

Ski towns and their housing issues

By Megan Michelson, Powder

A pervasive housing shortage is afflicting mountain towns from Stowe to Telluride. The issue is not just a question of locals being able to afford million-dollar homes—it's also about availability.

“There is very little vacancy for ownership or rental units, and what is vacant is very unaffordable,” says Stacy Stoker, housing manager for Wyoming's Teton County Housing Authority, which oversees affordable housing in the Jackson Hole area. “Less than three percent of the land in the county is able to be developed. This means that there is not a lot of land for building affordable housing.”

Aspen, Colo., has a vacancy rate of less than 1 percent for rental units; in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, it's zero; in Mammoth Lakes it's less than 2 percent.

Breckenridge, Colo., houses 50 percent of its workforce—so half of the town's employees commute from elsewhere. Vail and Aspen house less than 30 percent. Truckee shelters 41 percent of its employees. Mammoth and Jackson are doing well by comparison, each housing around 63 percent of its workforce.

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