

Snowmaking allows Sierra ski season to start

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

The scenery between Interstate 80 in Truckee and the base of Northstar isn't exactly a winter wonderland.

Autumn leaves are gone from most of the deciduous trees. Like much of California and Nevada, which have been under severe drought for years, Martis Valley is brown and dry.

But near the base of the resort, at about 6,330 feet in elevation, it's a different landscape altogether.

That's where a crew of as many as 28 people working with Director of Mountain Operations Jim Lamore work around the clock, but mostly at night, to cover the mountain with enough snow to make good on the resort's promise to open Nov. 21.

On a recent Sunday night the resort was operating about 100 of its 140 snow guns which, under the right conditions, are capable of producing as much as two feet of snow in an hour. Despite the brown hillsides elsewhere, the slopes were covered with an ever-deepening blanket of fresh, white snow.

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