

Snow King tunnel finished

*By Noah Brenner, Jackson Hole, Wyo.
November 1, 2008*

Developer Dave Taylor debuted his tunnel constructed underneath the flanks of Snow King Mountain Friday, welcoming neighbors and interested residents to walk through the structure.

Over 100 people attended the reception, said Taylor's representative Jennifer Mayfield.

"We wanted to get people out here before it starts snowing," she said. "There was a lot of curiosity about the project."

Though the project was much-maligned during its construction because of the large piles of dirt it left on the slopes of the Town Hill, Mayfield said response to the project now that it was complete has been generally positive.

Despite rumors to the contrary and the obvious carnage that littered the side of the hill, the tunnel linking the Pine Glades development to the streets of Jackson was completed in 12 weeks, one week behind schedule.

"There was certainly some negative feedback early on," Taylor said. "A lot of people thought it was a crazy idea but I don't think a lot of people really understood what we were doing."

Taylor's crews began bringing in prefabricated tunnel sections in mid-September. In all, crews linked 150 pieces weighing more than 50,000 pounds each to create the 600-foot long link between Taylor's high-end condo development and South Cache Street. Unanimously approved by the Jackson Town Council in January, Taylor's plan calls for 27 free-market townhome units and 12 affordable-housing units on a roughly 17-acre parcel.

Taylor had some extra dirt on the site and donated 3,000 cubic yards to help level county property at Adams Canyon and another 3,000 cubic yards to help level a new parking lot being built in Teton Village.

In addition to Taylor's work on the site, Snow King Resort took advantage of the disturbance to have some of Taylor's crew and equipment fill in a depression on the hill to make it a more even slope.

Though the tunnel was open to walk through during the reception, Taylor still needs to pave the road through the tunnel and connect it to South Cache Street.

He expects to complete that process within three weeks, at which point the first car will make its way under the mountain.