

# Events ‘part of our DNA,’ planners say

Snow or sun, concerts and more ensure good times

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EAGLE COUNTY — Most schools’ spring breaks are over. And it looks as if spring’s warmth has firmly taken hold. So how best to attract visitors to mountain resorts in the last weeks of ski season?

The answer for the past several years has been a variety of events. The Vail Film Festival wraps up Sunday, with the annual Taste of Vail culinary festival set for the week to come. The season ends with the popular Spring Back to Vail concerts the final weekend of the season.

Vail gets most of the attention, but late-season events also include Beaver Creek. In fact, Beaver Creek’s calendar actually has more events — from snowshoe tours to concerts at the Vilar Performing Arts Center.

“We’re trying to have a celebration of all things spring,” Beaver Creek Resort Company Director Jen Brown said. “We’re focusing on family-friendly activities and being outdoors.”

## ‘WEATHER-PROOF’

In Vail, the focus is on more adult activities that also draw weekend travelers from the Front Range. Longtime Vail resident Mark Gordon is a member of the town’s Commission on Special Events. Gordon said over the past several years, visitors and area residents alike have come to expect events in town.

“There was a time when events were an inconvenience for a lot of people,” Gordon said. “We’ve finally gotten past that — events are part of our DNA now.”

Those events are also a way to kind of weather-proof Vail’s economy.

“We’re successful with snow,” Commission on Special Events member and Masters Gallery owner Rayla Kundolf said. “Now, with retail and dining, we can be successful without snow. ... Events

are our anchors — people still come. With the film festival, most of it is at night, so the weather doesn’t really matter.”

Antlers at Vail General Manager Rob LeVine said events help temper the effects of weather. “They’re super meaningful,” he added. “We’re not going to solve our seasonal fluctuations with any one thing, but (events) make a big difference.”

## ‘YOU NEED THAT COMPONENT’

Events have become more essential during the years because Vail’s guest population these days doesn’t include as many single-minded skiers and boarders as it once did, LeVine said.

“If (guests) can do other things, that’s good,” LeVine said. “You need that event component, and not just in the spring.”

Gordon said the town’s event commission — which helps fund events with taxpayer money — has evolved over the past several years and is now taking a more “scientific” look at what it should support. That process has taken some time, and is still evolving,

Gordon said, adding that he’s excited about the way the commission evaluates proposals.

## ANALYZING EVENTS

That evaluation has to include a hard look at what the town gets in return for its investments. But, Gordon said, there’s more to the system than just dollars and cents.

“We’re able to analyze (events) and look at them as a whole,” Gordon said.

The result, so far, is that Vail is known for its variety in many areas. If a guest is looking for the very best of one specific kind of terrain or event, Vail in many cases isn’t at the very top of those lists.

“But if I’m looking for a lot of great events, I wouldn’t go anywhere but Vail,” he said. “Now, regardless of the season, Vail is known for great events.”

And guests notice those effects. Vail Valley Partnership CEO Chris Romer said friends of his were recently staying in Beaver Creek, and they enjoyed the atmosphere.

Events “bring people in and

## ON THE CALENDAR

Here’s an incomplete look at events in the last few weeks of the ski season:

- X The Vail Film Festival ends Sunday.
- X Beaver Creek SpringFest — through April 11. Performers, contests, parades and more for the family.
- X Taste of Vail, April 8-11.
- X Spring Back to Vail concerts: April 17-19

A complete events calendar is available at [www.vail.com](http://www.vail.com) and [www.beavercreek.com](http://www.beavercreek.com).

they’re cool,” Romer said. Something like SpringFest makes Beaver Creek a more enjoyable place, he added, and a place people enjoy — whether because of an afternoon kids parade or a free evening concert, it not only draws people in, but those people tend to come back.

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