

# U.S. skier visits soar in 2012-13 season

The National Ski Areas Association announced today that U.S. ski areas tallied an estimated 56.6 million skier and snowboarder visits during the 2012-13 season. The results represent an 11 percent increase over the previous season, and the largest year-over-year gain in 30 years.

Despite a slow start to the winter season in parts of the country, many ski areas experienced a strong Christmas holiday period, and also reported strong visitation during Presidents Day and throughout March, helping to propel the industry back into a more typical visit volumes.



People line up for Vail's gondola that opened this season. Photo/LTN file

In another indication of the widespread rebound this season, 78 percent of reporting ski areas posted increases in visits. The median resort experienced a 10.6 percent gain in visits.

Visits were up in all regions, with the biggest rebounds seen for the Pacific Southwest, up 20.5 percent. Meanwhile the Northeast was up 20.3 percent, and the Southeast was up 17.2 percent. Impressive gains were also recorded in the Midwest, up 11.5 percent, and Pacific Northwest, up 7.5 percent. The

Rocky Mountain was up 1.9 percent over the 2011-12 season.

On an overall national basis, visitation was up in every period of the season, with the most substantial increases recorded at the end of the season. Specifically, visits were estimated to be up 2 percent in the early season; up 16 percent during the Christmas and New Year's holidays; up 7 percent during the January 7 to Feb. 18 period; up 14 percent in the Feb. 19 to March 24 period; and up 25 percent during the March 26 to closing period.