



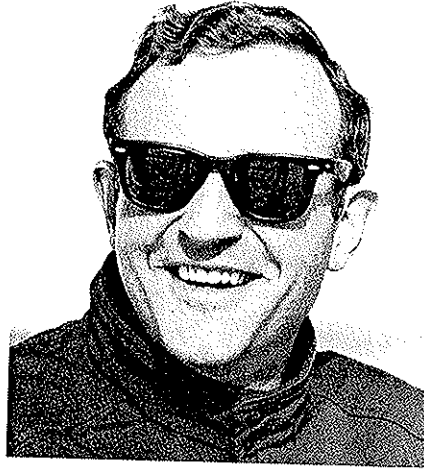
the mountain that Chuck BUILT

“IF THERE EVER WAS A MOUNTAIN that had terrain created for skiing, it would be Copper Mountain.” So read a 1969 US Forest Service report with uncharacteristic enthusiasm. At the time, the government agency went on to call Copper the finest undeveloped ski mountain in Colorado.

It was all there. Exciting ski terrain, plenty of deep powder snow, enough private land for development, easy access and a bright, aggressive management team to get the job done. Everything necessary for it to achieve that special “super resort” status reserved for the select few like Vail and Aspen. And the potential ski area also had something extra: a proximity to Denver and a key position astride Interstate 70 along which planners had already predicted a 100-mile stretch of ski developments reaching from Loveland Basin on the east to the Eagle Valley on the west.

Yet when Copper Mountain first starts its lifts sometime in mid-November, it will actually be a year late in opening. And for a few anxious months, there was cause to wonder whether it would ever open at all.

Copper’s story is one of circumstance — a sluggish national economy, a tight money market and how a young company of relatively modest means fought against all odds and won.



He put it all together

No big corporation to bankroll it, no push-button resort springing up out of a mountain meadow as if on command. It is a human story of personal endeavor with its share of trials, failures and successes. Of how a great ski resort was born — the hard way. And it is the story of Charles D. “Chuck” Lewis, the man who has served as midwife through three long, often disheartening but never dull years.

For more than a decade, ski experts had gazed in wonder at the almost perfect contours of the big mountain seven miles west of Frisco. Everybody agreed that it would make a fantastic skiing area. They wondered why no one had done anything with the adequate private land, the easy access, the natural ski slopes. But nobody really did anything more than talk, until a small group of businessmen headed by a Denver ski enthusiast entered the picture in 1968.

Under the lead of Chuck Froelicher, headmaster of Colorado Academy in Denver and a dedicated skier and outdoorsman, 16 investors with high hopes combined an initial capitalization of \$500,000 to form Copper Mountain Associates.

With this financial base, they negotiated the purchase of some 280 acres of private land at the base of the mountain for \$1,400,000 and

stock considerations from Denver entrepreneur Eugene H. Sanders. Little more than a year earlier, Sanders had purchased the land from heirs of the original homesteader for only \$300,000.

At first, Sanders was cool to their overtures, but after some months of becoming acquainted with the various partners involved, the agreement was reached and a contract was signed. Although such limited acreage is small by western ski resort standards, the 280 acres was all the private land in the entire valley, which is completely surrounded by US Forest Service land.

Lewis, one of the bright young men of the ski industry who previously was executive vice-president and treasurer at Vail, was installed as the general managing partner.

The Copper Mountain project was set to go. It had its leadership, its land, a Forest Service permit to operate and a carefully conceived plan that would guide it to a grand opening in November, 1971.

But there was just one problem — one that Lewis hadn't counted on when he laid out the timetable for his great design. Copper needed more money. Lots of it. Enough money to provide the equity essential in obtaining a \$6,500,000 capital investment necessary to get the resort into operation.

But when Chuck Lewis completed his planning and went out looking for money in the fall of 1970, he found the cupboard bare. The nation was in the depths of a recession; dollars were scarce, and what little venture capital existed was being courted at every turn by men with ideas.

It was against this background of a nationwide money crunch that Lewis packed his bags and hit the road. And for nine long, agonizing months it appeared as if the road had no end. Lewis logged more than 150,000 miles of air travel during that period: to New York, Dallas, Chicago, Minneapolis, Los Angeles and almost every point you can name in between.

"I got so expert in air travel that I even acquired a copy of *The Pocket Flight Guide*, which claims to catalog 16,000 flights in the US and Canada," Lewis said, managing a wan smile. "I can vouch for its authenticity. I think I took every one of them."

From coast to coast he knocked on doors, made his presentation, argued, even pleaded. Almost everyone seemed interested in Copper, but somehow the final answer always seemed the same. So he looked some more.

"It would usually be dark in New York as

I emerged from my last conference, so when I grabbed a cab I'd give instructions to drive to the Midtown Tunnel," Lewis recalls. "The tunnel was well-lighted, and I could study my flight guide and decide whether to go to Kennedy or LaGuardia to catch the next flight out.

"I didn't find any money, but I sure got a helluva lot of practice making my presentation. You can't imagine how much energy it takes to get yourself up to make a 2½-hour presentation — and I was often making three or four a day. It was awfully hard to keep from losing faith."

Throughout these troubles, as all hopes for achieving the planned 1971 opening slipped away, the 16 Copper Mountain partners stood firm.

"That's one of two things which enabled me to keep my sanity through all this," Lewis recounts. "Everyone kept their faith in our project and did whatever they could to help. They twisted arms, opened doors, even met me at points across the country to assist in making the pitch. I never ceased to be amazed at their resourcefulness.

"For example, Bo Polk (then president of MGM) had this thing with executive secretaries and knowing the habits of people. He got us into places nobody else could.

"Once," Lewis recalls, "we dropped in to see a key executive and found him gone. Nobody seemed to know where. We sat around awhile and suddenly Bo snapped his fingers, jumped to his feet and shouted, 'Let's go.' We rushed over to the executive's tennis club and caught him just as he was walking off the court. We made our pitch to him right there in the locker room."

Lewis' other comfort, however slight, was that nobody else was having any luck obtaining money either.

"I met people in every kind of endeavor and nobody was getting there," he relates. "If I had been the only unsuccessful one, we would have doubted the worth of what we were selling; we would have dropped the project. We had some offers, but not quite what we wanted. Our partners had the fortitude to wait."

Only one thing caused Lewis to doubt. "Of those few enterprises which did receive financing, all had one thing in common — a fancy four-color brochure. I vowed right then that the last \$20,000 I had would go for one of those fancy brochures. Fortunately, it didn't have to."

But it was close. Almost too close. Copper Mountain Associates were down to their last



Ski Above All

A-Basin still has the highest slopes around — 12,500 feet — with snow-perfect conditions and the longest season — early November to early June. No one can top that. Not even A-Basin.

What is better is all the NEW. New ownership/management team. Bright new colors. And spirit. New trail names. New standards for lift and trail maintenance. New Mountain Kiosk and Ski Club Haus with hot, tasty Bratwurst, sandwiches, beverages and snacks for famished skiers on the run. New dormitory lodging for clubs and racing groups.

Ski fun comes easy at A-Basin with The Ski Hire for short and long term rentals; comprehensive Pro Shop; Ski School for advanced as well as beginning techniques; Full-course meals served every day, and for delightful apres skiing, the convivial Lodge Lounge.

It's A-Basin, if you want to **ski above all**.



Send for free color brochure, trail guide and coupon for \$1.00 discount off your next lift ticket. For reservations, write or phone:

**A-Basin Inc. / P.O. Box 267
Dillon, Colorado 80435 / (303) 468-2608**

\$25,000 when salvation came. Ironically, after traveling the equivalent of six times around the globe, Lewis found the financing he needed less than 600 feet from his downtown Denver office.

It all began with a casual remark from his brother, who suggested Lewis talk to Paul Bailey, president of Denver-based Fulenwider Management and Development Company.

"I'd had some dealings with Paul when I was at Vail and we always seemed compatible, but it just never occurred to me to approach him," Lewis recounts.

"It was one of those cases of knowing how desperately we needed the money but trying not to let on. But both sides came out happy. It was a good deal for everyone."

So in June, 1971, after three months of continuing negotiations, Fulenwider Management offered up \$2,000,000 in capitalization and joined Lewis as the two general partners in the venture. Additionally, Fulenwider brought in a subsidiary, the York Company, as a limited partner.

With this base capital, Lewis had little difficulty lining up the necessary debt financing to complete his financial package.

"It's kinda funny," he chuckles. "Usually it's easiest to get the equity money and hard to obtain debt financing. But I had the debt money lined up from the first month. I just took care of the wrong end first."

One other thing bothered the Copper Mountain boss. "During the time I was out pounding the pavement getting nowhere, Big Sky in Montana was able to raise \$6,500,000. I guess that just proves that more people are familiar with Chet Huntley than me."

But it is also ironic that Copper Mountain will open its lifts this winter, while Big Sky will not.

For Paul Bailey's part, the investment appeal was in the combined potential of a ski and real estate venture. "It was a judgment thing," he says, "but when I found out Chuck Lewis was involved, that was half the battle — knowing the management was there."

At age 36, Chuck Lewis is tall with the trim build of an active outdoorsman. His pleasant, often smiling face retains an almost impish, little-boy look which has the immediate effect of disarming his listener. And he has an unswerving knack for looking on the bright side of things.

Through all the delay, Copper wasn't standing still. Trail layout plans were studied and

honed down. Wind and snow studies were completed and master studies were filed with the US Forest Service in the most minute detail.

"I always contended this was the ideal way to start a ski area — to build over two seasons," says Lewis the optimist, "but I'm not certain I really believed it myself, until we were forced into it."

Last winter, with major trails cut but no lifts or other support facilities available, Lewis made another of those decisions which never cease to amaze those around him. Copper would be open for skiing as planned, but instead of lifts there would be oversnow vehicles to take the skiers to the top of the runs.

More than 3,000 skiers turned out for the tours and went back to spread the word about Copper's deep powder snow and unending runs. But there were even more lasting benefits from a "trial run" winter.

"First, it enabled our management team — the ski patrol chief, mountain manager, construction manager and shop foreman — to learn a lot about our mountain and operation without the pressure of a regular ski year," Lewis explains. "And it gave us a two-month head start on making the mountain skiable this year.

"We were able to pinpoint the trouble spots, the knobs which needed to be leveled, an island of trees in the wrong place, a potentially dangerous transition area. And we got all our slash cleared a year ahead of time and can now pack our first snow as soon as it falls, thereby opening our doors earlier."

And there was another form of economy in the year's delay. Under a more relaxed schedule, Copper has been able to avoid many of the ruinous overtime costs which have plagued other operations.

"If we'd tried to install five lifts in addition to all the other work in a single summer, we'd have slit our throats," Lewis ad-

mits. "At this very minute, we're still within five percent of our original budget projection. That's a pretty good fudge factor."

But all has not been roses in the reshaping of Copper Mountain, which takes its name from an abandoned and not very productive turn-of-the-century copper mine near the 12,481-foot summit. Almost daily there have been thorns, and Lewis has faced each of them with his customary optimism and aplomb.

First there were the beavers who had transformed a sizeable chunk of the 280-acre base area into what might charitably be termed swamp. The myriad dams built by these hyperindustrious creatures had forced Tenmile Creek out of its banks and into the meadows; their foraging on the willows had left the remainder an impassable thicket of downed limbs and branches.

The situation was simple: to make the land inhabitable for man, the beavers had to go. The only problem, as anyone who has been disgraced by this formidable adversary will attest, was how to move them.

The ready solution seemed to be to blow out the dams, thereby encouraging the beavers to leave. But the furry little animals had an easy remedy for that; they simply built the dams back using all sticks and no mud, making them all but impervious to any blasting efforts.

Lewis remembers the duel all too well. "It was uncanny, almost as if some sage old beaver were down there directing the counter-operation. Just when I'd figure I had them licked, they'd come back one night and rebuild. It was maddening."

After weeks of this, Lewis tried another ploy — to do away with the willows and thereby eliminate the food supply. There was just one catch. Willows are extremely hard to do away with. The dense, deep-rooted plants are not susceptible to bulldozing or virtually any other conventional method of

Billy Kidd says visit these local Johnson dealers

COLORADO

BUFORD — Buford Lodge

COLORADO SPRINGS — PBG Marine,
931 Fountain Creek Blvd.

CRAIG — Valley Marine

DENVER —

Benny's Marine, 4890 Morrison
Boat House, 3100 Brighton Blvd.

FT. COLLINS — Marine & Sport Shop,
124 Harmony

GRAND JUNCTION — Andy Prinster's Marina

HOTCHKISS — Hotchkiss Plumbing & Heating

PUEBLO — Johnson Hardware, 315 Court

RANGELY — Ramparts, Inc., 417 E. Main

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS — Hilltop Rentals,
Sales & Service

TOPONAS — Joe Kayser Sales

TWIN LAKES — Twin Lakes Boat Sales

WESTMINSTER — Blaine's Marine Sales,
8040 N. Federal

WOODY CREEK — Dennis Smith

IDAHO

AMERICAN FALLS — Ray's Sports Center,
180 Idaho

BOISE — Rostock Boats, 2728 Canal

IDAHO FALLS — Lee's Marine, 2296 Iona

POCATELLO — Marine Sport Sales,
144 Trail Creek

REXBURG — Targhee Sports Center,
North Highway

ST. ANTHONY — Economy Chevrolet,
126 W. 1st So.

TWIN FALLS — Century Automotive Machine,
261 W. Addison

NEW MEXICO

ALBUQUERQUE — Duke City Marine,
2505 Candelaria

UTAH

GARDEN CITY — Holiday Marina,
On Bear Lake

KAYSVILLE — Thompson Marine Equip.,
104 N. Main

LOGAN — John Rutledge, 294 S. Main

PRICE — Barton Motors, 145 E. Main

SALT LAKE CITY —
Hyland Boat & Motor Co., 3786 Hyland
Robertson Marine, 3350 S. State

SPRINGVILLE — Robertson Marine, 97 S. Main

TREMONTON — Taylor Farm Service

WYOMING

AFTON — Salt River Oil & Motor Co.

CASPER — Outboard Service, 1030 E. "B" St.

CHEYENNE — Boating & Supply,
2301 E. Lincolnway

CORA — Jim's Sales & Service

EVANSTON — Bill's Texaco Service

GILLETTE — Cycle Shop, 407 Douglas Hwy.

JACKSON — Ross' Sales & Service

LARAMIE — Boat & Trailer Sales,
Snowy Range Rd.

ROCK SPRINGS — McFadden Wholesale,
415 Railroad

SHERIDAN — The Spot, 30 N. Brooks

**The majority
of skiers
at Sapporo
with one of these**

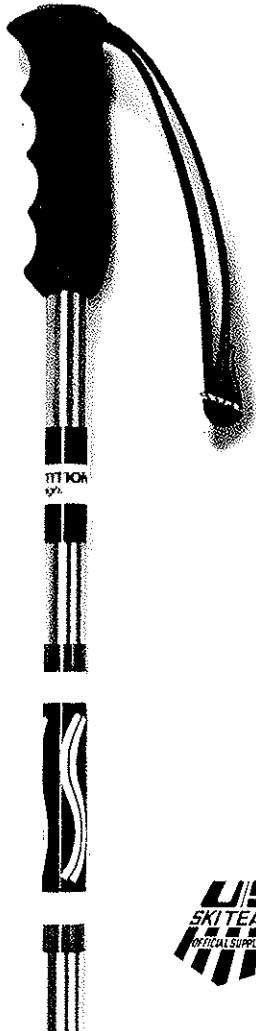


More competitors at Sapporo used Scott USA poles than any other. And more medals were won by competitors using Scott USA poles than any other . . . for no other reason than plain old superiority.

Scott USA, the choice of more competitive skiers than any other pole in the world. Lightweight strength, durability and performance — the trademark of the world's finest precision ski poles.

SCOTT USA
Sun Valley, Idaho 83353

had two of these.



eradication. Things looked rough.

But Lewis learned of a machine that was different. It was a Canadian-made "willow muncher," a large device that mulches the vegetation like a roto-tiller, and, as luck would have it, there was one available in nearby Granby. It spelled defeat for the beaver colony — their food supply suddenly depleted, they packed up and moved on to greener meadows across the highway.

"Now the highway department will have to contend with them when they come through with Interstate 70," Lewis chuckles. "It's their problem now, not mine."

The next challenge to Lewis' budget-inspired inventiveness was the incredible amount of concrete to be poured for the bases of the lift towers and the 16,000-square-foot mountain house to be built up on top.

The going rate for airlifting concrete up the mountain by helicopter is \$75 per yard. Multiply this by the 1,000 yards needed to do the job, and one has run up a healthy little tab to be sure. There had to be a better way, Lewis reasoned, but the Forest Service forbade roads or towers.

He briefly considered stringing highlines, a method sometimes used in Europe, but that idea was quickly dropped when it was discovered that the project would require four separate systems at the going rate of \$65,000 each. The use of all-terrain vehicles also was pondered, but these machines would transport only one-third of a yard at a time; also, there remained the ever-present danger of their turning over on the mountain's steep trails.

But why, Lewis reasoned, couldn't the concrete be somehow pumped up to its destination. All that was needed was a suitable pump and a pipe. The problem was where to obtain them. At length, Lewis determined there were only two such outfits in his part of the country, one of them, luckily, in Denver.

Once in operation, the Copper

crew pumped concrete in every direction: up, down and sideways. "I can report with some authority that not all of them work," Lewis confides.

But the end result was that the cost shrunk from \$75 per yard to only \$12.42, and Lewis figured there was some waste even in that figure. "I knew at least \$4 of that \$12 was a result of the erratic delivery habits of the Summit County cement industry, so I determined to get into the business myself," Lewis relates.

After five months of searching, Lewis got a call from a contractor in Kansas City who offered four concrete trucks at bargain basement prices.

Now the proprietor of the "Pretty Lumpy" Cement Company, Lewis leases his trucks throughout the county, with contractors working on condominium projects at Copper having first call on them. He estimates a savings of \$25,000 alone in overtime payments to workers.

And then there's the "Environmental Sawmill," a seeming contradiction in terms also born of Lewis' fertile mind. The problem was this:

More stringent environmental rules on the burning of slash, never a problem in the earlier days of ski development, made disposal of the trees from the trail cuts a problem. In addition, a new Forest Service policy increased the charge for cutting this so-called marketable timber to \$8 per 1,000 board feet.

"I hated to see it all go to waste, so we put in the little mill," Lewis explains. "We use a lot of four-by-four lumber at the ski area, and it had cost us about \$175 a thousand. Now we can finish our own for less than \$100 a thousand."

The operation has been so successful that Copper has been able to sell a quantity of its lumber on the local market. And Lewis has even found a use for the slash, cutting it to firewood length and selling that, too.

"The only thing I haven't solved

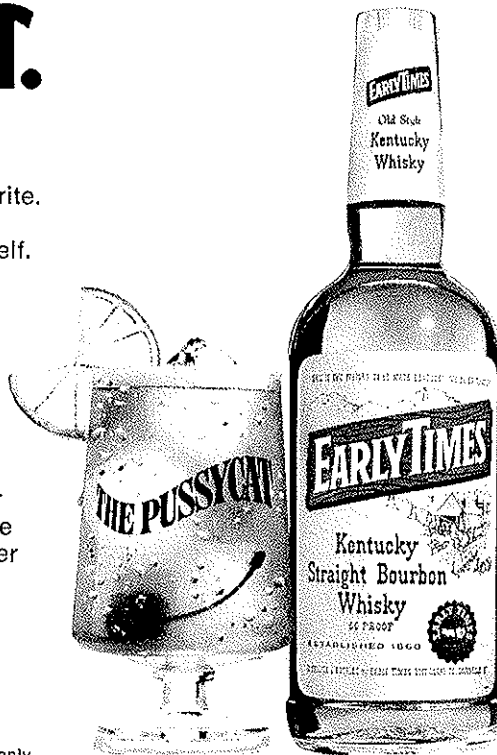


86 Proof • Early Times Distillery Co., Louisville, Ky. © 1972

TURN A SNOW BUNNY INTO A PUSSYCAT.

How? With the Early Times Pussycat. The apres-ski drink schussboomer's like you have made America's party time favorite. No wonder. This lively orange-sweet sour practically mixes itself. Just blend a packet of "Instant Pussycat Mix," water and Early Times. Then watch all the snow bunnies start to purr at your Pussycat party. And remember, your apres-ski party's not complete without Pussycat glasses and a Pussycat ski poster. To get your set of 4 Pussycat glasses and the full-color, 30 in. x 40 in. ski poster send \$5.00* to:

Early Times Pussycat Glasses
P. O. Box 378 Ski
Maple Plain, Minnesota 55359
The Early Times Pussycat.
Snow bunnies love it.



is what to do with the sawdust," he says with mock concern. "If only someone in the valley would start a turkey farm or something."

In his push for economy during those lean yesterdays, Lewis also waged war against Mountain Bell and the Public Service Company and wound up installing his own private telephone and utilities system, both at substantial savings over the long haul.

There is another unique aspect to Copper Mountain. It is surely the only ski resort in the country that won't engage in a massive land-sale promotion. The reason is simply that none of the land will be sold. Instead, all Copper Mountain properties will be negotiated on a lease basis which calls for a periodic review of the agreement.

Lewis gives two reasons for his decision to lease rather than sell: "First, with our limited land area, we just don't own that much land to let any of it go. Second, we are going to be very careful about what is done with it and about the controls we exercise. I don't want to wake up one morning and find a purple high-rise with pink flamingos strutting on the lawn!"

The end product of this unique, homespun approach to ski area development is something special — a resort that will open its first season with all systems go, the product as advertised.

And in no case will the merchandise be cut short. First there is the mountain — more than 20 trails with a complete variety of terrain served by four double chairlifts and a beginners' poma. Included is Colorado's first enclosed chairlift for the long but scenic ride high up to the spacious mountain house.

All levels of skiers will enjoy Copper's vast upper slopes where an alpine panorama unfolds in full circle: the Gore Range, Mount of the Holy Cross, the Tenmile Range, the expanse of the Continental Divide. The view is almost relentless.



Enjoy a quiet wine and cheese picnic on the slopes of the Highlands.

Nectar of the grape. Your favorite cheeses.
And a breathtaking view. It happens at Aspen Highlands. Don't miss it.

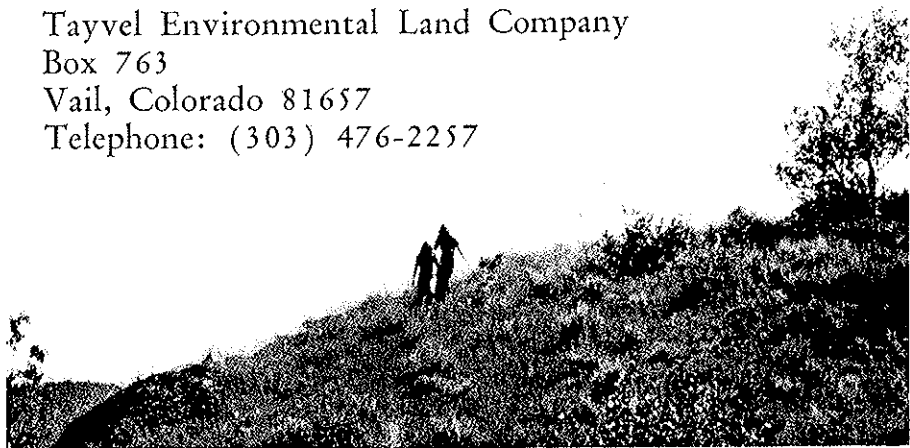
New speed timing gate. Colorado's highest vertical rise.
Flawless skiing. There's even a video tape run with instant replay.
The Highlands isn't quite like any mountain you've ever skied before.

ASPEN HIGHLANDS/THE OTHER ASPEN

LIONS RIDGE II

Commercial Property — Magnificent views of Gore Range and Meadow Mountain. Underground utilities, water and sewer being installed. Parcels ranging in size from .8 acre to 17.5 acres. 1 1/2 miles west of Vail Village.

Tayvel Environmental Land Company
Box 763
Vail, Colorado 81657
Telephone: (303) 476-2257



Another plus for Copper and its 2,450-foot vertical drop of long, rolling, leg-burning runs is its horizontal arrangement, east to west. More simply, the mountain shifts from knee-bending expert terrain on the east side to more gentle slopes as one proceeds to the west. Each run spills down due north directly to the base, and there is no entangling mish-mash of schussbooming experts on the intermediate and beginner terrain. Lewis expects this combination to lure up to 193,000 skiers this season, which would be a first-year record for a Colorado area.

For comfort there'll be the 16,000-square-foot mountain house on top and a 35,000-square-foot day center down below, both constructed in a contemporary style featuring wraparound plate glass for maximizing the scenic exposure.

And for starters, there'll be four condominium complexes — one with a gourmet restaurant — with 100 total units. Next year, plans call for 250 new condominium units, 500 hotel-lodge rooms and 50,000 square feet of commercial space.

The future holds even more for this newest resort in the Rockies. There'll be 15 chairlifts and a gondola serving an almost limitless expanse of ski terrain, and the total investment for the development should top the \$100,000,000 figure.

There is also an awareness by Lewis of Copper Mountain's potential as a year-round resort. The property commands both forks of Tenmile Creek, is not very far from Dillon Reservoir, and offers access to some of the finest backcountry camping — including the Gore Range-Eagles Nest Primitive Area. A summer dude ranch would have great appeal in the picturesque valley, and fishing and hunting activities could keep the new resort busy in the off-season.

Sometimes the best things are worth waiting for. □