

Inside Stevens

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RFID Lift Access Gate System – Part 2

As our fall season pass sale comes to a close and with new snow on the mountain, we know the start of the 2008-09 winter season is coming quickly. As we complete the last stages of implementation of our new Point of Sale system by Resort Technology Partners (RTP) and SKIDATA RFID lift access system, I wanted to address a consistent question we have been getting from guests.

The vast majority of guests are excited about the benefits of our new systems:

- Ability to back an Advantage Card with a credit card and go Direct-to-Lift.
- After buying the first daily lift ticket at the ticket window, the ability to reload a lift ticket on-line before arriving at the resort and also going Direct-to-Lift.
- For subsequent seasons, being able to renew a season pass and/or Advantage Card on-line, never having to wait in line to pick up a pass or card again.

Once guests understand how all this works, the question we often hear is “Will this slow down the lift lines?” The short answer is no. In fact, we believe it will increase the efficiency of the chairlift lines. Here’s why:

- The RFID chip in your ticket, Advantage Card or season pass can be read through layers of clothes. No more having to stop for a ticket checker and dig to find your pass.
- Our system is called a “FREEMOTION Gate – Open”. Because each gate has twin antennas early detection of the “lift access media” allows a free flow of guests through the gate. In other words, you are not waiting for a gate to open – the gate locks down only if the person trying to get through doesn’t have a valid ticket, pass or Advantage Card.
- There will be one gate for each seat on the chairlift that starts in the base area. Therefore, Big Chief will have 2 gates, Daisy 3, Hogsback 4, SkyLine 4 and Brooks 2.
- Each gate has a single-arm turnstile, allowing for better flow because there is no contact with the turnstile unless there is a “media” problem.
- The gates can provide access to the lift faster than we can load the chair – even the high-speed quads.
- The gates will be positioned well before the chair allowing for plenty of room for the chair loading queue.
- Each chair lift will have a “monitor” who will assist guests if there is a gate issue.

At right is a picture of what one gate looks like, with the turnstile in the closed position. This gate system is manufactured by SKIDATA, based in Austria. They have over 1,000 installations across Europe, so the technology is not new just new to the US. Stevens Pass will be the first



resort-wide deployment of the new RTP–SKIDATA integrated ticketing, RFID access control and point-of-sale system that manages resort operations, including lift access control, ticketing and season pass sales, ski and snowboard school, retail and rental operations, and eCommerce.

An interesting side note: SKIDATA won first prize at the 2007 Salzburg Innovation Award in recognition of its revolutionary FREEMOTION – Open Gate Technology. The Salzburg Innovation Award recognizes outstanding product innovation. This FREEMOTION Open Gate Technology was also nominated for the 2008 Austrian National Innovation Award.

As with anything new, it will take time to get used to using this new system. However, what we will be able to do with this technology this season and into the future is exciting. Stay tuned as we develop new programs using this new system that will enhance your Stevens Pass skiing and snowboarding experience.

Looking forward to seeing you on the slopes this winter.

John A. Gifford
General Manager