

Early winter bookings follow strong summer tourist season

Lodging properties in 17 Western mountain resort destinations, including Lake Tahoe-Truckee, wrapped up the summer through August with a 5.5 percent increase in actual occupancy and a 6 percent increase for the past six months compared to 2012, according to the most recent data released by Denver-based DestiMetrics.

The results are through Aug. 31. The robust number of overnight visitors led to the record-breaking summer occupancy that surpassed prerecession figures.

As mountain destinations shift their focus to winter reservations and the ski season, bookings for the upcoming six months are continuing the summer's strength.

"At this early stage, winter bookings are pacing well ahead of last year and signs are pointing toward continued momentum, but we will be keeping an eye on economic and political news that can shift travel dynamics quickly," Ralf Garrison, director of DestiMetrics, said in a statement.

September is continuing the upward trend with on-the-books occupancy up 6.6 percent compared to last September and revenues up 13 percent for the month.

The economic indicators that may influence consumer travel behavior are the stock market, consumer confidence, unemployment, room rates and the price of airline tickets.