

Squaw to spend \$35 mil. in 2 years on upgrading resort

Squaw Valley expects to invest \$15 million in the 2011-12 ski season. This is the first chunk of the \$50 million that is planned to be spent in the next five years.

When KSL Capital Partners became only the second owners of the North Shore ski resort in November, the Colorado company promised an infusion of cash to upgrade the resort.

Terrain parks, while popular in the industry, have not been something Squaw has done much with. That is about to change this winter with a variety of small, medium and large features being installed.



Squaw Valley's village and mountain are about to undergo changes.

Photo/LTN file

The funitel stop at the top of the mountain will be upgraded to look like something other than a dungeon.

The Gold Coast area will host North America's first ski-up coffee shop.

Signs will be added to make it easier for people to know where the are and how to get to where they want to go, along with real-time lift status boards. With this information comes revamped maps identifying before unnamed runs.

In the village, the Blue Coyote restaurant will be overhauled.

The KT-Sundeck will be completely redesigned. The entire deck will feature an indoor-outdoor bar. Other restaurants in the village will also undergo upgrades.

For beginners, the ski school is changing to focus on them.

A slopeside rental shop will open.

The bottom level of Squaw Valley's Olympic House base lodge will be transformed into a day lodge and family recreation center.

Next to it will be the new sales and services center enabling skiers and riders to purchase lift tickets, season passes, activity products and sign up for snowsports lessons in one place.

"The removal of the resort's ticket portals will eliminate the barrier between the village and the base area, creating a mountain 'beachfront' in the village providing enhanced views of Squaw Valley's peaks," CEO Andy Wirth said in a statement.

The following year the resort expects to spend \$20 million in upgrades.

The most significant is adding two high-speed detachable lifts – one lift replacing Granite Chief and the other replacing the High Camp chairlift. The existing High Camp chairlift will be refurbished and reinstalled in a new location with improved alignment.

"These new lifts, slated to open for the 2012-13 winter season, will have an uphill capacity of 7,200 skiers per hour,

allowing skiers and riders to spend less time on the lifts and more time on the mountain," Wirth said.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report