

# THE DAILY SENTINEL

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## Warming to a new plan

### Ski resorts are embracing role of climate activists

By BRITTANY PETERSON  
The Associated Press

ASPEN — Snow falls thick as skiers shed their gear and duck into the Sundeck Restaurant, one of the first certified energy efficient buildings in the U.S. — this one at 11,200 feet above sea level atop Aspen Mountain. Skiers in brightly colored helmets jockey for a spot at the bar, their bodies warmed by thick, insulated walls and highly efficient condensing boilers.

Overhead, WeatherNation plays on the television, looping footage of last year's mega storms and flashing a headline: "2022 billion dollar disasters."

Aspen Skiing Company's vice-president of sustainability, who sits nearby eating a slice of pizza, says it's not enough for resorts to just change their on-site operations to become "green."

"If you're a ski resort and you care about climate change or you profess to care about climate change, it absolutely has to go beyond reducing your carbon footprint," said Auden Schendler. "If your CEO hasn't spoken out on climate publicly or in an op-ed, you're not a green company."

As global warming threatens to put much of the ski industry out of business over the next several decades, resorts are beginning to embrace a role as climate activists in the halls of government. The industry contributes just a tiny fraction of overall greenhouse gas emissions, which cause climate

change, but arguably has outsized influence on popular culture and in the business world. While many resorts are focused on reducing their own emissions, others are going much further, leveraging their influence to shift public opinion and advocate for climate legislation.

Arapahoe Basin is a ski area leading such efforts in the United States. Positioned high up on the craggy, wind-whipped continental divide in central Colorado, the mountain is relatively well-positioned to endure a warmer, shorter winter season. High altitude, which keeps temperatures cooler and



Photos by THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Skiers go down a run at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area in January. As global warming threatens to put much of the ski industry out of business over the next several decades, resorts are beginning to embrace a role as climate activists. Mike Nathan, sustainability manager at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area, below, rides a lift in January. Earlier this year, Nathan and other industry leaders met with the staff of Colorado's governor to encourage the rapid transition to manufacturing EV heavy machinery statewide.

lengthens the time snow stays on the ground, is its golden ticket. But it isn't immune to extreme weather: it has experienced close calls with wildfires and subsequent mudslides, which washed out a parking lot adjacent to its slopes in 2021.

About a decade ago, the ski area transitioned from spending thousands of dollars annually to cancel out some carbon emissions by paying for carbon credits to instead funding a staff position focused on reducing on-site emissions.

"If we are gonna ask our guests to be better, we're gonna ask our guests to talk to their leadership, we're gonna go talk to our leadership directly, we definitely feel like we need to be doing it too," said Sustainability Manager Mike Nathan.

One way they're working to nudge a transition to renewable energies is with newly installed electric vehicle chargers. After a day on the slopes, Denver resident Kurt Zanca returned to his Tesla, which had been charging for free at one of the five dual-port stations situated in the front row of the mountain's parking lot.

Zanca said he thinks

charging infrastructure at ski areas can help encourage hesitant shoppers to purchase an EV. "If you can drive up here, charge, go back, no problem, it makes it a lot easier," Zanca said.

In the northern French Alps, luxury chalet operator Alikats also sees incentives for customers as a catalyst for change. They offer discounts to guests who travel by train, opt out of eating meat or don't use a hot tub during their stay.

Al Judge, who owns and operates the business with his wife Kat, considers himself a realist. He's not trying to save snowfall—massive reductions in greenhouse gases emissions worldwide are needed to slow global warming—but rather set a standard for how businesses should operate in a way that respects natural resources and protects biodiversity.

"The more that



becomes a cultural imperative, the quicker change will happen, and I think business has a very important role to play in that process," Judge said.

Arapahoe Basin, affectionately known by locals as "A-bay," is working toward net-zero emissions by 2025, partially by relying on credits through the Colorado Carbon Fund to offset some natural gas and diesel they'll still be burning at that time. They also aim to divert 75% of their waste by then — they're currently at 50% through various recycling and composting programs. Nathan says these efforts give them clout when trying to flex their influence off the

mountain.

They've pressured their utility, Xcel Energy, to expedite the transition to renewable power. Earlier this year, Nathan and other industry leaders met with the governor's staff to encourage the rapid transition to manufacturing EV heavy machinery statewide. And, after watching a federal bill that eventually became the Inflation Reduction Act stall, Nathan and Chief Operating Officer Alan Henceroth co-authored an op-ed and sent letters to Colorado's congressional delegation.

"Kicking the can

See PLAN, page 3A



News of climate disasters is displayed on a television overlooking a bar at the Sundeck Restaurant at Aspen Mountain in January.

## The planets on parade

### Five will line up near moon this week

By MADDIE BURAKOFF  
AP Science Writer

NEW YORK — Keep an eye to the sky this week for a chance to see a planetary hangout.

Five planets — Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Uranus and Mars — will line up near the moon.

#### WHERE AND WHEN CAN YOU SEE THEM?

The best day to catch the whole group is Tuesday. You'll want to look to

the western horizon right after sunset, said NASA astronomer Bill Cooke.

The planets will stretch from the horizon line to around halfway up the night sky.

But don't be late: Mercury and Jupiter will quickly dip below the horizon around half an hour after sunset.

The five-planet spread can be seen from anywhere on Earth, as long as you have clear skies and a view of the west.

"That's the beauty of

these planetary alignments. It doesn't take much," Cooke said.

#### DO I NEED BINOCULARS?

Maybe. Jupiter, Venus and Mars will all be pretty easy to see since they shine brightly, Cooke said.

Venus will be one of the brightest things in the sky, and Mars will be hanging out near the moon with a reddish glow. Mercury and Uranus could be trickier to

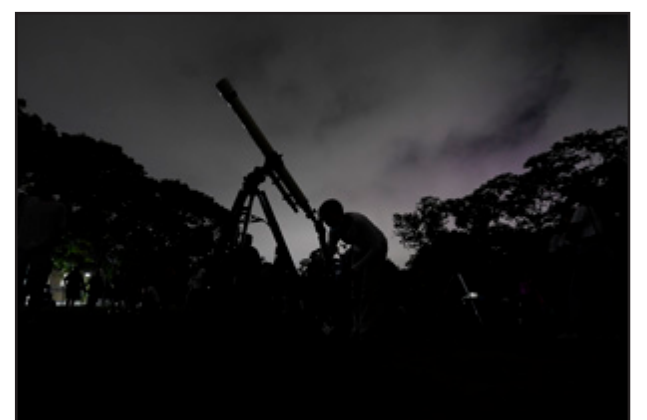
spot, since they will be dimmer. You'll probably need to grab a pair of binoculars.

If you're a "planet collector," it's a rare chance to spot Uranus, which usually isn't visible, Cooke said.

Look out for its green glow just above Venus.

#### DOES THIS HAPPEN OFTEN?

Different numbers and groups of planets line up in the sky from time to time. There was



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A girl looks at the moon through a telescope in Caracas, Venezuela, on May 15, 2022. The best day to spot five planets, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Uranus and Mars, lined up in the night sky is Tuesday, right after sunset. The five-planet array will be visible from anywhere on Earth, as long as you have clear skies.

a five-planet lineup last summer and there's another one in June, with a slightly different makeup.

This kind of alignment

happens when the planets' orbits line them up on one side of the sun from Earth's perspective, Cooke said.