

Heavenly cleared to build lodge near top of gondola

By Kathryn Reed

Heavenly Mountain Resort will be able to begin construction on its mid-mountain lodge at the end of the month.

An appeal to the U.S. Forest Service's "finding of no significant impact" has delayed the paperwork being signed off and therefore the project. Originally, Heavenly had hoped to start on June 15, with a Nov. 1 completion date. Now resort officials expect to open the lodge after the season begins.



East Peak Lodge at Heavenly will get some competition this winter when the lodge at the top of the gondola opens.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

Robert Coronado wanted the Forest Service to prepare a complete environmental impact statement on the 14,965-square-foot lodge at the top of the gondola – elevation 9,100 feet.

No indoor facility exists at that location. It will seat nearly 500 people.

Coronado also contended the project would increase traffic, have impacts on wildlife and not meet Clean Air Act guidelines.

Forest Supervisor Terri Marceron spoke with Coronado on July 6 in an attempt to resolve the issue. She was unsuccessful.

“As per Forest Service administrative procedures, the appeal was then reviewed by an appeal reviewing officer. The appeal reviewing officer found that Terri adequately addressed all the issues, and the regional forester upheld his review and affirmed Terri’s decision,” Forest Service spokeswoman Cheva Heck told *Lake Tahoe News*.

That decision came July 8. Heavenly can begin work 15 business days from that date. The plan is to break ground on the year-round lodge as soon as the all-clear signal is given.

With water, gas and sewer lines already installed, it means construction does not have to go over two seasons. Construction crews will access the site via the dirt road from the Stagecoach Lodge in Nevada.