

CATEGORY: 9: Best Building Project – General Contractor (\$10 - \$40 Million)

PROJECT: Pioneer Crossing Restaurant on Peak 7 | **GC:** Hyder Construction

Why This Project Should Win an ACE Award

Nestled on Breckenridge Ski Resort's Peak 7, steps from the top of Independence Chair, sits Pioneer Crossing, a contemporary 17,000 square-foot restaurant featuring heavy timber and steel framing, seating for 490 patrons, and ski patrol facilities. The \$11.2 million project is located at 11,400 feet, the highest full-service kitchen and the second highest on-mountain restaurant in the country. By creating a culture of pride, teamwork, optimism, safety, and support, the project overcame a variety of challenges—including a delayed start, unique weather (wind, snow, and lightning), complicated access (via a treacherous single-lane road, ski lift, snow cats, and a helicopter), and owner-added scope—successfully executing a quality project on time and on budget with no recordable incidents or lost time accidents.

Project Description

Hitting the slopes and getting caught up in the rush of the ride at Breckenridge Ski Resort is a quintessential Colorado experience. Even the most enthusiastic of skiers and boarders, though, need a respite during a long day on the mountain, a place to relax and grab a bite to eat or a brew to recharge for a few more runs. Pioneer Crossing provides these amenities and much more in an incomparable setting with a structure that both frames and complements the jaw-dropping mountain vista and valley of Breckenridge below.

Pioneer Crossing is an on-mountain restaurant at the top of Peak 7 that both respects and blends in with the surrounding forest environment while still making a structural statement. As riders approach the top of the Independence SuperChair lift, Pioneer Crossing and its strong natural wood and stone elements come into view. Once riders have popped off their skis or board and head inside, the immensity of the shed roof, held up by exposed heavy timber columns and beams, encourages lines of sight leading to the panoramic glass façade, showcasing and celebrating the mountainous views outside. Guests can enjoy their food, drink, and putting their feet up while experiencing the same excitement in the view as they would standing at the top of their favorite run.

The dining area is an open, expansive floor plan, reflecting the client's community-forward sustainable approach to design. Styled as a fresh reminder of western trailblazing, the interior design features barn elements throughout, and Beetle-kill pine wainscoting and Douglas Fir casework provide an encompassing warmth to the interior while also giving a nod to the ecological heritage of the region.

At over 11,400 feet in elevation, Pioneer Crossing is an example in high-altitude hospitality and design, one that blends functionality with the fun and wonder of a day on Breckenridge slopes.

Solutions of Special Projects | Excellence in Project Execution and Teamwork

Being at 11,400 feet of elevation came with a variety of challenges, including increased risk for altitude sickness, formidable weather, site access, and unforeseen changes.

The altitude environment required constant vigilance on the part of the team to ensure that all workers were drinking water and taking breaks to overcome oxygen deprivation.

The weather ran the gamut from lightning storms, blizzard conditions, and high winds. These issues easily could and did shut down the site, several times. The key was having someone dedicated to watching the weather so worker safety was always paramount. The team worked extra hours to overcome any schedule delays created by severe weather.

Accessing the site itself was the major challenge presented by the location. The project was only accessible via a single lane road, which was often icy. This meant that all deliveries had to be closely coordinated so that large trucks were not going up the road at the same time someone was trying to come down. Several times the superintendent had to go down the road on a forklift with chains to rescue stuck vehicles. Deep snow prevented road access after mid-November. After that, all equipment and workers accessed the site via the chair lift or snow cat. Team members were even skiing materials down the hill near the end of the project. Ultimately, what made such complicated logistics work so well was extensive communication and coordination.

The extreme elevation and isolated location also forced unexpected changes; a 50,000-gallon water tank was added to provide potable water, and materials were changed partway through the

project to accommodate strict Forest Service guidelines and elevation limitations. Additionally, Vail procured the Forest Service permit a month later than expected. The team started construction in June, but final approved drawings weren't available until 8/22. To accommodate these unusual circumstances, we held daily field meetings to discuss the day's work as drawings weren't always available. The team had to make decisions on the fly, which was only possible because we had such a thorough understanding of what Vail wanted. We often re-sequenced work in atypical ways, based on available approvals. We maximized all opportunities to accelerate the schedule, such as working extra hours during the Indian summer to get fully dried in. By the end of the project, the team was working 7-day 80-hour weeks, including Thanksgiving. Working this many hours in such an isolated environment could have been chaos, but by thoughtfully managing the project, we created a highly-motivated and team-oriented environment. Hyder supported their subs by working right alongside them, scheduling hotel rooms and rides for late work nights, bringing food, offering gift cards to teams to work late, and instilling a sense of pride. People showed up to work optimistic and everyone worked hard toward the same goal. The project closed out on 12/23/17, demobilized the night of 12/23, and opened 12/24 on time with fantastic guest reception.

The team's motivation, optimism, and pride are what led to the project's exceptional quality as well. The project came in on budget, which we accomplished by being fully transparent with the owner and subs. Our honesty showed Vail what the project would cost to get it open by Christmas and helped keep the subs accountable to their contracts.

Environmental/Safety

Over 66,000 man hours were worked on this project, all without a single lost time accident or OSHA recordable incident. In addition to the standard weekly safety meetings and daily jobsite walks, our site-specific safety orientation was very important on this project. The orientation was based on Hyder's in-house program, developed on past similar projects. It goes through rules and regulations specific to working in a mountain environment, including adverse weather conditions, high winds, lightning, wildlife awareness, and altitude. Because of the remote high-altitude location, we also coordinated with ski patrol to have them ready to respond should an incident occur, our site superintendent was trained as a first responder, and we had "chain

police” to make sure everyone who went up to the site had chains on their vehicles. Hyder also instituted an interactive safety award program to recognize workers who went above and beyond to correct unsafe work and promote safety. Barbeque luncheons were held several times to encourage safety. Workers who had been recognized received safety prize tickets and were included in prize drawings to commend their achievements.

Excellence in Client Service | Contribution to Community | Construction Innovations

Vail Resorts actually built this exact building at three of their other resorts; however, each of these locations was far less remote and much lower in elevation. Although it seemed that material and equipment selection would be a smooth process, many manufacturers don't guarantee products at elevations higher than 10,000 feet. Hyder worked with the engineers to run simulations to see if all specified equipment would still work at the restaurant's high 11,400-foot altitude. Although this delayed the equipment order, some equipment did change; the team's proactive approach prevented any future altitude-related equipment failure issues.

Breckenridge is one of the areas hit hardest by the beetle population. As an homage to the region and in an effort to embrace sustainable design, beetle kill wood was used as trim throughout the restaurant.

Although not an ideal construction situation, this project can be used as a case study in the construction industry for how to complete a fast-tracked on-mountain project on time. The schedule was such a sensitive issue because Breckenridge Ski Resort has very few on-mountain restaurants; Pioneer Crossing is also their first on-mountain full-service bar. By completing this project on time, the team allowed the ski resort to remain competitive as these areas trend more toward additional skier amenities. The Summit County community also welcomed this project as it improves the guest experience and drives additional tourism to the area.

Peter Grove, the project architect, commented, “I'm proud of the accomplishment of our collective teams in getting the lodge completed. As you are well aware this industry and certain projects can be a grind and this one had its challenges for sure. That said, the lodge looks great and will stand as a real testament to what knowledge, hard work and teamwork can do.”









