

Last winter impacting lodging reservations

Some mountain lodging establishments are looking at a better winter even though the ski season has barely started.

The record-breaking summer for occupancy and revenue among Western mountain resorts is carrying into the winter booking season, according to DestiMetrics, a Denver-based organization that tracks mountain lodging bookings at 19 Western mountain resorts in six states.

Winter bookings for November through March are showing an aggregated 7.4 percent gain in occupancy for the upcoming season compared to the same time last year with increases appearing in the first five months of the ski season that data is available. Aggregated revenue is also strong with a 15.5 percent increase for the first five months of the 2014-15 season.

Snow conditions from last season are having a distinctly different impact on bookings for Colorado-Utah-Wyoming compared to California-Nevada-Oregon. While the Rocky Mountain resorts are tracking 8.9 percent higher in occupancy with a 16.4 percent increase in overall revenues, the Far West resorts are experiencing the opposite effect. Their aggregated occupancy was down 6.5 percent and related revenues are down 7.7 percent.

The briefing concluded that while skiers and riders are loyal and committed mountain travelers even in tough economic times, weather and global geopolitics will require close monitoring this season.

“At this point, we’re seeing skiers and riders taking up right where they left off last year because of snow equity,” says Ralf Garrison, director of DestiMetrics. “While this is

working to the benefit of destinations in the Rockies, it is posing a challenge to Far West mountain resorts where negative snow equity is dragging booking pace. However, a major break in the drought or a few good early season snowstorms would be a powerful antidote for what ails them.”

– Lake Tahoe News staff report