

# LIFTS 2012- A BIG SURPRISE

Despite a lousy winter, lift numbers remained even.

BY JENNIFER ROWAN

Oh, how I was dreading pulling together this year's lift construction numbers. After the worst season in recent memory, how on earth can one come up with any silver linings or drum up any enthusiasm?

But, there was no need to! As Leitner-Poma's Rick Spear said, "It's a good sign for the industry that the profitable ski areas are reinvesting in their plants." A good sign, indeed. In fact, the North American total is actually up over the last three years, with 30 new lifts on the books. VTFH took a hit, and dropped to 37,512 from 2011's 49,223, as many projects were more about moving people around, rather than getting them straight up the hill.

And every region was a winner in uphill transportation. Starting north of the border, Canada welcomed seven new lifts to its fold, mostly in Ontario where five new fixed-grip quads were installed at local ski clubs.

In the eastern U.S., six new lifts were installed. Holimont, N.Y., marks the only detachable quad in the group, but sliders from New Hampshire to Tennessee will benefit from new uphill transportation.

*(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 dividing by 1,000.)*

The Midwest had its highest number of new lifts since 1999, with a respectable five installations, three of which were detachable quads.

In the Mountain region, 10 new lifts were unveiled, with the big story being the Ski Apache overhaul (a gondola and two lifts) and Vail's new gondola.

Moving west, the Pacific region only accounted for two lifts, but they were biggies: a detachable quad and a six-pack.

## AERIAL LIFTS

So how is it possible that we installed more lifts than in the past four years? Well, a combination of planning, timing and lift companies that are able to respond quickly. *cont.*

## NEW LIFTS BY REGION

Region	New VTFH	Surface	Gondolas/ Trams			Total
			Chairs	Funiculars		
East	2,859	1	5	-	-	6
Midwest	5,181	-	5	-	-	5
Mountain	20,744	-	7	3	-	10
Pacific	4,079	-	2	-	-	2
Canada	4,649	-	7	-	-	7
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>37,512</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>30</b>

## LIFT COMPARISON WITH PRECEDING YEARS

Region	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
East	13	9	8	8	5	9	7	7	9	6
Midwest	4	2	0	1	0	2	0	2	3	5
Mountain	4	25	17	11	22	11	4	5	7	10
Pacific	3	8	3	5	6	5	3	3	4	2
Canada	11	10	5	6	8	11	7	6	6	7
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>

## NEW LIFTS BY MANUFACTURER

Manufacturer	Surface	Chair	Gondolas/ Trams		Total Lifts	Total VTFH
			Funiculars			
Doppelmayr	1	13	1	-	15	17,562
Leitner-Poma	-	9	1	-	10	17,482
SkyTrac	-	4	1	-	5	2,468
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>37,512</b>

## VTFH (000) COMPARISON WITH PRECEDING YEARS

Region	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
East	12,431	11,065	10,367	11,533	7,610	15,436	5,801	9,497	17,927	2,859
Midwest	3,120	1,130	0	638	0	1,228	0	1,855	1,474	5,181
Mountain	13,376	25,870	35,849	29,785	39,455	22,994	6,719	15,665	14,934	20,744
Pacific	6,425	15,860	4,250	9,998	16,718	5,209	960	4,707	7,259	4,079
Canada	21,294	11,675	6,533	11,767	21,610	11,777	12,601	11,242	7,629	4,649
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>56,646</b>	<b>65,600</b>	<b>56,999</b>	<b>63,661</b>	<b>85,393</b>	<b>56,644</b>	<b>26,081</b>	<b>42,966</b>	<b>49,223</b>	<b>37,512</b>

**EAST**

Location	Type	Manufacturer	Installed HP	Length	Vert.	Design Cap.	Initial Cap.	Speed	VTFH
<b>NEW HAMPSHIRE</b>									
Bretton Woods	T-Bar	Doppelmayr	40	2264	394	1007		550	397
<b>NEW YORK</b>									
HoliMont	4C-Det.	Doppelmayr	300	2369	397	2400		984	953
<b>TENNESSEE</b>									
Smoky Mountain	4C	Doppelmayr	100	2618	558	500		200	279
<b>VERMONT</b>									
Haystack	4C	SkyTrac	75	2855	448	600		400	269
Jay Peak	4C	Doppelmayr	100	542	95	1800		425	171
<b>VIRGINIA</b>									
Bryce Resort	4C	SkyTrac	150	2495	439	1800		425	790

**MIDWEST**

Location	Type	Manufacturer	Installed HP	Length	Vert.	Design Cap.	Initial Cap.	Speed	VTFH
<b>MICHIGAN</b>									
Hyland Ski & Snowboard	4C	SkyTrac	60	570	110	2058		400	226
<b>MINNESOTA</b>									
Spirt Mountain	4C-Det.	Leitner-Poma	400	3543	564	2400		1000	1354
<b>SOUTH DAKOTA</b>									
Terry Peak	4C-Det.	Doppelmayr	361	3530	984	1800		984	1771
<b>WISCONSIN</b>									
Devil's Head	4C	Doppelmayr	150	833	136	1793		450	244
Granite Peak	4C-Det.	Leitner-Poma	400	3178	610	2600		1000	1586

**MOUNTAIN**

Location	Type	Manufacturer	Installed HP	Length	Vert.	Design Cap.	Initial Cap.	Speed	VTFH
<b>COLORADO</b>									
Vail	Gondola	Leitner-Poma	1400	9308	1996	3600		1200	7186
<b>NEVADA</b>									
Las Vegas Ski & Snowboard	4C	Doppelmayr	60	215	27	1800		400	49
Ridge Resort*	Tram	SkyTrac	40	685	110	160**		300	18
<b>NEW MEXICO</b>									
Ski Apache	Gondola	Doppelmayr	677	7746	1652	2000		984	3304
Ski Apache	3C	Doppelmayr	353	5259	1276	1300		450	1659
Ski Apache	4C	Doppelmayr	150	1377	456	1500		400	684
<b>UTAH</b>									
Deer Valley	4C-Det.	Doppelmayr	366	2965	869	2400		984	2086
Snowbird	4C-Det.	Doppelmayr	537	3204	1302	1800		984	2344
Sundance	4C	SkyTrac	200	2702	647	1800		450	1165
<b>WYOMING</b>									
Jackson Hole	4C-Det.	Leitner-Poma	400	3389	1041	2160	2030	1000	2249

**PACIFIC**

Location	Type	Manufacturer	Installed HP	Length	Vert.	Design Cap.	Initial Cap.	Speed	VTFH
<b>ALASKA</b>									
Alyeska	4C-Det.	Doppelmayr	453	4455	1348	1800		984	2426
<b>CALIFORNIA</b>									
Squaw Valley	6C-Det.	Leitner-Poma	500	3579	551	3000		1000	1653

**CANADA**

Location	Type	Manufacturer	Installed HP	Length	Vert.	Design Cap.	Initial Cap.	Speed	VTFH
<b>ALBERTA</b>									
Vista Ridge	4C	Leitner-Poma	150	1919	407	2000		450	814
<b>BRITISH COLUMBIA</b>									
Mt. Seymour	4C-Det.	Doppelmayr	346	3599	686	1400		984	960
<b>ONTARIO</b>									
Brimacombe	4C	Leitner-Poma	150	1371	256	2400		453	614
Devil's Glen	4C	Leitner-Poma	200	1516	492	2400		512	1181
Earl Bales Ski Area	4C	Leitner-Poma	75	804	135	2400		453	324
Glen Eden	4C	Leitner-Poma	100	948	217	2400		453	521
Uplands Golf & Ski Centre	4C	Doppelmayr	60	699	98	2400		450	235

\*Services Heavenly Valley \*\* Each way

**TOWS: ROPE, HANDLE, WIRE ROPE**

Harusch	3	Star Lifts**	1
Multi Skillift	1	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>

\*\*Includes Bruckschloigl and O'Connor.

**CONVEYORS**

ChairKid	6	Star Lifts	15
Magic Carpet	11	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>

**6-YEAR CHART OF CONVEYOR INSTALLATIONS**



“Most of the orders came in late thanks to the terrible weather and economy,” says Jan Leonard from SkyTrac, but they did come in. The five-year-old company installed four new lifts and its first tram, as well as relocated and installed two other quads.

“For us,” says Doppelmayr’s Mark Bee, “the market has been consistent the last four years.” At 15 lifts, Doppelmayr certainly kept itself busy last summer.

“Given the lack of snow and the economy, we were very pleased,” says Spear. Leitner-Poma installed 10 lifts, which accounted for the same VTFH that Doppelmayr had.

And what about 2013? SkyTrac says that they are kicking a lot of proposals out the door and Leitner-Poma sees 2013 shaping up a lot like 2012. Doppelmayr’s Bee is more bullish: “There are enough projects on the radar screen that, if the weather cooperates, 2013 looks good. We could be rising out of the recent pattern.”

And when it comes to getting people onto the lifts, loading conveyors continue to head in a solid direction. Marc Wood of Chairkid had six installations in 2012 and says, “It’s a concept and a tool that’s catching on.”

**SURFACE LIFTS**

While the folks in aerial lifts breathed a sigh of relief, there were still a few casualties from last winter. Conveyor numbers were cut almost in half, from 61 in 2011 to 32 in 2012.

“During a bad weather season, people close their pocketbooks,” says Dave Kelly from Magic Carpet. But, he points out, it won’t last: “Sales are still in the bucket and we normally feel pent-up pressure a year or two after a bad snow year.”

Pete Kavanagh from Star Lifts acknowledges that the U.S. economy and lousy winter certainly took their toll, but says that, “Canada really stepped up to the plate in 2012, accounting for almost half of our sales.”

In the end, perhaps it was a bullet dodged. Or perhaps ski areas are more resistant to an off-weather year with good long-term planning in place. As for the future, it doesn’t take a genius to figure out that a good snow year would certainly put some projects back on the boards.



TOP ROW: Left: Terry Peak, S.D., installed a new detachable quad from Doppelmayr. Right: Ski Apache, N.M., went for a complete overhaul this summer after a devastating fire. The area installed a triple, a quad and the gondola shown here. All were built by Doppelmayr.  
 SECOND ROW: Left, Leitner-Poma installed four fixed-grip quads in Ontario. This one at Devil's Glen was over 1,500 feet in length.  
 Right, Spirit Mountain, Minn., welcomes skiers this year with a new detachable quad from Leitner-Poma.  
 THIRD ROW: Left, students from the ski area management program at Lyndon State College, under the direction of Sean Doll, assist Jay Peak, Vt., and Star Lifts USA install their new Sunkid Wonder carpet.  
 Right, at only 70 feet long with a 4-1/2-foot vertical rise, this small Magic Carpet lift at Arapahoe Basin, Colo., serves a mighty purpose: spanning a wetlands area.  
 BOTTOM ROW: Bryce Resort, Va., will debut a shiny new quad from SkyTrac this season that boasts almost 2,500 feet of length.

