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Price of hitting the slopes steepens as ski season opens

BY ROY GAULT
THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

SALEM — A dollar here, a couple dollars there: The price of skiing and snowboarding has increased, particularly at Oregon's trendiest resorts, as those at the highest elevations begin operations for the winter.

There are plenty of bargains for the discriminate lift-ticket shopper, but for those who show up on the mountain to purchase an adult single-day pass, the cost will be \$3 more this winter at Mount Bachelor; \$2 at Mount Hood Meadows and \$1 at Timberline Lodge and at Willamette Pass.

Hoodoo, the ski area closest to Salem, is one of the resorts that has chosen to hold the line. Single-day passes are the same price as a year ago, but owner Chuck Shepard has given 2004-05 season ticket holders an opportunity for big savings because they didn't get full value during last winter's short ski season. Hoodoo was open only 49 days. An average season at the resort on Santiam Pass is 120 days.

"Chuck has dramatically dropped prices for people who were season-pass holders last year because he wants them to feel like they got

their money's worth," said Pam DeMarsh, assistant office manager. "It's a great deal."

Last year's season-pass holders can buy an adult season pass — \$495 face value — for \$275. Holders of a mid-week pass a year ago — \$265 face value — can buy the same pass for \$185. That offer is good until Dec. 15.

The highest adult single-day lift tickets in Oregon are \$49 at Mount Bachelor and \$48 at Mount Hood Meadows. Both increase that rate to \$52 for adults on peak days — weekends in January and February and during holiday periods, including Christmas vacation.

Adult single-day lift tickets at Hoodoo will hold at \$32, but for those who can get to the mountain Tuesdays after Jan. 4, it will be \$16.

The buyer who is willing to shop can find similar bargains, some of them even at the more upscale resorts. A Thanksgiving Day lift ticket at Mount Hood Meadows, for example, was \$26 if purchased online.

Timberline raised its price \$1 to \$43 for an adult one-day pass, but it is offering a \$5 savings to about half its participants.

"It's a newsworthy little thing, the Skul Kard, a little wallet-sized card for

kids 13 to 18 that is free, and it's good for a \$5 discount any time, every time, by showing it at the ticket office," said Jon Tullis, spokesman for Timberline. "With it comes a lot of discounts at ski shops, so what it represents is a true price reduction from last year. It's an age group that comprises about 50 percent of our business."

The card is available at Portland-area ski shops and at the Timberline ticket office.

Janette Sherman, spokeswoman for Mount Bachelor, said price increases there "are mostly due to increased gas prices and electricity."

Mount Hood Meadows raised only its adult ticket prices.

"We were just taking a look at what prices were other places for a comparable experience," said spokesman Dave Tragethon.

Prices will hold level at a second resort owned by Mount Hood Meadows: \$18 for an adult pass at Cooper Spur Mountain Resort. Moreover, for \$65 on a Sunday night through a Thursday night, two people can have a hotel room at Cooper Spur and two free lift tickets at Mount Hood Meadows. That offer runs through Dec. 23.

Albany company's creations ship worldwide for holidays

BY ALEX PAUL
ALBANY DEMOCRAT-HERALD

ALBANY — If Santa Claus had a workshop in Oregon, it would have to be Crystal Valley Decorating.

Red, gold and green garlands sparkle as employees create lighted holiday decorations that will soon be shipped around the world.

"We've shipped pieces to Moscow, Alaska, Cuba, South America, even the United Arab Emirates," said marketing manager Russ Milstein. "Plus, we ship to all 50 states and many provinces in Canada. We have 60 distributors all around the country."

This time of year, more than 100 employees are working from 5:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. each day, trying to keep up with a record-setting sales pace, Milstein said.

The company has been owned for 15 years by John Kulick and Dan Cowen. It moved in June from Fresno, Calif., to the former Willamette Graystone building on Excor Road,

between Albany and Corvallis.

Production time varies from two days to as much as two months, depending on the size and complexity of the project.

Prices start at \$40 for a section of Victorian fencing that's 2 feet tall and run as much as \$800,000 for a custom tree with 150,000 light-emitting diodes. A basic 44-foot tree costs about \$58,000, Milstein said.

"Our products are purchased by big casinos in Las Vegas, resorts, theme parks such as Dollywood or Universal Studios and municipalities," Milstein said. "We also make custom orders for estates. We're working on one project we call the Kilroy Santa Claus that is 49 feet long and 40 feet tall. It will go to a large East Coast estate."

Crystal Valley makes all of its own major parts. The company buys hundreds of tons of steel annually, ranging from 3/8-inch to 1/2-inch hot-rolled rod and tubing from 1 to 4

inches square.

The process is labor-intensive and starts with a concept provided by the customer or from numerous designs in the company's catalog. Once the design is complete, the image is projected onto a wall and traced onto large pieces of paper.

Craftspeople develop a jig or use pipe-bending equipment to mold the metal into shapes that will then move to the welding department.

"What makes our products especially unique is that we build all of them in modular units. Everything is made to be carried through a doorway," said Milstein, 40. "Our trees, for example, are built in 2-foot sections. Those sections can be stored inside each other for shipping or when taken down after the holiday."

When the metalwork is finished, it is cleaned and taken to a powder-coating area. Powder coating uses an electrical charge to attract powdered

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Dear Students,

As you have probably noticed, the Counseling & Testing Center is currently undergoing a substantial remodel. Consequently, our contractors have asked us to vacate the building while our new air handling system is installed during Winter Break.

From **December 12th to December 26th**, we will NOT be providing walk-in hours, appointments or phone coverage. If you have an emergency during this time, please contact **White Bird at 687-4000** as they will remain staffed 24 hours every day.

From **December 27th to January 6th**, you may call 346-3227 between 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday to be connected with a counselor **by phone**. We will have intermittent heat and electricity during this time, so will still NOT be available for any on-site counseling. After hours and evening emergencies will continue to be handled by White Bird.

Thank you for your understanding and patience.

Sincerely,
Counseling & Testing Center Staff