

Seasoned Stresses:

Staying Sane and Out of Debt While Between Seasonal Jobs

By: Aleks Zablotni

As frost begins covering the ground early in the morning and we find ourselves scraping our car windows before work, it becomes clear that it's that time of year again. The summer is over and we can look forward to the fall season, which really just acts as a quick stepping-stone to yet another endless winter.

This time of year is also chock-full of business closures and lay-offs which are reflective of the change of season. As a result, many outdoor hiking, rafting, canoeing and horse-back riding guides and tour operators as well as golf course workers find themselves between jobs. Many of these individuals choose to work in similar fields yet ones which are dependant on snow. In other words, they choose to work at for ski resorts, snow removal companies, dog-sledding tour operators or as back-country guides. However, the white stuff often likes to play a tricky waiting game which can take a toll on these workers' patience and bank account balances. So, the question is: How can one stay sane and out of debt while waiting for the snow to fly?

First of all, it's easy to become impatient when all of your friends are working, the bills are piling up, and you're waiting....and waiting....and waiting for a phone call. While waiting, why not stay busy volunteering your time to some worthy causes throughout the Bow Valley. Volunteering will not only make you feel good about yourself, it will also help you expand your network and make valuable connections for the future. If you're interested in volunteer opportunities, I urge you to contact the **Banff Volunteer Centre** at 760-8669 or the **Family & Community Support Services** in Canmore at 609-3743.

Next, what to do to pay the bills? Judging from the amount of employment ads in the newspapers and the "Help Wanted" signs in business windows, there is no shortage of work opportunities throughout the Bow Valley. If you are planning on applying for any of these part/ full time positions, it is best to be candid with your potential employer. Let them know what your future plans are and how long you anticipate being available for. They will appreciate your honesty and will be better prepared when forecasting their staffing needs for the winter season.

Another option is to work for a temporary employment agency while you wait for your seasonal job to start. Most agencies will allow you to work for as little as a day or for as long as you like. Among others, the advantages of working for an Employment Agency include shift flexibility, no commitments (other than showing up for scheduled shifts, of course), job variety, competitive wages, and a steady pay cheque. Using an employment agency while you are between jobs is a great way to keep busy, keep your bank account out of the red zone, and still have the time to attend your interviews.

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