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### **Skiing vital to economy**

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**CEDAR CITY** - The amount of money Southern Utah generates from its ski industry is chilling considering there is nothing else to replace its impact.

"I know that last fiscal year, which ended April 30, the resort's payroll was approximately \$2 million and that can be a big impact on a local economy putting that much out in payroll," said Jon Christoffersen, Brian Head Ski Resort sales, marketing and public relations manager. "Excluding payroll, during 2010, the resort put \$1.8 million into the local economy, also."

Examples Christoffersen gave of funds circulated back into the economy include the purchase of office supplies and equipment, utilities such as water from the town of Brian Head, fuel from vendors and food served at the resort's restaurants.

"If the resort wasn't here, there would be 350 less jobs in the community and that's obviously a big deal because the payroll money extends to every part of the community," Christoffersen said. "The employees, mostly being from Iron County, spend their money in restaurants, stores and shops in Cedar City and so the money we put out extends to the entire community from our employees spending their paychecks."

An additional contribution to the economy that hasn't been there for the last eight years is the Dec. 15 opening of the former Elk Meadows Ski Resort in the Tushar

Mountains of Beaver County. New ownership has taken over and plans to open the resort as Eagle Point.

Shane Gadbow, the new owner and founder of Xe Capital Management in New York City, had crews working this summer and fall to renovate all five lifts, rebuild lodges and clear slopes and trails of overgrowth, said spokeswoman Jodi Holmgren. The new resort is hiring for 100 jobs to be filled in all departments by Nov. 15, she added.

"This first year, we will focus on the drive market from Las Vegas, Phoenix and southern California," Holmgren said. "Eagle Point has really been aggressive in offering specials for locals because we understand our local audience and feel it is very important to us and so we're motivated to create that loyalty."

Eagle Point's reopening already has made an economic impact with Beaver County receiving more than \$300,000 from Gadbow that paid for back taxes and other liabilities associated with the property. The 400-acre resort is sponsoring a pre-season party open to the public at Beaver's Main Street Pavilion to celebrate its inaugural season with a live radio remote, giant slide, free snowcones and cotton candy. Those interested will find out about pre-season pass deals and job opportunities.

Brian Head Resort is also offering its annual job fair on the campus of Southern Utah University next week. Positions available at the resort are full- and part-time for lift operations, ticket cashiers, food service, rental shop, ski and snowboard instructors, day care personnel, guest services, custodians, reservations receptionist, revenue auditor and ski patrol dispatcher. The pay range for the jobs is from minimum wage up to \$15 per hour.

"During the three years prior to the 2009-2010 winter season, Brian Head Resort had average gross revenues from ski operations of \$6.8 million, with average earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization in that period at \$1.7 million," said John Brice of Brice & Associates for the resort. "The average annual skier days in that period was 141,000. The EBITDA projection for 2010-11 is \$2.2 million."

Other significant funding contributions by Brian Head Resort was a total of real and personal property taxes paid in fiscal 2010 of approximately \$230,000. Total sales tax collected and remitted by the resort in the same budget year totaled an estimated \$475,000.

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