



*Estes Park Convention & Visitors Bureau
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New Visitors Center Opens in Estes Park

Visitors to Estes Park are getting a new perspective on this vacation haven these days.

Gone is the brown nondescript structure that had been used as a Visitors Information Center since it opened in 1975. In its place sits a mountain lodge that's about 2.5 times larger and serves the same purpose.

Estes Park Convention & Visitors Bureau staff began operating from the new offices March 15. The formal dedication and grand opening will occur Friday, April 7.

Town officials say the impression left by the building could act as a catalyst for strengthening the community's position as a premier family vacation destination while providing a hub for two experimental shuttle systems set to operate this summer.

"The center provides an image of Estes Park that sets the tone for the visitor. We know it is important to have the building represent the type of experience people will enjoy said CVB Executive Director Tom Pickering" Architectural elements of logs, stone and windows provide the basis for those first impressions.

The new center now can accommodate handicapped visitors and provides space for those seeking information about the area. The old structure that was demolished last week was designed for 50,000 visitors a year. Current statistics show that about 200,000 people use the Visitors Center's facilities annually.

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A 155-space parking lot adjoins the Visitors Center. Another 100 parking spaces just a short walk across the Big Thompson River will come on line in June. The addition of those spaces (there were 53 spaces at the old building) will allow the Town of Estes Park to inaugurate its experimental Shopper Shuttle in July. At the same time Rocky Mountain National Park will operate a Hiker Shuttle as an extension of its already popular park-and-ride system. Park passes will be available at the Visitors Center through an automated machine at the Estes Park Visitors Center.

The new Visitors Center cost the Town of Estes Park \$1.275 million and was funded internally through its community reinvestment fund.

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Facts about the Estes Park Visitors Center

	Old Structure	New Center
Total Square Feet:	3,500	9,000
Square feet in Lobby	Approx. 900	2,025
Square Feet on Main Level:	1,750	5,600
Square Feet on 2 nd Floor (unfinished*)	1,750	3,400*
Lot Size	5.4 Acres	5.4 Acres
Parking East of the Center	30	155
Center Building Cost		\$1.275 Million