

LIFTS 2009- NOT MUCH TO SAY

It should come as no surprise that lift numbers are down. Way down.

BY JENNIFER ROWAN

In the days leading up to writing this piece, several staff members here at SAM asked how I was going to put a positive spin on the 2009 lift construction numbers. As a glass-half-full person, I was wondering that same thing myself. In the end, though, I realized that I can't—they stink.

There is no way I can find a silver lining in the 21 lifts that did go in. Nor can I reasonably find an upside to a VTFH total of 26,081. Maybe if I had been invited to report on that lift in St. Lucia, I might have found some small ray of sun-

shine in lift building in 2009. Alas, the only positive is that 2009 is over.

As was to be expected, the economic climate took its toll on uphill transportation as ski areas across North America deferred lift installations in favor of

(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.)

squirreling money away and waiting for lending markets to loosen up. The 2008-2009 season itself was certainly not the culprit. Many regions did rather well, and skier visit numbers were about average for a decent snow year. But faced with an extremely uncertain economic future last spring, most resorts hunkered down to wait out the financial storm.

REGION BY REGION

Economic skies were obviously brighter in Canada, where VTFH actually increased more than 800 feet over last

NEW LIFTS BY REGION

| Region | New VTFH | Surface | Gondolas/ Trams | | | Total |
|---------------|---------------|----------|--------------------|------------|----------|-----------|
| | | | Chairs | Funiculars | | |
| East | 5,801 | 1 | 6 | - | - | 7 |
| Midwest | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Mountain | 6,719 | - | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Pacific | 960 | - | 2 | 1 | - | 3 |
| Canada | 12,601 | - | 7 | - | - | 7 |
| TOTALS | 26,081 | 1 | 16 | 3 | 1 | 21 |

LIFT COMPARISON WITH PRECEDING YEARS

| Region | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| East | 6 | 12 | 10 | 13 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 7 |
| Midwest | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Mountain | 11 | 14 | 5 | 4 | 25 | 17 | 11 | 22 | 11 | 4 |
| Pacific | 10 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 3 |
| Canada | 21 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 10 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 11 | 7 |
| TOTALS | 50 | 37 | 33 | 35 | 54 | 34 | 31 | 41 | 38 | 21 |

NEW LIFTS BY MANUFACTURER

| Manufacturer | Surface | Chair | Gondolas/ Trams | | Total Lifts | Total VTFH |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|--------------------|----------|-------------|---------------|
| | | | Funiculars | | | |
| Doppelmayr CTEC | 1 | 12 | 2 | 1 | 16 | 17,137 |
| Leitner-Poma | - | 4 | 1 | - | 5 | 8,944 |
| TOTALS | 1 | 16 | 3 | 1 | 21 | 26,081 |

VTFH (000) COMPARISON WITH PRECEDING YEARS

| Region | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| East | 11,358 | 16,881 | 14,891 | 12,431 | 11,065 | 10,367 | 11,533 | 7,610 | 15,436 | 5,801 |
| Midwest | 1,070 | 0 | 1,744 | 3,120 | 1,130 | 0 | 638 | 0 | 1,228 | 0 |
| Mountain | 21,999 | 25,625 | 12,906 | 13,376 | 25,870 | 35,849 | 29,785 | 39,455 | 22,994 | 6,719 |
| Pacific | 28,521 | 4,091 | 11,296 | 6,425 | 15,860 | 4,250 | 9,998 | 16,718 | 5,209 | 960 |
| Canada | 32,424 | 18,042 | 26,244 | 21,294 | 11,675 | 6,533 | 11,767 | 21,610 | 11,777 | 12,601 |
| TOTALS | 95,372 | 64,639 | 67,081 | 56,646 | 65,600 | 56,999 | 63,661 | 85,393 | 56,644 | 26,081 |

EAST

| Location | Type | Manufacturer | Installed | | | Design Cap. | Initial Cap. | Speed | VTFH |
|------------------------|---------|-----------------|-----------|--------|-------|-------------|--------------|-------|------|
| | | | HP | Length | Vert. | | | | |
| NEW HAMPSHIRE | | | | | | | | | |
| Gunstock | 4C | Doppelmayr CTEC | 60 | 1207 | 165 | 1500 | | 400 | 248 |
| NEW JERSEY | | | | | | | | | |
| Xanadu | 4C | Doppelmayr CTEC | 100 | 708 | 118 | 2400 | | 360 | 283 |
| Xanadu | Platter | Doppelmayr CTEC | 20 | 708 | 118 | 350 | | 300 | 41 |
| NEW YORK | | | | | | | | | |
| Bristol Mountain | 4C-Det. | Doppelmayr CTEC | 500 | 4200 | 1108 | 2400 | | 1000 | 2659 |
| Roosevelt Island Tram* | Tram | Leitner-Poma | 1300 | 3091 | 229 | 1200 | | 1575 | 275 |
| PENNSYLVANIA | | | | | | | | | |
| Liberty Mountain | 4C | Doppelmayr CTEC | 200 | 1809 | 520 | 2375 | | 450 | 1235 |
| VERMONT | | | | | | | | | |
| Middlebury College | 3C | Doppelmayr CTEC | 200 | 3860 | 824 | 1200 | | 500 | 989 |
| VIRGINIA | | | | | | | | | |
| Massanutten | 4C | Doppelmayr CTEC | 100 | 1167 | 189 | 1833 | | 400 | 346 |

MOUNTAIN

| Location | Type | Manufacturer | Installed | | | Design Cap. | Initial Cap. | Speed | VTFH |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------|--------|-------|-------------|--------------|-------|------|
| | | | HP | Length | Vert. | | | | |
| COLORADO | | | | | | | | | |
| Steamboat Springs | Pulse Gondola | Leitner-Poma | 150 | 1942 | 104 | 340 | | 1000 | 35 |
| IDAHO | | | | | | | | | |
| Sun Valley | Gondola-Det. | Doppelmayr CTEC | 1000 | 7935 | 2160 | 1800 | | 1000 | 3888 |
| NEW MEXICO | | | | | | | | | |
| Red River | 3C | Doppelmayr CTEC | 400 | 5590 | 1514 | 1800 | | 500 | 2725 |
| UTAH | | | | | | | | | |
| Deer Crest | Funicular | Doppelmayr CTEC | 2x250 | 581 | 216 | 330 | | 540 | 71 |

PACIFIC

| Location | Type | Manufacturer | Installed | | | Design Cap. | Initial Cap. | Speed | VTFH |
|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------|--------|-------|-------------|--------------|-------|------|
| | | | HP | Length | Vert. | | | | |
| CALIFORNIA | | | | | | | | | |
| Badger Pass | 2C | Doppelmayr CTEC | 60 | 925 | 272 | 1186 | | 465 | 323 |
| Northstar-at-Tahoe | 4C | Doppelmayr CTEC | 100 | 1036 | 160 | 2372 | | 400 | 380 |
| Northstar-at-Tahoe | Pulse Gondola | Doppelmayr CTEC | 300 | 3450 | 584 | 440 | | 800 | 257 |

CANADA

| Location | Type | Manufacturer | Installed | | | Design Cap. | Initial Cap. | Speed | VTFH |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------------|-----------|--------|-------|-------------|--------------|-------|------|
| | | | HP | Length | Vert. | | | | |
| ALBERTA | | | | | | | | | |
| Marmot Basin | 4C-Det. | Leitner-Poma | 800 | 7542 | 1832 | 2400 | | 1000 | 4397 |
| Nakiska | 4C-Det. | Leitner-Poma | 500 | 4790 | 1537 | 1910 | | 1000 | 2936 |
| BRITISH COLUMBIA | | | | | | | | | |
| Whistler Blackcomb | 4C-Det. | Doppelmayr CTEC | 300 | 1823 | 430 | 2400 | | 984 | 1032 |
| ONTARIO | | | | | | | | | |
| Mount Pakenham | 4C | Leitner-Poma | 125 | 1534 | 261 | 2400 | | 453 | 626 |
| QUEBEC | | | | | | | | | |
| Parc du Mont Saint-Mathieu | 4C | Leitner-Poma | 200 | 2354 | 594 | 1600 | | 453 | 950 |
| Val d'Irene | 4C | Doppelmayr CTEC | 250 | 2988 | 800 | 2000 | | 450 | 1600 |
| Vallée du Parc | 4C | Doppelmayr CTEC | 200 | 2867 | 482 | 2200 | | 450 | 1060 |

CARIBBEAN

| Location | Type | Manufacturer | Installed | | | Design Cap. | Initial Cap. | Speed | VTFH |
|------------------|------|-----------------|-----------|--------|-------|-------------|--------------|-------|------|
| | | | HP | Length | Vert. | | | | |
| ST. LUCIA | | | | | | | | | |
| Rain Forest* | 4C | Doppelmayr CTEC | 60 | 1159 | 28 | 1650 | | 256 | 46 |

*Not included in lift statistics.

TOWS: ROPE, HANDLE, WIRE ROPE

| | | | |
|----------------|---|--------------|----------|
| Harusch | 1 | Star Lifts** | 6 |
| Multi Skillift | 1 | TOTAL | 8 |

**Includes Bruckschlägl and O'Connor.

CONVEYORS

| | | | |
|--------------|---|--------------|-----------|
| ChairKid | 5 | Star Lifts | 16 |
| Magic Carpet | 7 | TOTAL | 28 |

6-YEAR CHART OF CONVEYOR INSTALLATIONS



year to 12,601, which is nearly half of the total VTFH for North America. And this was not an Olympic effect—new lifts were spread out between Québec, Ontario, Alberta and B.C.

In the eastern U.S., lift totals only dropped by two, to seven, but these seven lifts only represent a VTFH of 5,801, a third of the region's 2008 total. And two of these lifts are not even turning this season. The Xanadu indoor snow dome in N.J., which installed a quad and a platter, has yet to open its doors to the public thanks to financing issues.

The four lifts in the Mountain region were spread over four states, and three of the projects were major: two gondolas and a funicular. The VTFH in that region, 6,719, represents a quarter of the total VTFH in North America.

The Pacific region had three installations that didn't do a lot for the VTFH bottom line—coming in at only 960—but the projects were sizable, especially at Northstar-at-Tahoe, which got a pulsed gondola and a quad.

The jittery economy also took its toll on conveyor lifts. A total of 28 conveyors were installed compared to 59 in 2008. Of that number, five of the installations were loading conveyors from Chairkid. Handle tows, however, made a nice jump from four in 2008 to eight in 2009.

So what will the future bring? We went to the two major lift manufacturers to find out what their crystal balls are predicting.

"As of December, we have five lifts under contract for 2010," says Mark Bee, president of Doppelmayr CTEC. "The phones are starting to ring, but we are still cautious in our optimism for 2010. Like every year, we'll have to see how our customers do over the holiday season."

"2009 was a challenging year as business was down 50 percent from 2008 thanks to the financial crisis," says Leitner-Poma's Rick Spear. "A downturn like this seems to happen every 10 years or so. The silver lining is that we have seen several resorts get serious about long-range planning for new lifts. This trend reduces volume volatility, thereby reducing our costs. This, combined with the decrease in raw steel costs (finally!) and two very hungry lift manufacturers, has created a buyers' market."



TOP ROW: Left, Red River, N.M., got a new Doppelmayr CTEC triple. On the right, the upscale St. Regis Deer Crest at Deer Valley installed its own funicular to move people in and out (for more, see Blue Pages).
 SECOND ROW: Naksika in Alberta debuted this Leitner-Poma detachable quad this season. Right, Mount Pakenham, Ont., opened with a brand new quad from Leitner-Poma.
 THIRD ROW: Left, Chairkid installed this loading conveyor at Bridger Bowl, Mont. On the right, this Magic Carpet lift at Beaver Creek stretches 320 feet.
 BOTTOM ROW: This conveyor lift from Star Lifts was installed at Stone Mountain.

