



## Vail's labor crunch not unique

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JACKSON HOLE, Wyo. — Winter is a slower time in the economy of Jackson Hole than is summer.

That's why it's all the more concerning to employers there that they can't find enough hired hands to clean the sheets, wash the dishes and do all the other tasks in a service-oriented tourism economy.

Sharpening the tension, reports the Jackson Hole News&Guide, is the fact that the federal cap on H2B temporary worker visas was reached on Jan. 3, well in advance of Jackson's high season. That leaves some employers considering recruitment from Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories, where visas are unnecessary. Others may use J1 student visas.

The wages are relatively high, about \$14 for many jobs as housekeepers. A business owner, who spoke to the newspaper only on the condition of anonymity, said he takes whatever document prospective workers give him.

"Now I just have everyone complete I-9s, show me their driver's licenses and Social Security cards," he said. "We all know they're not legal, but we look the other way."

The business owner estimated that his Mexican workers make \$4,000 to \$7,000 a month.

Would higher wages draw U.S. citizens? Mark Walker, a restaurateur, thinks not, but he also says he can only pay so much. "You can't pay \$30 (per hour) for unskilled labor."