

Skiing Business Third-Biggest For Colorado

Post p. 13A 12-10-82

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✓ Accounted for 22 percent of all employment in the western half of the state and 18 percent of its personal income to become the region's largest single employer.

✓ Ranked third, behind agriculture and oil and gas exploration, as the state's largest creator of jobs, well ahead of coal and metallic mining and electrical and electronic manufacturing.

The \$75,000 study was commissioned by Colorado Ski Country USA, the state's ski trade association, with grants from Boettcher & Co., IntraWest Bank of Denver and United Bank of Denver.

It was conducted over the past year by the research firms of Browne, Bortz & Coddington and H. Rubinstein & Co. Dean Coddington, one of the report's authors, was a principal author of the only other major study of tourism conducted in recent years by the Denver Research Institute in 1967.

"Skiing has become a major contributor to Colorado's economy," Coddington said Thursday, admitting that he was surprised himself by some of the growth figures.

For example:

✓ In the 1980-81 poor-snow season, skier visits dropped by 30 percent, but ski-related jobs were off only 8 percent and retail sales dropped only 15 percent in real dollars.

✓ Over the past two years, ski-related housing starts represented nearly 10 percent of total Colorado housing starts and one quarter of Western Slope starts, despite the frenzy of the shale oil development and the spurt in gold and coal mining activity.

(The report doesn't cover building in the summer of 1982 and the effects of the recession.)

✓ Recent efforts of the industry to turn ski areas into year-round resorts produced \$55 million in retail sales, about 9 percent of winter sales.

✓ The greatest portion of eco-

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conomic benefits accrue to businesses other than the ski operators. For every skier dollar spent on lift tickets, nearly \$6 is spent on other goods and services.

For six of eight counties, skiing is critical to the economy, the report said. They are Summit (85 percent of total employment), Eagle (80 percent), Pitkin (75 percent), Grand (54 percent), Routt (45 percent) and Gunnison (25 percent). The other two are La Plata (9 percent) and Clear Creek (7 percent).

In Denver, 4,300 jobs are supported directly or indirectly by skiing. Skier visitors spent \$28.7 million in the city last season, led by \$20.7 million for rental cars.

The so-called "destination skier" — a skier who spends a night at a ski area — will spend an average \$118.72 a day at the area, six times that of a day skier who spends only an average \$19.30 daily. In the state, 15,500 jobs are directly supported by the out-of-state skier.

The proportion of "destination skiers" to total skier days has stabilized at slightly above 60 percent of the total, the report said.