



SAFETY PROGRAMS

Safety Awards: Five Repeats, Two Four-PEATs, and Vail's Seventh Straight.

PROACTIVE EDUCATION EFFORTS TARGET YOUTH, EMPLOYEES.

BY TROY HAWKS

Five resorts, including Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort Mass., Killington Resort, Vt., The Summit at Snoqualmie, Wash., Welch Village, Minn., and Wintergreen Resort in Virginia each reaped their second Heads Up National Ski Area Safety Award for the 2005/06 season. The awards were presented at the '06 NSAA National Convention and Tradeshow held at Marco Island, Fla. Other award-winning safety programs include Colorado's Vail Mountain, winning the most awards of any resort with seven consecutive, and Aspen/Snowmass and Beaver Creek, each winning its fourth award. Honorable Mentions went to Grand Targhee Resort, Wyo., Heavenly, Calif., and Whiteface, N.Y.

"This was perhaps the most imaginative group of contest entries that we have seen since the inception of the safety awards, it's very gratifying to see resorts put this much energy and effort into safety. I doubt that there is any industry in the country that works harder at promoting safety for its guests," said NSAA Education Director Tim White. Here is a brief review of the award-winning programs:

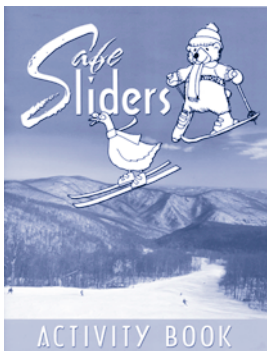
BEST YOUTH SAFETY PROGRAM

Wintergreen Resort, Va.

www.wintergreenresort.com



Wintergreen Resort won its first safety award in the 2000/01 season. This season, the resort promoted its Safe Sliders program, which targets kids aged 4 to 12. The program was a combined effort with local organizations including the University of Virginia Children's Hospital and a local kids coalition, all promoting a unified safety message. The program included an activity coloring book, helmet giveaways and indoor presentations. To test the program's effectiveness, the resort developed a five week control group of



local students whose test scores increased 20 percent after completion of the program. Wintergreen projected it had reached 3,000 program participants by season's end, and will seek to incorporate similar safety programs in its summer operations.

"We chose this age group believing that if we could improve the children's' experience by teaching them the necessary skills and knowledge of safer snowsports participation, they would want to continue their newfound hobby," states Director of Mountain Operations Jay Roberts.

BEST SMALL RESORT SAFETY PROGRAM

Welch Village, Minn.

www.welchvillage.com



This was the second consecutive year Welch Village won a Safety Award, having won last season's Best Terrain Park Safety Program. The resort's objective for this season, reports Marketing Manager Brad Larsen, was to engage children aged 11 to 17 in the seven points of the Responsibility Code.

Larsen submits: "Safety week traditionally lands on one of the busiest weeks of our season. We have hundreds of people visit the resort through group travel during this period, and most



of the groups largely consist of children. These children receive very little supervision while at the resort, and most are unfamiliar with ski safety. Engaging the children's attention on safety is no simple task, but it's absolutely imperative. Nearly 70 percent of all accidents at Welch Village occur among children between the ages of 11 and 17. Getting these young people to acknowledge the safety code is a strong step toward lowering incident rates."

In response, Welch created Safety Suckers with the tagline, "Don't be a dum dum, know the safety codes!" Also, lift tickets displayed the skier responsibility code. According to Larsen, by the end of the week-long promotion, Welch had distributed 650 Safety Suckers to youth groups. For many visitors, it had been the first time the skier Responsibility Code had been presented to them. In addition, the program helped remind and rally the Welch staff toward promoting Safety Week.

BEST SAFETY MESSAGE

The Summit at Snoqualmie, Wash.

www.summit-at-snoqualmie.com



In Washington, The Summit at Snoqualmie Risk Manager Jeff Krueger reports that for the 2005/06 season, the resort targeted its Safety Week efforts toward the 4- to 17-year-old age group, focusing on chairlift safety.

"Knowing that safety is not always cool among younger skiers and snowboarders, we wanted to make this effort as appealing and as guest interactive as possible," submits Risk Manager Jeff Krueger.

With this, the resort developed a safety mascot, and subsequently held a naming contest for the "spokescreature" in an effort to involve the target audience. In addition, Snoqualmie staff designed three posters with different safety messages regarding chairlift safety.

Each poster was designed with the youth market in mind. The poster taglines included: Back to Back, illustrating the importance of sitting all the way back on the chairlift; Pack in Laps, reminding passengers to take off their backpacks before getting on the lift; and a third poster introduced the Snoqualmie mascot with the tagline, Safety Starts with Me. In addition, the vehicle and lift maintenance departments designed a life-size practice chair also promoting the Back to Back phrase.



"The success of this program has engaged many departments around our base areas to promote chairlift safety as well as safe attitudes and work environments," says Krueger. "Our focus on safety at the Summit enables many departments to get involved in their own ways."

Beyond chairlift safety, the Snoqualmie grooming department parked their machines at the base areas with operators on hand to answer questions about grooming and various safety issues; the human resource department gave prizes in the parking lots for vehicles carrying cable chain, fire extinguishers, first aid kits, blankets and shovels; and ski patrollers addressed private ski school students before they hit the slopes.

MOST ORIGINAL SAFETY PROGRAM

Jiminy Peak, Mass.

www.jiminypeak.com



Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort
Director of Marketing Betsy

Strickler reports that for the season the resort decided to create a "radical" and "different" campaign in its effort to communicate the Responsibility Code to guests and employees. In doing so, the resort created Zeke, the "what-not-to-do" mascot. The campaign included a "micro-site" specific to Zeke within the Jiminy Peak website, with regular contests designed to drive guests and employees to the site, encouraging interaction and exposure to safety messages.

The website featured videos of Zeke violating various aspects of the Responsibility Code, such as not using the chairlift restraining bar or stopping where he could not be viewed by others on the slope. Also, a Zeke blog listed information regarding on-mountain contests that involved both guests and more than 500 on-snow employees throughout the season. By season's end, Jiminy had distributed 7,000 Zeke stickers; the Zeke website received more than 18,000 visits during a two-month period; and more than 200 guests had participated in an on-mountain contest each week. ▶



BEST FREESTYLE TERRAIN SAFETY PROGRAM

Beaver Creek, Colo.

www.beavercreek.com



While this season saw several new components to Beaver Creek's safety awareness efforts, the resort's Park-ology Weekly Smart Style Terrain Park Education program was voted the industry's best. The resort's ski and ride Park-ology program teaches kids aged 3 to 17 pipe and park etiquette, and teaches them how to be safe and respect others while skiing and riding. The program was held every Wednesday and reached every child registered for lessons that day. In addition, a series of special Park-ology learning competitions with video analysis and pizza parties were scheduled throughout the winter.

Other new safety endeavors at Beaver Creek this season included a Rail Jam Series designed to promote the three points of Smart Style. In the series, resort instructors provided demonstrations and supervision in order to provide park enthusiasts of all ages with basic instruction on how to slide rails and perform other terrain park maneuvers safely. The resort also developed a bright yellow on-mountain Safety in Motion mobile safety station, staffed with patrollers, on-mountain safety ambassadors, and resort managers from various departments.

Also new, the resort conducted Reverse Sting Operations, in which nearly 40 staff members patrolled various mountain areas rewarding safe skiing and riding guests and also produced a 4-minute educational safety video highlighting year-long safety efforts.

In the area of employee safety, the resort enlisted three graduate students from the University of Colorado who researched the resorts safety programs throughout the season and then presented their findings to resort management. Also, an employee safety committee was formed that met regularly to share ideas and further develop a resort-wide safety plan.



BEST SAFETY WEEK PROGRAM

Killington Resort, Vt.

www.killington.com



In launching its Safety Week campaign, Killington Resort Risk Manager Anne Snyder says the resort created Heads Up welcome packages placed at hotel and condominium check-in locations in an effort to introduce guests to National Safety Awareness Week, reinforced with articles in the local newspaper and posted on Killington's website. Among a host of various projects, the resort introduced bright yellow Heads Up Safety Awareness jackets this season, worn by management staff, on-mountain ambassadors and others. Each jacket featured one of ten short marketable messages related to the Responsibility Code.



"Our goal was to educate skiers and riders in the lodge, on the hill, in the lift mazes and during ski and snowboard lessons, these jackets capture the attention of everyone, everywhere," submits Snyder.

In addition, 40 Heads Up Know the Code signs were mounted on lift towers across six different mountain areas. Indoors, the resort produced 1,000 cafeteria trays featuring the Responsibility Code and featured daily menu items that incorporated safety awareness messages, such as the "Look Before You Leap over the Hot Open-Faced Turkey" and the "Easy Style It with BBQ Pork on a Round Roll."

The local RSN-Killington TV station aired live interviews and highlighted various Safety Week events and messages, and guests visiting the resort during any day of Safety Week were offered a free lift ticket or lesson package with the purchase of a helmet and half-priced binding checks were offered at rental and repair facilities.

OUTSTANDING SAFETY VIDEO

Vail Mountain, Colo.

www.vail.com

Winning its seventh straight safety award, this year Vail was recognized for the, "It Won't Happen to Me" safety video. A year in the making, the 20-minute video provides hard-hitting messages on some of the industry's major safety concerns including information on skiing too fast, skiing out of bounds, the weather and avalanches.

"The genesis for the film came from our frustration that more often, people are not held accountable for their actions when they are skiing and riding," submits Vail Director of Ski Patrol Julie Rust. "Make no mistake about it, this is not a marketing campaign to draw people into our sport, this message is geared toward our already captured audience who need a reminder of the dangers of skiing and riding."

First unveiled at the 2006 NSAA Winter Shows, Vail has offered copies of the video to other resorts, and has incorporated the film into its employee and community safety education efforts. The video aired on local TV stations as well.



Beyond the video, this year Vail conducted Sting Days that involved various department heads and senior leaders stationed in high traffic areas contacting guests regarding skier safety. Guests deemed out of control lost their skiing or riding privileges for the day. Every Saturday, the resort placed an ad in the local paper, informing the public of how many passes were revoked due to safety violations.

Starring in Vail's safety efforts again this season was Pork Chop the Safety Pig. Also Yellow Jackets provided on-mountain support and Vail's Make a Difference Day provided community safety education focused on skier and rider safety. In all, Vail submitted a list of 100 safety-related activities conducted by staff every day.

For a complete list of past Heads Up National Ski Area Safety Award winners, enter the Safety & Education section of www.nsaa.org

BEST OVERALL SAFETY PROGRAM

Aspen/Snowmass, Colo.

www.aspensnowmass.com

ASPEN SNOWMASS

Aspen/Snowmass General Manager of Mountain Operations Rick Burkley reports that the resort's safety program goals were two-fold: To create awareness of protocol and rules for kids and teens in pipe and parks utilizing the Smart Style program; and to create general awareness among adults on safety issues.

For kids, the resort continued its "Safety is Hot, and You're the Sauce" theme, distributing 5,000 wrist bands featuring the message. Also, 1,000 chocolate bars were distributed featuring a National Safety Awareness Week label with the tag line "Raising the Bar on Safety." Geared toward users of the resort's X Park at Buttermilk, orange jelly beans were redubbed and handed out as Safety Pills. In addition, more than 6,000 safety week buttons were distributed to kids under 6 years old. Aspen/Snowmass staff members gave safety presentations at local middle and high schools and rescue dog demonstrations were held during peak lunch time hours.



"Anytime you hand out candy bars or jelly beans, you will generally meet with approval and this was the case," states Burkley. "The number of kids that made the effort to get to our guest service centers specifically for the chocolate bars indicated the information, if not the actual message, was getting through, and the Safety Pills became a big hit at Buttermilk."

For adults, patrol stations were set up at all four base areas; two lectures were hosted detailing common ski and ride injuries and offering tips on how to avoid them; and the resort placed heavy emphasis on its daily safety tips on the local TV station, helping to reinforce on-mountain messaging. ■