

Safety First

NATIONAL SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK INITIATIVES
EARN RECOGNITION FOR EIGHT RESORTS.

By Keri Hone

Each year, NSAA invites ski areas to promote slope safety to visitors and staff during January's National Safety Awareness Week, and each year a few resorts stand out from the rest with exceptionally creative campaigns. To recognize them, the annual Ski Area Safety Awards were established.

The awards honor resorts for customer friendly programs, new ideas, and overall staff involvement during Safety Week, sponsored last season by Boeri. Below, the eight winning 2003 programs are detailed. Information on what all participating resorts were doing during Safety Week is listed at www.nsaa.org, "Ski and Snowboard Safety." Thanks to all resorts that helped promote slope safety and filled NSAA in on what you were doing.

1 million+ Skier Visits

Aspen Skiing Co., Colo.

Aspen Skiing Co. reported an increase in positive guest feedback as a result of 2003 safety week initiatives. Live television interviews of patrollers and instructors from the top of the mountain were shown daily, and 20,000 fortune cookies were handed out to guests with safety message "fortunes" in each cookie (i.e., "Space not speed, grasshopper" or "Effortless delight on snow comes from a lesson"). The first, second and third place winners of the local Kids' Poster Contest skied or rode with team Aspen/Snowmass and received prizes for their individual entries. Expanding the resorts' involvement in Safety Week increased safety awareness among staff and in the community.

Vail Mountain, Colo.

The Vail Mountain staff was an integral part of the resort's Safety Week program. Each department was involved in a different safety contest, from snow sculpting to scavenger hunting. The food and beverage



SQUAW VALLEY, USA, CALIF.

Squaw Valley Freeride Team members hand out their freeride safety trading cards during National Safety Awareness Week. From left: Jeremy Jones, Jeff McKitterick, Aaron McGovern (with his "Hot Dog" inspired one-piece), Becky Moore of Squaw Valley, Tom Wayes, Shawn Sullivan and Jessica Sobolowski.

department created brownies with powdered sugar Heads Up logos and the HR department skied the hill dressed as Superman and Spiderman to create aware-



20,000 FORTUNE COOKIES WERE
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ness. Vail's award-winning Yellow Jacket squad continued its outreach efforts. The Yellow Jackets hosted both terrain park etiquette and avalanche awareness demonstrations. As a result, Vail saw more support from the local media and tremendous efforts from employees.

500,000–1 million Skier Visits

Killington, Vt.

Killington stepped off the mountain, reaching new audiences in resort lodging properties and in 30 area schools. Guests received "Safety First" information sheets at various lodging properties upon arrival. Mountain Ambassadors handed out Killington trail maps and discussed safety etiquette with students. A local radio station ran a two-hour live broadcast with giveaways every half hour. On-mountain publicity included safety videos shown in base lodges and rental and retail shops and increased signage on lifts. Activities planned for Safety Week at the resort remained part of the overall programming for the remainder of the season.

Squaw Valley, Calif.

Squaw Valley promoted "Be at Squaw and Be Safe" with personalized "freerider trading cards" from local athletes. The resort's

relationships with local role models provided an outlet for delivering powerful safety messages to a target audience, since the youth market sees value in messages coming from professional athletes. Squaw also provided photo opportunities with the resort's avalanche rescue dogs. Ski patrol hosted an avalanche awareness clinic with more than 150 participants and opened the patrol shacks for tours. The resort also implemented Smart Style program materials during Safety Week and then added them to mountain signage permanently.



Stratton uses this work safety logo to target employees throughout the season.

250,000–500,000 Skier Visits

Stratton, Vt.

Stratton focused on interaction with guests during Safety Awareness Week. Safety gift bags containing cereal, Chap Stick and Dermatone were handed out to hundreds of skiers and boarders, and more than 2,000 laminated Skier Responsibility Code cards were attached to lift tickets. Ski patrol ran contests in lift lines, awarding guests. Stratton involved staff by encouraging employees to nominate fellow staff members who displayed safety in their work. Actually, work-related safety is emphasized year long at Stratton, which uses a work safety logo targeting employees. Safe employees have positively impacted overall mountain safety.

Mountain High, Calif.

With a list of Safety Week resort initiatives, Mountain High gathered sponsor support to

Safety Poster Contest Winners Announced

KIDS PLAY A PART IN PROMOTING RESPONSIBILITY.

Michigan and South Dakota kids were named winners of the 2003 National Kids' Safety Poster Contest, which challenged elementary-aged children to create posters based on the Your Responsibility Code's seven principles of slope safety. Cas Bowman, age 11, representing Terry Peak Resort, S.D., and Kathryn Habecker, age 8, from Crystal Mountain, Mich., took top honors.

On local levels, an estimated 5,000 posters were created by children through resort-sponsored contests. Thirty-three ski areas from 22 states sent submissions for the national contest. In its third year, the contest, sponsored by Boeri Ski and Snowboard Helmets and SKI Magazine, is part of NSAA's ongoing Heads Up slope safety initiative.

Habecker's design won the "Most Creative" category. She's been involved with the Crystal Mountain Kids Program since she was 2 years old, and recently took up snowboarding. Her instructors say she's a natural, but she still prefers skiing—preferably on black runs.

Cas Bowman received the award for "Best Safety Message" for his poster admonishing to "Ski In Control." Bowman participates in Terry Peak's ski school program. His entry was chosen at a local contest held at the resort.

Bowman and Habecker will be featured in the October issue of SKI and will each receive a Boeri helmet.

For more information on the contest, slope safety, or Heads Up, log onto www.nsaa.org, "Ski & Snowboard Safety."—A.D.

promote safety on the slopes, mainly targeting kids. Dryve Snowboards donated 14 boards with the Heads Up logo imprinted on the bottom. Sequoia, Mountain High's ski patrol dog, was used to promote the resort at trade shows and in classrooms nationwide. During Safety Awareness Week, Sequoia greeted guests on the mountain. The resort's "Kids with Lids" program encouraged children to wear helmets. Mountain High established business partnerships that led to future program opportunities and increased publicity for the resort.

0–250,000 Skier Visits

Crystal Mountain, Mich.

Crystal Mountain captured a broad audience with a safety section in *Mountain Life*, the resort's publication. The article was dedicated to Kids' Poster Contest winners and Crystal Mountain's 2003 Safety Week plans. On-mountain contests included the NAS-TAR safety race and the "most turns" contest, which taught guests how to control

speed. Kids could sign up to have lunch with resort mascots and learn about the Responsibility Code.

Windham Mountain, N.Y.

Windham Mountain's Safety Rodeo scavenger hunt attracted more than 100 people and was so popular among guests, it was a featured program again two months later. Staff designed a safety poster with the message "Go Ahead – Wear a Helmet" that targeted kids to encourage a younger audience to wear helmets. After guests requested to buy the posters, Windham decided to hand them out. Following Safety Week, ski patrol reported a noticeable decrease in guests skiing and riding off-trail and an increase in those abiding by safety messages.

This season's honorable mentions were: Whistler/Blackcomb, Canada; Beaver Creek, Colo., Jackson Hole, Wyo., and Sky Tavern, Nev. ■