

# New Forecast Tool to Help Businesses Run Lean and Mean

**Sandy Evans Hall**

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS  
CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION

Effective Occupancy Forecast is a sophisticated model.

## What is it?

The Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association, in collaboration with the Steamboat Ski & Resort Corp., has launched a new forecasting tool to provide business members with better information on which to base their operating decisions. This tool combines multiple variants such as airline bookings, Central Reservations bookings, current pacing levels and other national indicators to include Consumer Confidence in a regression analysis model.

Say what? It is a very sophisticated way of combining multiple sets of data against known actual results to predict the future. "While we have provided a 45-day rolling forecast against the last two years, I think it's fair to say that the reliability of this tool within the first 30 days is very good. I'm hoping that businesses will be able to manage a tighter ship with this knowledge," stated Andy Wirth, senior vice president of sales and marketing for Steamboat Ski and Resort Corp. "The Effective Occupancy Forecast is much more than a lodging barometer because the data underlying it does not stop at the people renting nightly lodging units. It also takes into account those that are time share owners, fractional owners, second-home owners, and friends and family," Wirth said.

## What it isn't

The EOF does not predict the weather and does not foretell the spending patterns of our visitors. As such, it can't be used to predict revenue or sales tax gen-

## For more

### Not receiving the Effective Occupancy Forecast with your Chamber membership?

Call Shelly Bisbee, membership sales manager, to upgrade your membership today and start receiving this invaluable tool as well as these additional benefits:

- Logo with Web listing on SSCRA Web site
- Additional Web site link on Category Search results page in Business Directory on SSCRA Web site
- Member-to-Member offers in the Monday Report e-newsletter and on [www.steamboat-chamber.com](http://www.steamboat-chamber.com)
- One set of mailing labels or Excel file for mail merge
- 25 percent off SSCRA networking events

Call Membership Sales Manager Shelly Bisbee at 970-875-7004 or [shelly@steamboat-chamber.com](mailto:shelly@steamboat-chamber.com)

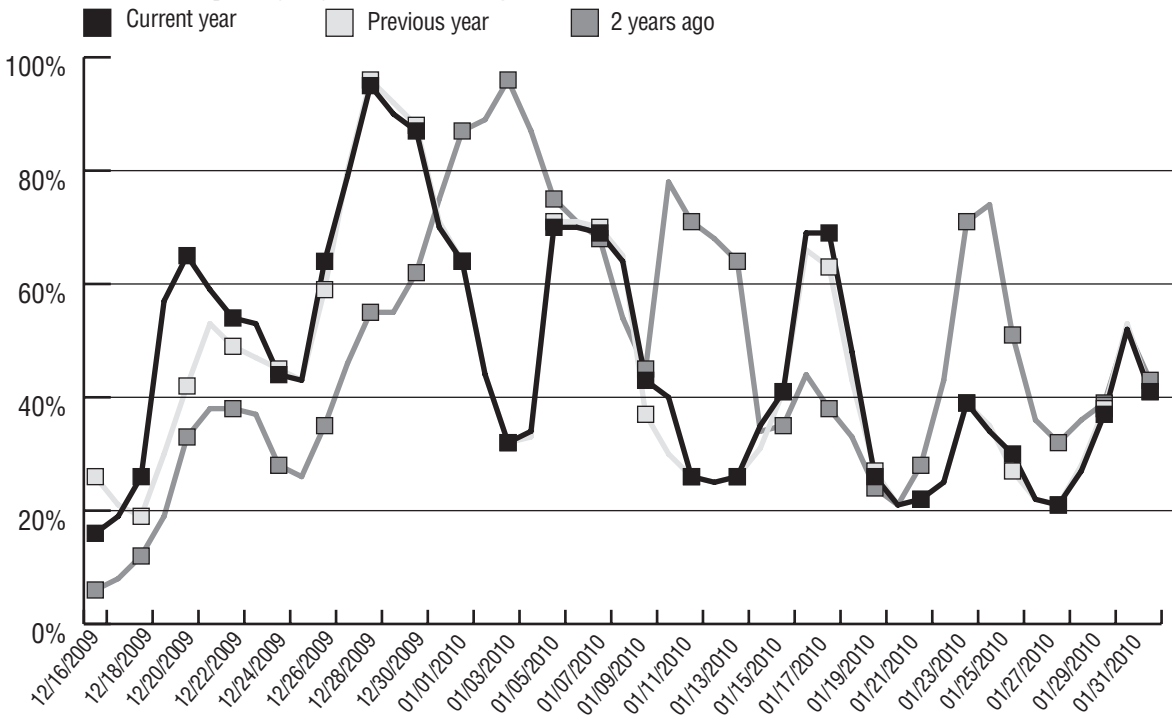
eration. As most are very well aware, discretionary spending by the consumer is in check as a result of this recession. Value propositions continue to reign, and discounts are king.

So although it may not help to generate revenue, it definitely can help to minimize expenses. Each business needs to look at the forecast against its records for similar time frames. By comparing dates, revenues, staffing levels, inventory levels and promotional successes of the past, business owners can make decisions weeks in advance to effectively manage their expense side. And with clever promotions, loss leaders and excellent service, businesses can minimize any losses in revenues.

## Barometer still useful

The Effective Occupancy Forecast is not meant to replace the familiar Lodging Barometer. The barometer is compiled weekly by the Chamber and specifically looks at a sampling of lodging properties within a geographic

## Effective Occupancy by date through Jan. 31, 2010



SOURCE: STEAMBOAT SKI AND RESORT CORP.

area or lodging type: Downtown, U.S. Highway 40, Condominium and Mountain Hotel. It is a rolling nine-day forecast that can be very helpful for adjusting staffing levels at local businesses. "We know that many businesses depend on this knowledge and so we will continue to provide this information," said Sandy Evans Hall, executive vice president of the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association. "However, we believe that especially in recessionary times, businesses need as much information as possible to make good decisions."

## Bright spots for season

There are a couple of green shoots emerging for this season. The first is Sunday, driven in part by the Olympic Trials and in part by the consumer's search for value. Regardless of the reason, it appears that this time frame will be 10 to 15 percent up from last year. Dec. 26 to

28 also will be very strong for this season but may not surpass that same time frame for 2008. Looking out past the Christmas holiday, Jan. 10, Martin Luther King weekend combined with the Cowboy Downhill, president's week and the first and third weeks of March also are showing some promise.

At the Business Outlook Breakfast on Friday, Wirth said consumer confidence or expectation indicators were stalling out and in tandem the pacing of reservation booking was slowing. Wirth said, "Many people believe that snow is the ultimate motivator for skiers, but I'll trade a CCI of 65 any day over a snowfall!" Through pulse campaigns (short window discount offers delivered to a highly qualified demographic set via e-mail), the ski area marketing team plans to compete aggressively throughout the season. "We are well-positioned to suc-

ceed in this competitive marketplace," Wirth said.

## Service is critical

The Effective Occupancy Forecast hopefully will be a useful tool for businesses, and a healthy business community is very important to the customer experience and the community's future. Wirth also reminded everyone at the Outlook Breakfast that with fewer guests, we have the opportunity to provide incredible service. Service will determine the winners and losers in this recession, and those who place conscious value on excellence in this area will fare best in the long run.

Wirth's advice for winter survival: Put on your sincere smile, blow away your customers with service, cut your expenses wherever possible, creatively promote and use all the tools you can find to make good decisions!



## Upcoming Events

### January 15 Good Morning Steamboat!

Come hear a panel of local speakers discuss current issues and the stories behind the headlines. Bagels provided by Colorado Bagel Co. with time for networking and Q&A. \$5 per person. Please [RSVP@steamboat-chamber.com](mailto:RSVP@steamboat-chamber.com) or 875-7000.

7:30 a.m. at *The Steamboat Smokehouse*

### January 29 Forum Series—Generational Communication in the Workplace

The Economic Development Council and Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association present the forum series. Please [RSVP@steamboat-chamber.com](mailto:RSVP@steamboat-chamber.com) or 875-7000. \$15 member price includes lunch, purchase the entire series for \$50 and receive a discount to the Economic Summit in May.

11:30 a.m. at *Rex's American Grill & Bar*

## New Members

### Boys & Girls Club of Steamboat

Heather Martyn  
(970) 871-3160  
325 7th Street  
[www.craigbgc.org](http://www.craigbgc.org)

In every community, boys and girls are left to find their own recreation and companionship in the streets. An increasing number of children are at home with no adult care or supervision. Young people need to know that someone cares about them.

## Rivertree Custom Builders, Inc

Eric Rabesa  
(970) 879-1016  
[www.rivertreebuilding.com](http://www.rivertreebuilding.com)

Rivertree Custom Builders is Northwest Colorado's most innovative general contractor. We offer the utmost quality in new residential construction, remodels and additions. Whether your style is log, timber, rustic or contemporary; we specialize in custom features, eco-friendly building, quality construction and efficient management. We pride ourselves on a "last 5% promise", in which every detail is completed.

This page is Sponsored by:



**MOUNTAIN VILLAGE**  
APARTMENTS

Apartment Rental  
Community in Steamboat

One, Two, and Three  
B/R Units Available

[www.steamboatapartments.com](http://www.steamboatapartments.com)

970.870.1719

1101 Mountain Village Circle  
Steamboat Springs, Colorado 80487  
Email: [mtnvillage@comcast.net](mailto:mtnvillage@comcast.net)



**STEAMBOAT SPRINGS**  
CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION, INC.