



A look inside Big Sky's employee housing. Photo Credit: Morgan Schulte/Big Sky Resort

Working and living at a ski resort may be a dream job for people who love skiing or riding and want to be close to the mountain. Most ski resorts offer their employees discounts and benefits such as free season passes, discounts on food and drinks, discounts on purchases of merchandise, and a bunch more. However, most mountain employees are just looking for a nice place to stay while working at the resort.

The challenge of finding affordable housing at a ski resort is a real problem not only for the employees but also for the ownership and management of those ski resorts. It is not cheap to live close to a ski resort, and due to transportation and inclement weather, most employees do not want to make the daily commute farther than 30 minutes to the mountain. However, most housing options resort employees can afford are about 30 minutes from the resort. Big Sky Resort, Montana, is leading the way in the ski industry by providing its employees with affordable housing on its mountain.

Big Sky Resort announced on March 9, 2023, that it was opening Levinski Lodge A, the first apartment-style housing option for its resort team members. The new housing units are walkable to the resort, make the commute feasible, and do not cause more traffic congestion on the local transportation system. Big Sky also stated that Buildings B and C will open for the winter of 2023/24 and are a mix of dormitory and apartment-style rooms. In a press release on Big Sky

Resort's website, Troy Nedved, the resort's general manager said, "We want our team members to live right here in Big Sky. It enlivens the community, and it's better for the employee, atmosphere, and climate."



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This is a big step within the industry where resorts have struggled, in the past, with being fully staffed. Shortages in staffing have led to limiting or shutting down some mountain operations throughout the industry. The apartments at Big Sky are fully furnished, including a full kitchen, common space, bathrooms, storage closets, and free laundry facilities in the building.

- ***Related Article: Almost 80% of Homes in Park City, UT, Are Vacant Or Not Owner Occupied (<https://snowbrains.com/almost-80-of-homes-in-park-city-ut-are-vacant-or-not-owner-occupied/>)***

Big Sky offers 826 beds to its employees, and the resort provides more than seven times the ski industry average. Nedved said, "Recognizing that we need more diverse and affordable housing options is crucial to address the housing shortage in the Big Sky community." Nedved added, "Apartment-style units address a part of the population that has not quite fit in our other housing offerings." Big Sky Resort also offers employee housing in Bozeman and its employees get a free pass to ride Skyline Bus.




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Big Sky Resort is moving forward with its mountain projects' responsibility for its environmental impact on the planet. Amy Fonte, the resort's sustainability specialist said,

“Building sustainable housing is not just about location. We’ve included the best efficiency measures to further reduce our environmental impact, including low-flow water fixtures and an energy-efficient HVAC system.” Fonte added, “The complex will be partially powered by rooftop solar panels, the resort’s first net-metered solar installation, which puts clean energy directly into the grid.”

A resort can offer great powder, a great place to work, and competitive pay, however, the employees need a place where they can sleep at night. Resort employees need an affordable housing option that allows them to be located relatively near the mountain resorts they work at. “Ultimately, our goal is to reach 1,000 beds in Big Sky, which would house approximately half of our team in the winter season. We’re on track to reach that goal by the winter 2023-2024 season,” Nedved said.

For more information about Big Sky Resort check out its website. (<https://bigskyresort.com>)

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