

## National Ski Council Federation Newsbeat February-March 2026

**Ikon Pass Reveals 2026-27 Price, New Resorts, and Access for Skiers.** The Ikon Pass, one of the two biggest multi-mountain ski passes, is back on sale soon with new resorts, deals for younger skiers, and expanded Colorado access. [More.](#) Powder

**Indy Pass Adds 16 Partners, Launches Auto-Renewal Requirement for 2026-27 Sales.** Indy Pass has added 16 new alpine and cross-country ski area partners and opened 2026-27 pass sales Feb. 25 to existing pass holders under a new automatic renewal structure the company said is designed to manage demand. [More.](#) SAM

**Epic Pass Drops 20 Percent In Price, But Only For This Age Group.** Vail Resorts announced a 20-percent discount for skiers aged 13-30, slashing the price of an Epic Pass to \$869 and the price of an Epic Local Pass to \$649. The 2026-'27 prices will debut at \$1,089 for an adult Epic Pass and \$809 for an Epic Local Pass. That's about a 3.6 percent increase (which is a smaller increase from last year's 6.5 percent). [More.](#) Ski

**How Premium Season Passes With Exclusive Amenities are Quietly Influencing the Ski Industry.** Resorts across North America are experimenting with ultra-expensive products that promise first tracks, shorter lines, private lounges, and a host of VIP perks to those willing to pay thousands of dollars for the privilege. [More.](#) Snowbrains

**Oregon Introduces the ORCA Act of 2026 to Address the State's Liability Insurance Crisis.** A bipartisan coalition of Oregon lawmakers introduced Senate Bill 1593, also known as the Oregon Recreation Commerce and Affordability Act of 2026 (ORCA), for consideration in the upcoming legislative session. "Oregon's liability laws are broken, and it's not just hurting recreation providers," Representative Jeff Helfrich (R-Hood River) said. "It's hurting small businesses of every kind that rely on basic liability waivers to operate." [More.](#) Snowbrains

**Steamboat's Long-Held Local's Only Side Country is Now Open to the Public.** Now, two seasons after Alterra Mountain Company invested \$200 million over three years on its "Full Steam Ahead" project, Steamboat is still finding its equilibrium between massive infrastructure improvements, increased visitation, a passionate local user base, and how people can best utilize the expanded mountain and base area. [More.](#) Freeskier

**\$100M Investment, Major Changes Coming to Mont-Sainte-Anne.** Mont-Sainte-Anne and operator Resorts of the Canadian Rockies (RCR) have reached an agreement with the Quebec government to fund substantial capital improvements at the resort, including the replacement of four lifts with three new ones, new snowmaking infrastructure, and installation of warm-season attractions. [More.](#) SAM

**ORDA Commits \$15.9 Million for Upgrades at Whiteface, Gore, and Belleayre.** The New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA) board of directors approved \$15.9 million in capital investments across Whiteface, Gore, and Belleayre mountains, continuing a multi-year run of infrastructure upgrades at the state-owned ski areas. [More.](#) SAM

**Burke Mountain (VT) Revival Has Begun.** After nearly a decade in receivership, Vermont's Burke Mountain is coming out of hibernation. New owners Bear Den Partners are prioritizing long-deferred

capital improvements and operational stability, having already accomplished a variety of projects after taking ownership in May 2025, with more on the horizon. [More.](#) SAM

**Bear Den Partners Acquires Majority Ownership of Smugglers' Notch (VT).** Bear Den Partners has acquired a majority ownership interest in Smugglers' Notch Resort from Bill Stritzler, who has owned Smuggs for 29 years and whose family will retain an ownership stake in the resort. Stritzler's daughter and Smuggs CEO Lisa Howe will serve as an advisor on the future of the mountain. [More.](#) SAM

**Pats Peak (NH) Snowmaking Expansion Includes Multifold Increases to Pumping Capacity, Water Storage.** Pats Peak will undergo a significant expansion of its snowmaking system this summer that will allow the ski area to double the number of snow guns it can operate at once starting in winter 2026-27. [More.](#) SAM

**Powderhorn (CO) Launches Limited Three-Year Pass Tied to 60th Anniversary, Lift Investment.** As it approaches its 60th anniversary season, Powderhorn Mountain Resort is introducing a limited three-year season pass, positioning it as both a loyalty offering and commitment to affordability amid a major capital upgrade and plans for future improvements. [More.](#)

**Pomerelle (ID) Sold to Longtime Mountain Manager.** Pomerelle Mountain Resort in southern Idaho has been sold to mountain manager Zach Alexander and his wife, Crystal, according to Ski Idaho. The Anderson family, which has owned and operated the ski area for decades, finalized the sale this month. [More.](#) SAM

**Shanty Creek (MI) Acquired by New Ownership Group.** Trinidad Resort & Club, LLC has sold Shanty Creek Resort to a new ownership group called Shanty Creek Ski and Golf Resort, LLC. The resort is a 5,500-acre, four-season property that includes two ski areas—Shuss Mountain and Shanty Creek—five golf courses, a variety of lodging and dining options, and several other amenities. [More.](#) SAM

**Little Switzerland (WI) to Invest \$4 Million on Two New Chairlifts.** Little Switzerland Ski Area will install two new Skytrac quad chairlifts this summer to replace the ski area's Lift 1 and Lift 2, a unique "up and over" double chairlift that loads from both the base area and backside of the ski area and transports guests uphill in opposite directions to unload at the summit mid-point. It was originally installed in 1964. [More.](#) SAM

**What It Really Takes to Build a Modern Ski Lift.** No two chairlifts are the same and the engineering and construction must be adapted to the specific terrain and carrying capacity requirements. Replacement of an existing chairlift is a very different process from installing a new one in a new place. [More.](#) Ski

**Is a \$300 Ski Helmet Really Safer Than a \$70 One? Ski Found Out.** Every winter, Ski's gear testers try out dozens of ski helmets, putting them through the paces in myriad locations and different weather conditions. Then they collect everyone's detailed feedback and rate the winning helmets, calling out the best qualities in each one. [More.](#) Ski