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The Economic Impact of Skiing and Snowboarding

Overview

The National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) conducted research in the 2019-20 season, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, to assess the economic impact of alpine skiing, telemark skiing and snowboarding on the U.S. economy. NSAA partnered with RRC Associates and Southwick Associates to analyze historical and current data from ski areas and other industry suppliers. Data is aggregated and sometimes weighted to account for non-respondents. NSAA only releases data at the national level; for state-level information, please contact that state's ski industry trade association.

Key Impacts

- In the 2019-20 season, there were 470 ski areas in operation across 37 U.S. states. (NSAA, 2020)
- The alpine ski, telemark ski and snowboard industries contribute over \$55 billion in retail spend to the U.S. economy. These include expenditures made by skiers and snowboarders across all 50 states for equipment, travel expenses and services during 2016. These combined initial retail sales are the stimulus that trigger the multiplier effects across the national and statewide economies. (Southwick, 2019)
- The U.S. alpine ski, telemark ski and snowboard industries support over 533,000 jobs. (Southwick, 2019)
- Skiing, snowboarding and telemark contribute approximately \$29 billion to the gross domestic product (GDP) of the United States.
- The ski industry suffered an estimated loss of \$2 billion in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes losses from the early shutdown in March, when approximately 93% of ski areas ceased operations prior to their scheduled closing date; from canceled summer business, including conferences, weddings and other large-scale events. (RRC Associates, 2020)

- Ski areas typically reinvest profits into the infrastructure of the ski area to improve the guest experience. In 2019/20, ski areas invested an average of \$18.60 per skier visits in capital expenditures nationally. Top expenditures included on-mountain improvements like new or upgraded ski lifts and snowmaking equipment. (NSAA, 2020)

Methodology

NSAA contracts with independent research firms to assist with data aggregation and analysis. Data is collected from surveys of member businesses. Through the year, NSAA collects data from both member and non-member ski areas, resulting in statistically-significant data sets, summarized here. NSAA wishes to thank the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) for their partnership in supplying additional data for our research.

Additional Information

NSAA offers several reports for purchase; [click here](#) for more information. The association does not release raw data or any reports free of charge to non-members.

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The National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) is a trade association representing the interests of ski area operators and industry suppliers. Formed in 1962, NSAA designs and supports ski industry initiatives and programs, including growth, safety and sustainability, from its Lakewood, Colo., headquarters. Learn more about NSAA's mission and programs at [NSAA.org](https://www.nsa.org).