

New developments greet season's skiing enthusiasts

Whakapapa and Turoa ski fields are the Ruapehu District's premier tourist attraction, generating millions for the local economy each year. And, this year's skiers will benefit from the new \$8 million cafe that's been built to replace the Knoll Ridge Chalet at Whakapapa destroyed by arson last year.

Ruapehu Alpine Lifts Ltd (RAL) General Manager, Dave Mazey, is in charge of the two ski fields, which cover 500 hectares, employ around 900 people at peak season and see ten to twelve thousand visitors skiing and snowboarding on peak days.

Dave says the cafe is one of several new developments on the mountain.

"Our new cafe will cater for up to 500 people at once and is going to be a real boost for our 2010 ski season. But, it's not our only new development. We've partnered with Ruapehu District Council to fund a new bridge on the Ohakune Mountain Road. Plus, we've purchased six new snow guns, increasing our snow making capacity by nearly 10%," says Dave.

RAL has been a customer of King Country Energy and its predecessors since electricity was first reticulated to the

mountain in the 1950s. The company also boasts the highest reticulated electricity service in the country. Its snow making systems, buildings and chair lifts rely on electricity to operate, and as a result, RAL is one of the region's largest electricity users.

Dave says King Country Energy's good service and competitive pricing has given him reason to remain a customer for so many years.

"RAL has a strong and positive relationship with King Country Energy. We've sought quotes from other retailers in the past, but King Country Energy has always offered the more competitive rate.

"It's also good to know a lot of the energy we're using on the mountain has been generated locally by the company. Generating and using electricity locally just makes good sense," explains Dave.



Dave Mazey, General Manager, RAL