

Summer lodging bookings look good for mountain regions

By Howard Pankratz, Denver Post

A tough economy that has Americans postponing extended and overseas vacations has been a blessing to western mountains resorts, according to Ralf Garrison, director of the Denver-based Mountain Travel Research Program.

According to Garrison, advanced reservations are up at most participating mountain resort destinations.

Advanced bookings in May were up 2.8 percent compared to last May with increases in June, July and August.

For the month of May, actual occupancy for mountain lodging was up 5.6 percent over a year ago, and the average daily rate being charged by the resorts is up 3.2 percent compared to May 2010.

Garrison said that with a slumping economy, “there is a disincentive to travel further and an incentive to stay at home.”

But where as Americans were recently taking “stay-cations” – or staying very,very close to home – they are now taking what Garrison described as “close-cations”. That means the western mountain resorts are seeing an influx of reservations from nearby metropolitan areas, he said.

Garrison said in Colorado, the resorts are seeing reservations from the Front Range, Utah resorts are seeing an uptick from the Salt Lake City area and Tahoe is seeing traffic from California cities.

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