowstone	3C	Doppelmayr CTEC	50	2415	415	600	400	249
Yellowstone	Platter	Doppelmayr CTEC	14	1806	16	67	450	1
Yellowstone	Platter	Doppelmayr CTEC	14	707	55	55	450	3
Yellowstone	Platter	Doppelmayr CTEC	14	371	25	64	400	2
UTAH								
Alta	4C-Det	Doppelmayr CTEC	500	3569	1099	2400	1000	2638
Alta	4C-Det	Doppelmayr CTEC	500	2727	741	2400	1000	1778

① New ski area

ton, B.C., which the manufacturer describes as “up and over.” That is, it goes up one side of the mountain, and down the other. On one side the length is 3,258 feet, with another 1,004 on the “over” side. Vertical is 1,187 feet and 426 feet, respectively, on the “up” and “over” sides.

Who got the business? Doppelmayr-CTEC with 69.9 percent of the business and Leitner-Poma with 26.7 percent, that’s who. This breakdown reflects a modest relative gain by Leitner-Poma. And, of course, to keep everyone honest, there’s third party Partek, which had a good year, installing four lifts (two quads and two triples) from California to Quebec. They represent 3.4 percent of the national total.

What about that long-awaited replacement lift surge to replace the 958 chairs installed in the 1970s? It has not really materialized, although roughly one half of this year’s installations are replacement lifts.

The fact that this represents a slight drop in the percentage of replacement lifts can be joyfully attributed to the arrival of a real new international player, Tamarack Resort in Idaho. If you’re going to arrive as the new kid on the block, best do it in a way that will be noticed. And did they ever! Tamarack installed no less than two quad detachables (Leitner-Poma) and a Doppelmayr-CTEC fixed grip quad. Oh, yes, and a Leitner-Poma platter. Quite an arrival statement!

We’ll take stimulation of lift construction from any place where we can find it. So, we wonder out loud if it is just a coincidence that Lone Peak in Montana will have no less than six new lifts servicing its slopes. They were ordered up by three separate and feisty ski areas which share the mountain: Moonlight Basin Ranch, Yellowstone Club and Big



Left to right: A Doppelmayr-CTEC detachable quad at Canada Olympic Park; Leitner-Poma detachable quad installation at Aspen ; a Partek triple at Homewood Resort.

Sky. To put it mildly, there has been something of a dust-up between them, as readers of our Blue Pages are familiar with. These six lifts include a detachable quad at Big Sky, a fixed grip quad at Moonlight Basin and a triple plus three platters at Yellowstone.

Rolling Out the Carpets

Last year in these pages we celebrated the dramatic growth in the number of new conveyor-type lifts. In three years, we had gone from 37 to 46 to 61, and we celebrated the fact that this reflected our industry's new emphasis on bringing kids into our magic kingdom.

Well, the good news is that we have continued the upward climb with no less than 77 new conveyor installations—a 26 percent increase over last year's total. This year's crop includes 33 from Sunkid, 24 from Magic Carpet Ski Lifts (plus extensions engineered for four existing conveyors), 17 from Kaser Skicarpet and three from the Quebec-based Schippers.

Who put in these conveyors? Everyone. Breckenridge alone installed five. They're being installed in Sun Valley (two), Missouri, California. This sort of investment, if it can be sustained, is bound to have an enormously positive effect on our industry. It represents an investment in our future. Nothing less.

Likewise, the industry's investment in wire rope tows, handle tows and other similar uphill conveyances—a total of 22. All help the industry grow, as well as aid in getting new sliders to our slopes, namely tubers.

Clearly, lift construction for 2005 represents a significant advance in new lift construction of all types. And these heady figures do not include the lift modifications and re-engineerings that are done every year, but which effectively increase our industry's capacity to serve our guests.

What does the future hold? There is no doubt that impending rises in steel prices are going to have a major impact on new lift construction. Just do the numbers. (See story on page 38.) But the industry has been able to absorb this sort of thing in the past. What is not clear is whether this type of cost increase, on top of what may be coming down the pike from Congress in delivering on the President's promises, is beyond our ability to pass on to our customers. Be alert!

Mountain cont'd.

Location	Type	Manufacturer	Installed HP	Length	Vert.	Cap.	Speed	VTFH (000)
UTAH Cont'd								
Deer Valley	4C-Det	Doppelmayr CTEC	600	5247	984	2400	1000	2362
Deer Valley	3C	Doppelmayr CTEC	75	697	195	1800	400	351
Park City	4C-Det	Doppelmayr CTEC	300	1823	276	2400	1000	662

Pacific

CALIFORNIA								
Homewood	3C	Partek	200	2501	767	1200	450	920
Mammoth Mountain	4C-Det	Doppelmayr CTEC	400	3123	524	2250	1000	1179
Northstar	4C-Det	Doppelmayr CTEC	500	4622	690	2400	1000	1656
Squaw Valley	2C	Doppelmayr CTEC	40	5178	98	8000	300	78
NEVADA								
Heavenly	6C-Det	Doppelmayr CTEC	600	2325	793	3400	1000	2696
Mt. Rose	6C-Det	Doppelmayr CTEC	800	3938	1303	3600	1100	4691
OREGON								
Mt. Hood Meadows	4C-Det	Leitner-Poma	700	5494	1119	1963	1200	2197
WASHINGTON								
Mt. Baker	4C	Doppelmayr CTEC	450	3855	1357	1800	500	2443

Canada

ALBERTA								
Canada Olympic Park	4C-Det	Doppelmayr CTEC	300	1959	380	2800	800	1064
BRITISH COLUMBIA								
Big White	2C	Doppelmayr CTEC	115	2101	747	1015	500	758
Mt. Washington	4C	Doppelmayr CTEC	400	4272	1613	1400	450	2258
ONTARIO								
Caledon Ski Club	4C	Doppelmayr CTEC	110	767	207	2297	450	475
Dagmar	4C	Leitner-Poma	75	874	151	2400	390	362
Devil's Elbow	4C	Leitner-Poma	100	1737	274	2000	394	548
Devil's Glen	4C	Leitner-Poma	150	2270	454	2000	453	908
QUEBEC								
La Massif	4C-Det	Doppelmayr CTEC	500	4413	1169	2400	1000	2806
Mt. Garceau	4C	Doppelmayr CTEC	250	3753	838	2000	450	1676
Ski Bromont	4C	Partek	125	2414	410	2000	450	820

Tows: Rope, Handle, Wire Rope*

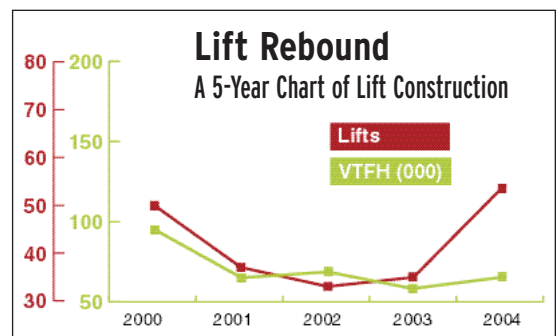
Harusch	1	Schippers	1
Multi Skilift	14	Star Lifts**	6
TOTAL		22	

**Includes Borer, Brückschlögl and O'Connor.

Conveyors*

Kaser Skicarpet NA	17	Schippers	3
Magic Carpet	24	Star Lifts	33
TOTAL		77	

*Not included in lift statistics.



A Magic Carpet installation at Woodbury Ski Area, Ct.



Star Lifts' SunKid being installed at Smugglers' Notch.

Photo by Rob Pirag