

Wider trails, bigger burgers at Heavenly

By Kathryn Reed

A mix of natural and man-made snow will allow Heavenly Mountain Resort to open Friday on a limited basis.

The resort that straddles California and Nevada always strives to open before Thanksgiving “ and often hits the mark because of its state-of-the-art snowmaking system that is one of the largest in the world.

In addition to what drops from the sky, 69 percent of Heavenly’s trails are covered with another 120 inches via snow guns.



Heavenly's tubing hill doubled in length.

Photo/Provided

Improvement to some trails will be noticeable “ especially to snowboarders who may have had some trouble accessing places like Milky Way Bowl.

Meteor, Sky Shoot and Auto Shoot trails have all been widened.

Near Pinnacles some larger rocks are gone and wind fences are up to make it easier for groomers to get on the slope.

For a change of pace or for the non-skier, the tubing hill at 450 feet is now double the length it was, it's four lanes and has a 65-foot vertical drop " the same as falling four stories.

The zipline is still closed pending clearance from the U.S. Forest Service and CalOSHA after a death on the ride last summer.

Fun areas that will be open once enough snow accumulates are the various terrain parks. More recycled features are part of the mix.

Adventure Session for \$119 a person is like hiring a guide to take skiers/boarders to areas of the mountain they might not be familiar with. Groups will be limited to a handful.

Food is a big component of what's new at Heavenly this season.

"This year we have completely reworked the hamburger," Russ Pecoraro, Heavenly spokesman said. "We sell more hamburgers than anything else."

The Epic Mountain Burger is available at all Vail Resorts owned ski areas. At Heavenly it costs \$12.95 for the two quarter-pound Angus beef patties on a gourmet bun shipped in from a Denver bakery.

Lunch value meals " entr e, side, drink " run \$9.95.

"We are trying to step up the vegetarian options. We are trying to diversify," Pecoraro said.

Heavenly relaunched its website " www.skiheavenly.com – to offer features to make people feel like they are on the slopes by integrating Google mapping.

A booking engine allows users to store a trip folder on Heavenly's site.

“You can retrieve data, share it with friends, retrieve old itineraries. There are a lot of cool aspects with that,” Pecoraro said.

Heavenly is notorious for not releasing its daily lift prices until moments before it opens. Often early season is less expensive than when the whole mountain is open. The resort’s website is the place to check for pricing.