

LIFTS 2011- EVERYONE WINS

No region was left behind as lift numbers start to climb.

BY JENNIFER ROWAN

What a difference a year makes! Last year we wrote about curling up in the fetal position if you were a lift manufacturer. This year, they can break out the sparkling cider. . .we're not in Champagne territory, yet.

The summer construction season was a busy one across the U.S. and Canada with the installation of 29 new aerial lifts, 61 conveyors and 5 surface lifts.

Let's start in the East, where nine lifts, representing almost 18,000 VTFH, found new homes. From a T-bar to a comfy new 6-pack at Mount Snow, the East went big on vertical transportation feet, almost double last year's.

The Midwest weighed in this year with three new quads, one a detachable

at Alpine Valley, making it the third detachable at the area.

The Mountain region came in with seven new lifts, which is on the low side compared to previous years that ranged from 11 to 25. Is this a new normal for this region? Perhaps. Expansions and replacements seem to have reached a comfortable holding pattern...for now.

Moving to the Pacific region, four new lifts were installed, which is right

(Note: VTFH measures the number of skiers and riders who can be transported 1,000 feet vertically in one hour. It is arrived at by multiplying the vertical rise in feet by the capacity in people-per-hour and divided by 1,000.)

about where resorts in this area usually fall—with the current economic realities, holding steady is not a bad place to be.

Over the border in Canada, six new lifts went in, including this year's only gondola, at Le Massif. There were also several "almost-new" lifts that we didn't count, resulting in a decent year for lift construction for the Canadians.

AERIAL LIFTS

So, do these new numbers mean that things are getting back on track in lift building? Yes and no. Doppelmayr's Mark Bee feels that the market is not where it should be given the age of many lifts out there. But, he sees a bright future. "The first detachables built in the 1980s

NEW LIFTS BY REGION

Region	New VTFH	Surface	Chairs	Gondolas/		Total
				Trams	Funiculars	
East	17,927	1	8	-	-	9
Midwest	1,474	-	3	-	-	3
Mountain	14,934	-	7	-	-	7
Pacific	7,259	1	3	-	-	4
Canada	7,629	-	5	1	-	6
TOTALS	49,223	2	26	1	-	29

LIFT COMPARISON WITH PRECEDING YEARS

Region	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
East	10	13	9	8	8	5	9	7	7	9
Midwest	2	4	2	0	1	0	2	0	2	3
Mountain	5	4	25	17	11	22	11	4	5	7
Pacific	6	3	8	3	5	6	5	3	3	4
Canada	10	11	10	5	6	8	11	7	6	6
TOTALS	33	35	54	34	31	41	38	21	23	29

NEW LIFTS BY MANUFACTURER

Manufacturer	Surface	Chair	Gondolas/		Total Lifts	Total VTFH
			Trams	Funiculars		
Doppelmayr CTEC	2	14	1	-	17	29,144
Leitner-Poma	-	9	-	-	9	17,958
SkyTrac	-	3	-	-	3	2,121
TOTALS	2	26	1	-	29	49,223

VTFH (000) COMPARISON WITH PRECEDING YEARS

Region	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
East	14,891	12,431	11,065	10,367	11,533	7,610	15,436	5,801	9,497	17,927
Midwest	1,744	3,120	1,130	0	638	0	1,228	0	1,855	1,474
Mountain	12,906	13,376	25,870	35,849	29,785	39,455	22,994	6,719	15,665	14,934
Pacific	11,296	6,425	15,860	4,250	9,998	16,718	5,209	960	4,707	7,259
Canada	26,244	21,294	11,675	6,533	11,767	21,610	11,777	12,601	11,242	7,629
TOTALS	67,081	56,646	65,600	56,999	63,661	85,393	56,644	26,081	42,966	49,223

EAST

Location	Type	Manufacturer	Installed HP	Length	Vert.	Design Cap.	Initial Cap.	Speed	VTFH
MAINE									
Sugarloaf	4C	Doppelmayr	400	3746	1457	1815		485	2644
MASSACHUSETTS									
Wachusett Mountain	4C-Det.	Doppelmayr	200	2205	299	2400		1000	718
NEW YORK									
Mt. Pisgah	T-Bar	Doppelmayr	38	1546	307	810		433	249
NORTH CAROLINA									
Cataloochee	3C	Doppelmayr	60	883	125	1500		325	188
PENNSYLVANIA									
Ski Roundtop	4C	SkyTrac	150	1503	445	2020		425	899
MAINE									
Burke Mountain	4C-Det.	Leitner-Poma	600	5890	1581	2200		1000	3478
Mt. Snow	6C-Det Bubble	Leitner-Poma	800	7236	1604	2400		1000	3850
Stowe	4C-Det.	Doppelmayr	800	5882	2046	2400		1000	4910
VIRGINIA									
Massanutten	3C	Doppelmayr	150	2414	596	1663		400	991

MIDWEST

Location	Type	Manufacturer	Installed HP	Length	Vert.	Design Cap.	Initial Cap.	Speed	VTFH
ILLINOIS									
Bartlett Park District	4C	Doppelmayr	60	940	125	2400		400	300
MICHIGAN									
Crystal Mountain	4C	SkyTrac	125	920	255	2525		400	644
WISCONSIN									
Alpine Valley	4C-Det.	Leitner-Poma	150	1421	279	1900		1000	530

MOUNTAIN

Location	Type	Manufacturer	Installed HP	Length	Vert.	Design Cap.	Initial Cap.	Speed	VTFH
COLORADO									
Beaver Creek	4C-Det.	Doppelmayr	600	4714	1326	2400		1000	3182
Buttermilk	4C-Det.	Leitner-Poma	600	6813	1663	1800		1000	2993
Copper Mountain	4C-Det.	Doppelmayr	500	4819	1006	2400		1000	2414
Loveland	3C	Leitner-Poma	250	3554	1079	1392		500	1502
IDAHO									
Bogus Basin	4C-Det.	Doppelmayr	600	3923	1448	2400		1000	3475
UTAH									
Beaver Mountain	3C	SkyTrac	125	1785	385	1500		400	578
Park City	3C	Doppelmayr	150	2176	439	1800		500	790

PACIFIC

Location	Type	Manufacturer	Installed HP	Length	Vert.	Design Cap.	Initial Cap.	Speed	VTFH
CALIFORNIA									
Dodge Ridge	T-Bar	Doppelmayr	25	1137	78	600		650	47
Mammoth	4C-Det.	Doppelmayr	500	2888	1068	2400		1000	2563
Northstar-at-Tahoe	4C-Det.	Doppelmayr	600	4673	1453	2400		1000	3487
OREGON									
Mt. Hood Meadows	4C-Det.	Leitner-Poma	270	2800	581	2000		1000	1162

CANADA

Location	Type	Manufacturer	Installed HP	Length	Vert.	Design Cap.	Initial Cap.	Speed	VTFH
ALBERTA									
Canada Olympic Park	4C-Det.	Doppelmayr	300	1716	509	2400		886	1222
Marmot Basin	4C-Det.	Leitner-Poma	540	4770	1339	2400		1000	3214
Vista Ridge	4C	Leitner-Poma	150	1949	404	1974		450	797
ONTARIO									
Chicopee	4C	Leitner-Poma	100	1089	100	2400		450	432
QUEBEC									
Le Massif	Group Gondola	Doppelmayr	300	832	148	635		787	94
YUKON TERRITORY									
Mount Sima	4C	Doppelmayr	300	3871	1039	1800		450	1870

CARIBBEAN

Location	Type	Manufacturer	Installed HP	Length	Vert.	Design Cap.	Initial Cap.	Speed	VTFH
PUERTO RICO									
La Marquesa*	Group Gondola	Doppelmayr	200	1980	219	600		600	131

*Not included in lift statistics. NA - Not available

TOWS: ROPE, HANDLE, WIRE ROPE

Harusch	1	Star Lifts**	2
Multi Skilift	2	TOTAL	5

**Includes Bruckschlögl and O'Connor.

CONVEYORS

ChairKid	5	Star Lifts	32
Magic Carpet	24	TOTAL	61

6-YEAR CHART OF CONVEYOR INSTALLATIONS



are starting to be replaced to update the technology [there were problems with the articulating sheaves, for starters], but there weren't that many built during that time. When the lifts built in the early 1990s start to hit 30, that's when we'll see some bigger numbers," he says.

Leitner-Poma's Tom Clink was very happy with the numbers in 2011. Leitner-Poma of America installed 10 lifts, including one in France. "It was a great season for us—better than the last few," he says. "Areas are increasing capacity, replacing older lifts, and there are a lot of new projects, alignments and expansions coming on-line."

This year marked the first construction season for the new kid on the block, SkyTrac. The company had hoped for four new lifts, and ended up installing three, and worked on two overhauls. "Our expectations were met," says Jan Leonard. "In the future, we expect to be building new lifts, as well as working on modifications and retrofits." As for detachables, SkyTrac is sticking with the fixed grip models...for the moment.

A final trend with aerial lifts is the growing use of loading conveyors. ChairKid's Marc Wood explains, "Loading conveyors are allowing ski areas to achieve the design capacity the lifts were built for. And we see a strong future. Loading conveyors are about where conveyor lifts were in the early 2000s. We feel the concept is gaining traction and is going to take off in the future."

SURFACE LIFTS

Conveyors are still as popular as ever. ChairKid, SunKid and Magic Carpet are still seeing strong numbers as areas add these popular lifts to tubing and ski school areas. "We had a couple of installations that actually replaced aerial lifts," says Magic Carpet's Jennifer Kelly. "We are also seeing longer lengths and more covered lifts to help with snow removal."

"The category is strong," says Star Lift's Pete Kavanagh. "Conveyor lifts are doing a great job in the beginner areas and at tubing hills—which are key profit centers at resorts."

Whew! It's nice to be back. And all the manufacturers SAM spoke with are feeling bullish for 2012—several already had lift orders in hand.



TOP ROW: Left, Mount Snow, Vt., got itself a brand new six-pack, from Leitner-Poma of America, that'll have guests seeing blue. In order to keep the bubbles clear, Mount Snow will offload them each night into the barn for safekeeping. Right, Marmot Basin, Alberta, has a brand-new detachable quad for guests this year, also from Leitner-Poma.
 SECOND ROW: Left, Doppelmayr installed a detachable quad at Mammoth Mountain, Calif., with a height-adjustable terminal. Right, this detachable quad from Doppelmayr was installed at Copper Mountain, Colo.
 THIRD ROW: Left, Mount Seymour, B.C., installed a covered 440-foot Magic Carpet conveyor lift for guests. Right, a beautiful sunset shot of the new 450-foot conveyor lift at Arizona Snowbowl from Star Lifts.
 BOTTOM ROW: SkyTrac has its first construction season under its belt, including this fixed grip quad at Crystal Mountain, Mich., complete with a loading conveyor from ChairKid.

