



Orange Bubble Express

Park City, Utah



Like a strand of Christmas lights strung to the top of the mountain, the vividly orange protective shields and glimmering galvanized steel of the Orange Bubble Express Lift chairs stand out amidst the crisp white snow blanketing the landscape.


This ski lift, located at The Canyons in Park City, Utah, is a one of a kind, state-of-the-art structure. Featuring heated seats, the orange, bubble-like enclosure provides lift passengers protection from the wind and snow. The clear orange plastic allows riders in the quad-lift to observe the surrounding scenery as if through a pair of ski goggles. As the first of its kind in North America, it is important the lift remain visually appealing and free of unsafe and unsightly rust stains.

The lift is located just outside the resort's Grand Summit Hotel and takes skiers to mid-mountain Lookout Peak, before continuing uphill just south of the current Sun Peak lift. The express lift increases capacity from the base mountain by 47% and carries skiers to the top of the mountain in nine minutes, accommodating 2,400 passengers per hour.

At an elevation of 8,700 feet, the harsh mountain environment demands a coating that is both durable and maintenance-free. Thanks to decades of battle-proven performance, most ski lifts produced in the world are designed to be hot-dip galvanized. The amount of pipe and tubular product, such as towers and chair bails, in this project are considerable and hot-dip galvanizing for corrosion protection of these elements is ideal.

Unlike other systems, the hot-dip galvanizing process allows molten zinc to flow within and around tubular products, protecting both the internal and outside surfaces with a uniform, consistent coating. Two hundred tons of lift towers, cross-arms, lifting frames, chair bails, restraint bars, walkways, ladders, and handrail were galvanized for this project.

One of the main design objectives of the lift was to improve visibility for the passenger. The galvanized coating provides aesthetic appeal coupled with the uniquely designed orange bubble shields that protect the passengers from the weather. Despite constant exposure to moisture and daily passenger wear-and-tear, the zinc coating guarantees the lift will continue to protect riders as well as remain aesthetically pleasing and corrosion free for 70 years or more.

In addition to the interior and exterior corner protection offered by a hot-dip galvanized coating, barrier and cathodic protection were the most important attributes considered when selecting a corrosion protection system for the Orange Bubble Express. The coating's superior abrasion resistance and bond strength were also key factors in selecting hot-dip galvanizing. The galvanized steel utilized in the lift will keep it operating at top speeds, without interruption, for decades. 

Galvanizer

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