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SOARING TREE TOP ADVENTURES

DURANGO, COLORADO

A high-flying eco tour adventure which sends enthusiasts soaring through one of the last stands of old growth Ponderosa pines on earth, is coming to the world-famous Tall Timber Resort near Durango, Colorado, in spring, 2005.

Soaring Tree Top Adventures is the highest, largest and safest arboreal excursion in the world, and the only one in the continental United States. Centuries-old Ponderosa pines support 30 stainless steel platforms scattered over 180 acres of the San Juan Mountains' alpine valley of the Animas River. Guests will glide suspended from spans of stainless steel cable on exhilarating runs ranging from 75 to 400 feet, 20 to 50 feet above the forest floor, allowing a view of the forest usually reserved for its feathered inhabitants.

Accessible only by the historic Durango-Silverton steam train, Soaring Tree Top Adventures features a patented personal suspension system, along with harnesses and personal safety hardware specially designed by the The Petzl Company, world-famous maker of quality climbing and rescue gear. Guests soar through a protected pine and aspen forest full of deer, elk, bears and Colorado's colorful cast of feathered soarers. Guests will enjoy a gourmet picnic lunch on a special elevated platform in the trees, with a view of the rushing waters of the Animas River. At the end of the course, guests will rappel down from the treetops to the forest floor.

David B. Temple, president of Animas Valley Arborist and member of the International Society of Arboriculture, marvels at the design of the course, which permits no intrusion or harmful stresses to any tree. "Tall Timber should be commended," Temple says, "for the creative and non-invasive approach to providing a recreational opportunity for the public to experience an eagle's eye view of some of the best arboricultural treasures Mother Nature has to offer." Platforms are supported by patented "tree hugging" padded collars which allow the trees to sway in the wind and to expand with growth. As Mr. Temple says, "These old girls won't even know you're here."

Safety is the highest priority of Soaring Tree Top Adventures. All Sky Guides and Safety Officers are EMT-trained, and have completed a twelve-point program in soaring procedure. The custom-designed harnesses come from the Petzl Company, world renowned for providing the finest quality climbing and safety hardware. Petzl Trac pulleys, soaring harnesses, clamps and hardware demonstrate the unprecedented commitment to safety that is the hallmark of Soaring Tree Top Adventures.

All structures and platforms for Soaring Tree Top Adventures were fabricated at Holt Sheet Metal Inc. Each component is high-strength stainless steel, down to every last bolt and bit of decorative trim. HSMI is a second generation family business in Durango, Colorado, which has built an international reputation for quality and innovation since it opened in 1965. Though they have achieved success in a wide variety of ground-breaking projects, company president Ralph Holt says, "I don't think anything comes close to this." At first skeptical of the idea, Holt was one of the first to test the Soaring Tree Top Adventure. "That's when it became a reality, when we went up there and got to run in between the trees. It's quite a trick."

Since then, people of all ages from around the world have experienced the thrill of Soaring Tree Top Adventures. In the words of 12 year old Britain Simons, of Montrose, Colorado, "I'm glad I took the chance. It's the funnest thing I've done. It makes you feel free, like you can fly."

The all-day arboreal excursion offered by Soaring Tree Top Adventures is \$199 per person, and includes all the equipment, training and supervision necessary to experience nature in a way few humans ever will. The price does not include train tickets on the Durango-Silverton steam train, which must be purchased separately.

Soaring Tree Top Adventures will be open to the public from Spring 2005 to Autumn 2006. After that, it will be available only to guests of the Tall Timber Resort.

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