

More talk than action on Tahoe workforce housing

Publisher's note: *This is one in a series of stories about affordable housing in the Lake Tahoe-Truckee region. All articles may be accessed via the home page under Special Projects, 2017 Affordable Housing.*

By Kathryn Reed

Nearly two years after Vail Resorts announced it would spend \$30 million on workforce housing, the financial commitment is beginning to pay off in Colorado, though not so much in Tahoe.

The ski resort behemoth has been doing more at its Colorado properties than in California. Keystone is getting a \$6 million workforce housing project, while 23 acres near East Vail have been identified for housing. It is spending \$440,000 to convert a commercial building it owns in Silverthorne (Summit County, Colo.) into housing.



Vail Resorts says it owns or leases approximately 3,000 beds in Eagle and Summit counties, which is where its Vail, Beaver Creek, Keystone, and Breckenridge resorts are located.

“Employee housing is a priority for us at both Heavenly and Kirkwood mountain resorts, and we continuously work with our community partners and stakeholders to provide housing options and opportunities for our resorts’ teams. For instance, we have employee housing at both of our mountains; and recently, we added an additional 32 beds to our housing at Kirkwood,”

Kevin Cooper, spokesman for the resorts, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

However, what he wouldn't say is how many employees can be housed at the company-owned facilities, what the amenities are (laundry? food provided?), if they are more like apartments or dorms, if they are seasonal or year-round, and the cost to workers.

At the Sept. 21 California Tahoe Conservancy meeting, staff noted they are in talks with Vail Resorts – the Colorado-based parent company of Heavenly and Kirkwood – about developing workforce housing on a parcel the state owns near the Crossings at the Y in South Lake Tahoe. CTC is doing the prep work to get that land ready to be sold, with the desire for it to be used for worker housing.

It's estimated 40 residential units could go there.

CTC staff said Vail is interested in year-round housing for employees as it expands its summer attractions.

The board will see this parcel and idea on the agenda when the environmental documents are completed and more details are solidified. Staff had no time line for when that might be.

Northstar, the Vail Resorts property in Truckee, is part of the Truckee North Tahoe Regional Housing Council, and has pledged \$30,000 to the Housing Solutions Fund.