



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Glenwood Caverns keeps employees busy with renovation projects while the park is closed for construction of the new Glenwood Gondola**

*Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park has kept all of its full-time, year-round employees working this winter, even though it's closed for construction of the new Glenwood Gondola. They're using this time to complete renovations around the park, including a major upgrade in the cave.*

**GLENWOOD SPRINGS, Colo.** (Jan. 30, 2019) — There's a lot going on at Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park this winter, even though it's closed. While the park's maintenance crew and a team from Leitner-Poma are working to replace the Iron Mountain Tramway with the new, high-efficiency Glenwood Gondola, other departments are using the time to upgrade, renovate and repair.

"It was really important to us to be able to keep our full-time, year-round employees on the payroll this winter," general manager Nancy Heard explained. "Since it is difficult to complete large-scale renovations while the park is open, we're keeping everyone busy by making improvements throughout the park."



One of the biggest projects is taking place in The Barn, a large cave room located in the lower section of Glenwood Caverns.

Walkways constructed of decking material are being replaced with concrete that provides better footing and steel handrails. A new route has eliminated seven steps and allows guests to walk amongst the rocks rather than above them. Extreme care was taken to ensure that no living cave formations were damaged in the process of building the pathway. To protect the air inside the cave from dust, a double tent houses portable concrete mixers and bagged concrete that's mixed by hand in small batches.

"After 20 years, it's time to replace the old decking materials with something more permanent, so we are using concrete and stainless steel," natural attractions manager Kathy Miller said. "We've been working on this for a couple of years now; this is phase three of four."

In addition, cave staff members are dusting formations with shop vacs fitted with attachments typically used to clean computer keyboards, then doing a gentle wash; removing lint and hair that collects over time; checking, replacing and resetting light bulbs; checking airlock seals on doors; installing a new phone line that can be used in case of an emergency; and scaling to check areas prone to loose rocks.

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The food and beverage department is taking advantage of the downtime to scrub and clean its areas from top to bottom. According to manager Bob Stepniewski, "The opportunity to clean this deeply does not come very often, so we are removing everything and getting in there with toothbrushes. We've purged and cleaned storage areas, removed kitchen equipment, stripped and sealed the kitchen floors, and disassembled and cleaned equipment." The team is also reupholstering all chairs, refinishing or touching up almost every piece of stained wood including the tabletops, emptying and cleaning the walk-in coolers, and stripping and resealing the floors in the restaurant. New menu items are being researched and tested to provide fast, fresh options for guests.

In the General Store gift shop, much of the work has been on deep cleaning, reorganizing, doing inventory and painting. Chris Pezel, who joined the park as retail manager last year, has also been on the hunt for new products including apparel, handmade soaps, vintage candy and kids' toys. "I've focused on finding new, high-quality vendors and, over time, will be adding items that give the store more of a vintage, artisan and handmade feel."

Not to be left out, the attractions department is removing carpet and installing a wood laminate on the floors inside the 4D Motion Theater and has given the Laser Tag Arena a makeover with repairs and fresh paint.

Last fall, the maintenance team began their meticulous work of performing the annual refurbishment and preventative maintenance of all the rides. They also finished burying the utility lines that were previously attached to the tram cables. This was a big, long-term job that consisted of trenching 4,500 feet down the mountain. The benefits of having these lines underground include the ability to pump water continuously, whereas before the Park could only pump water when the air temperature was above freezing. Other benefits are to provide more protection for the utility lines and make for a sleeker look of the gondola.



"The reason we have time to complete these projects, of course, is the replacement of the Iron Mountain Tramway with the new, high-efficiency Glenwood Gondola. We've chosen a new name to emphasize just how much difference it will make in our guests' experience. The 44 detachable cabins that won't stop on the way up or down the mountain are going to more than triple our capacity and decrease the ride time," Heard said. "So, instead of waiting in line at the base or the top during peak season, our guests can spend that time enjoying the park. This also allows us to offer more events, even during the summer. Our Music on the Mountain schedule is greatly expanded with more Colorado bands for this year, and locals will still be able to enjoy live music during Friday Afternoon Club."

Construction of the Glenwood Gondola officially started on Oct. 29, 2018, although a crew was busy preparing the base for removal of the tram cabins the night before. It's been non-stop ever since, with teams from the park and Leitner-Poma tackling different parts of the process. At the midpoint, everything is on track for a grand opening celebration in March.

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Heard added, "At this point, the heavy excavation, the removal of the old concrete footers, is completed. All of the footers for the new gondola have been poured. The two columns for the supporting structure of the base terminal were installed last weekend. This week, the terminal for the base will be constructed. Next comes the support structure for the top and then the terminal building itself. After that, the tower assemblies will be flown in and the haul rope, or cable, will be installed. Finally, the gondola cabins will be attached. Once assembled and operational, testing will be conducted, followed by the commission by Leitner-Poma and licensing by Colorado Passenger Tramway Safety Board."

When the Park celebrates the grand opening of the Glenwood Gondola this spring, guests can expect to enjoy faster transportation up and down the mountain with few or no lines, and a fresh, new look throughout. Progress reports can be found in the Post Independent and at [Facebook.com/Glenwood Caverns](https://www.facebook.com/GlenwoodCaverns).

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**About Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park**

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Located in scenic Glenwood Springs, Colo., midway between Aspen and Vail, Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park offers a one-of-a-kind mountain-top adventure. The Adventure Park features a gondola ride, walking and wild tours of Glenwood Caverns and Historic Fairy Caves, dining, and year-round attractions including the new Haunted Mine Drop, Alpine Coaster, 4D Motion Theater and Laser Tag Arena. Seasonal offerings include the Giant Canyon Swing, Glenwood Canyon Flyer, Cliffhanger Roller Coaster, Wild West Express family coaster, a climbing wall, gemstone sluice box mining, a Ferris wheel ride and a holiday light display. Ideal setting for groups and birthday parties. Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park operates new Iron Mountain Hot Springs now open on the bank of the Colorado River in Glenwood Springs.