

'96-97 season sets ski record

Post 5-29-97 P. 1C

Visits up 3.6 percent over last season

By Penny Parker

Denver Post Business Writer

COLORADO SPRINGS — Buoyed by a bountiful snowfall that started early and ended late, Colorado's 1996-97 ski season ended with a record-breaking, 3.6 percent increase in skier visits.

The growth in skier visits — defined as one lift ticket sold or given to a skier on one day — boosted the Colorado Ski Index to a record 109.1. The ski index is a single figure that measures the performance of the winter tourism industry — including skier days, enplanements, lodging nights, and restaurant and consumer spending — relative to the base season of 1991-92.

This season's index of 109.1 broke the record of 108.6 set during the 1993-94 season and came in above the 106.7 posted for the 1995-96 season. The index is compiled by economist Tucker Hart Ad-

ams.

Ski index and skier visit numbers were released by Colorado Ski Country USA Wednesday during the trade group's annual meeting at the Broadmoor Hotel.

John Frew, president of Colorado Ski Country USA, had said before the end of the season that Colorado's resorts might break the 12 million mark in skier days. But Frew on Wednesday called the 11.8 million skier visits — an increase of roughly 400,000 over last season — “remarkable.”

Destination resorts collectively snagged 8 percent growth in the number of skiers visiting their areas; Front Range resorts had 2 percent growth, Frew said.

Please see **SEASON** on 3C