

July 20, 2018

MEDIA CONTACT: Carri Lawrence, Hive Staffing Agency, Executive Director: 1-877-232-HIVE;
media@hivestaffing.com

City of Branson Short Up To 3000 Employees This Tourist Season

Hive Staffing Agency Seeks to Solve Branson's Staff Shortage Crisis with Americans

With Branson's largest expected tourist season looming, Branson businesses are scrambling to fill as many as 1000 to 3000 jobs to help their staff shortage crisis. Newly imposed federal limits on foreign seasonal workers and red tape have lessened businesses' ability to fill positions with foreign visa workers, leaving businesses hoping to lure American workers from areas with higher unemployment rates.

Hive Staffing Agency seeks help to solve this staffing shortage with American workers, hoping to bring in as many as 1000 workers to fill the critical demand for employees in Branson. Primarily recruiting staff from the neighboring states of Oklahoma, Texas, and Arkansas, workers from across the country are starting to swarm in for the season with Hive Staffing's unique national staffing model that knows no geographic boundary. National recruits have also come from Indiana and other states across the USA. With a goal of sending in at least 200 workers this month alone, Hive Staffing Agency is giving American workers the opportunity to spend tourist season in a regional tourism mecca.

Branson is an Ozark tourism mecca, known for such attractions as a Hollywood Wax Museum, Ripley's Believe it or Not, Dolly Parton's Stampede Dinner Attraction, outdoor sports, and distilleries. Despite all the tourist attractions, Branson businesses have been desperate to fill seasonal staff positions for over 20 years.

With a population of just over 11,000, Branson lacks the staffing power for peak tourist seasons. There just aren't enough local employees. For almost 20 years, local businesses have had to turn to the H-2B Visa temporary worker program to bring in housekeepers, culinary staff, and hospitality workers from countries like Belize and Jamaica. Despite posting all open jobs locally first before advertising jobs to other countries, as the federal H-2B program requires, Branson hasn't been able to attract enough American staff to fill their burgeoning tourist staffing needs. They have had to rely on foreign visa workers, or any other workers, willing to relocate seasonally.

This year, fewer federal foreign visa approvals have meant an even greater shortage in staff. The national H-2B worker cap for Q1 was 33,000, with that number reached by January 10. Previously, returning workers were not included in the cap but are now counted. This nationwide low limit on H-2B workers has put Branson in even more of a bind for what some believe will be its busiest tourism season in decades.

A shortage of J-1 work-travel visa workers and a 4 month limit on J-1 work-travel visits has also compounded Branson's staff shortage. The J-1 summer work program allows students to work and travel in the USA short-term with a sponsor approved by the State Department as part of a cultural exchange. With only around 1,000 total J-1 participants in the entire

state of Missouri for the 2017 summer work travel program, J-1 workers are far too scarce to solve Branson's staffing shortage of up to 3,000 workers for the 2018 tourist season. J-1 summer work travel program also has a 4 month maximum stay, with participants arriving from May through July and having to depart by September, while Branson's tourist peak season lasts until December. Those busy fall and winter months are unable to be staffed by J-1 summer workers, leaving employers scrambling even more to find seasonal staff.

Greater restrictions on temporary H-2B visas, seasonal departures of J-1 summer workers no later than September, and increasingly expensive international travel costs have caused employers to try to recruit domestically in areas with higher unemployment rates. The Branson Chamber of Commerce even organized a Puerto Rico job fair in hopes of attracting workers. Temporary workers from another region, or even another country like Jamaica, can come at a high cost. Businesses are often required to pay for travel expenses, assist with living arrangements, and other relocation expenses in order to recruit seasonal workers.

Hive Staffing Agency's solution is even closer to home: bringing in workers from neighboring states, like Oklahoma, for the season. A short afternoon road trip over to Branson means vital staff can start work quickly, while also saving businesses on costly foreign and out-of-region travel expenses to recruit essential hospitality staff. One of the only staffing agencies known to transport staff nationally to help with staffing shortages, Hive Staffing Agency hopes to help fill solve Branson's staffing crisis, utilizing American workers domestically and cost efficiently.

While other agencies have attempted to help Branson with temporary staffing before, none have lasted as long as Hive Staffing Agency. Hive Staffing Agency has been serving Branson for over 90 days already, with at least 4 employees choosing to relocate to Branson permanently. Taking staff to Branson every week, workers commit to 30 day minimum contracts that can be extended indefinitely, offering a more long-term solution for employers than 4-month maximum J1 summer work-travel visas. Unlike most seasonal staffing solutions, Hive Staffing Agency offers a national staffing model and arranges all basic framework for successfully relocating seasonal employees, from corporate housing to a "HIVE-RIDE" employee shuttle that can transport workers to and from work every day while in Branson. Employers no longer have to worry about a seasonal employee not having a way to get to work, or not being able to find housing in a tourist's rental market, simplifying relocation for employers and employees alike.

"We hope that making a unique national regional staffing model will help solve Branson's staffing crisis. Quick action like this is needed to safeguard domestic tourism operations in our region. Adequately staffing tourist destinations and resorts is vital to servicing guests and creating repeat tourists. Local residents and visa holders are not the complete answer to Branson's seasoning staffing crisis, bringing in additional domestic workers seasonally is. It's a way for us to develop new business opportunities, while giving under employed American citizens a rare opportunity to gain meaningful work experience to launch their careers, whether work seasonally or long-term, in a new environment," said Carri Lawrence, Executive Director of Hive Staffing Agency.

Hive Staffing Agency hopes to set a national record for the most seasonal staff transported in the nation, along with the longest placement durations.

#####

Media Kit Available at: <http://hivestaffing.com/media/>