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CWSAA NEWS RELEASE

Skiing at its best this year

January 06, 2016 - Kelowna, BC – Ski resorts across Western Canada are buried in record breaking snowfalls, and it keeps coming. Skier visits and revenues are up dramatically at most ski resorts across Western Canada. This is particularly great news for B.C.'s Lower Mainland ski areas and Mount Washington who took the brunt of last season's warm weather, and are all reporting copious amounts of snow and record visitation.

With early November snowfalls many ski areas opened weeks ahead of schedule. Mt. Norquay was the first Canadian ski resort to welcome skiers and boarders this season, opening on November 5, 2015. The first to open in B.C. was Big White Ski Resort with its earliest start since 1997 on November 13. Kicking Horse Mountain Resort recorded its first November opening ever for skiing and riding. Helicopter and Snowcat ski areas are also enjoying excellent snow conditions and receiving strong early bookings for the 2016-17 season.

The record snow fall and early season openings mean big business for Western Canadian ski resorts. "We've had a record setting December in both revenue and skier visits in the entire 67-year history of RED Mountain Resort," said Don Thompson, President and General Manager of RED in Rossland B.C.. Skiers and boarders were flocking to Apex Mountain Resort near Penticton this December. "Not only did we have the best revenues and skier visits but we beat the previous record by 51%," said James Shalman, General Manager at Apex Mountain Resort. Whistler Blackcomb is also reporting record visitation this season. Dave Brownlie, President and Chief Executive Officer of Whistler Blackcomb commented: "Considerable momentum from both destination and regional markets combined with excellent winter conditions resulted in a busy Christmas holiday period and the highest year to date visitation in our history."

The soft Canadian dollar is also having a positive impact on the ski and tourism industries. U.S. overnight tourist visits to Canada increased 8% over the first ten months of 2015 (compared to 2014). Resorts of the Canadian Rockies, which owns Fernie, Kicking Horse, and Kimberley Ski Resorts, report that U.S. business to their resorts is up 200% over last year. At Sun Peaks Resort in Kamloops, "increased visitation from the US has driven more than just Christmas numbers," says Christopher Nicolson. "A significant rise in Presidents' week vacationers has boosted February bookings by 16%." In Alberta, favourable exchange rates coupled with fantastic early season conditions has boosted early season visits for Mt. Norquay, Lake Louise Ski Resort and Sunshine Village.

It's clear Canadian skiers are staying north and visitors, especially from the U.S., are jumping at the opportunity to take advantage of the huge savings and fantastic snow.

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Photos: View and download photos at <http://www.cwsaa.org/marketing/ski-photos.html>. Also, check out our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/CWSAA) for lots of great videos, photos and updates from Western Canada's Ski Areas.

About CWSAA: The Canada West Ski Areas Association (CWSAA) is a not-for-profit trade association that represents the Ski Areas of Western Canada. Its primary areas of focus are government relations, media relations, marketing, safety & risk management and industry conferences. CWSAA currently has 291 members, including 134 Ski Areas and 157 Suppliers to the Ski Industry. CWSAA Members account for over 92% of all Ski Areas and over 99% of Skier Visits in Western Canada. This outstanding level of member support allows CWSAA to provide a strong and unified voice for the Western Canadian Ski Industry. On an annual basis, CWSAA Members in Western Canada receive 9 million skier visits and generate revenues of approximately \$800 million.

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