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Snowflex adds intermediate slope: Real snow adds to the excitement on Liberty Mountain

April 01, 2010 | Sarah Deskins and Sarah Funderburke

Just three months after its grand opening ceremony in August 2009, the Liberty Mountain Snowflex Centre was expanded to include a new intermediate ski slope. The additional terrain allows skiers and snowboarders to make wide and long turns — adding length to their ride and a more gradual descent down the mountain.

The new intermediate slope debuted Dec. 19, 2009, just in time for Central Virginia’s first snowfall of the season. Skiers and snowboarders were able to test the facility on fresh snow. Although Snowflex is a synthetic material that simulates natural snow year-round, the slopes can also be used when there is real snow on the ground.

“With the snow, we pretty much turned into a regular ski resort,” said Will Scheren, assistant manager of the Snowflex Centre. “We have received a great response from the public because you can spend the day skiing on fresh powder slopes at a rate more affordable than traditional ski resorts.”

Snowflex also got a taste of real snow in January and February as two additional snowstorms hit the mid-Atlantic in consecutive weekends. The slope was a big hit for Central Virginia residents.

“We get a great response from people who come here when it snows,” said Drew Sherwood, general manager for Snowflex. “It’s close and it’s economically feasible — it’s like paying a

fourth of a price of going to a huge ski resort. You get the same experience and it's a lot less [money] — and it's right in your back yard.”

This is the first expansion of the Snowflex facility since its opening in August, but Sherwood said it will not be the last.

“We definitely want to keep on growing,” he said. “But for the time being, we are going to focus on maintaining and improving the operations of our current facility.”

Liberty's facility is the first of its kind in the U.S. and offers slopes ranging from easy to difficult, challenging skiers and snowboarders at any level of expertise. Several jumps and rails are strategically placed on the advanced slope so boarders and skiers can try out and improve their tricks. The facility offers ski and snowboarding lessons for beginners, and competitions and jam sessions for more competitive boarders.

In January, the facility hosted a “Seven Kings” competition in which snowboarders and skiers tested their ability at a variety of tricks, jumps and rail rides. The next competitive event to be held at Snowflex will be the Dew Games on April 10. Sponsored by Mountain Dew, this competition will award large cash prizes to men or women who place in the top three slots of their Big Air and Slope style ski event and the Big Air and Slope style snowboard event, with first place being \$750. Prizes will also be given for Best Trick, Biggest Air, Biggest Fall, Best Female, Best Dressed and Most Amplitude off the Quarter Pipe. To register, email snowflex@liberty.edu or call (434) 582-FLEX. Registration is \$20 per person, and all participants will need to complete a qualifying run on April 9 or 10.