

H2B Program: The Justification

Chad Adcock, GCS, TPC Avenel

Seasonal labor is a necessity in the golf industry in the Mid-Atlantic states and throughout the country. The Tournament Players Club at Avenel operates a seasonal business here in the mid-Atlantic, just nine miles from downtown Washington D.C. We need seasonal labor because our membership plays very little golf during the winter months. Our turf grasses do not grow in the frigid winters and cool springs that we experience this far north. Similar to many other agricultural plants, turf grasses have a seasonal growth pattern and will go dormant when soil and atmospheric temperatures are consistently cold. Our maintenance needs quadruple during the late spring, summer and fall when the vigor of turf growth matches the number of rounds played at Avenel.

TPC Avenel is located in an area where the economy is still quite strong and labor is already very difficult to find and retain on a seasonal basis. Compounded by our need to lay off employees for the winter, labor is often the most difficult aspect of our entire industry.

Golf courses used to rely on students for seasonal staffing. However, after the dot.com boom and tech boom, young people would much rather be in front of a computer in the air conditioning making larger salaries as opposed to working hard outdoors on a golf course.

I firmly believe that the current struggle for immigration reform has gotten out of control and placed undue strain on government initiatives such as H2A and H2B programs. These programs are seen as avenues for illegal immigration by our representatives in Washington. In actuality, the H2B workers come for nine months and do a great job and then return home to their families. The problem with illegal immigration lies with our government's inability to come up with more labor solutions such as the H2B program and their inability to streamline these processes making it easier to obtain legal documented seasonal labor. Companies that have seasonal labor needs are dotted throughout the Washington D.C. area in construction, landscaping and service-oriented businesses. These companies currently hire workers with documentation that is questionable but due to the survival mentality, managers overlook these flaws in documentation in order to get by. Don't blame the immigration worker who is looking to feed his family or the employer who seeks out temporary labor solutions south of the border. The problem is much more deeply rooted in our government's inability to deal with a growing labor problem in a timely manner.

In review, many golf courses across the country miss the opportunity to acquire employees from the H2B program because the nationwide quotas are extremely small compared to the actual number of needed employees. The result is a survival state of mind when it comes to hiring seasonal labor and many managers are overlooking key red flags that signal that an employee is here illegally. These quotas must be raised if we are to halt the hiring of undocumented workers within the industry while still having a sufficient supply of seasonal labor to sustain our businesses. As programs such as H2B become more common and are used by more companies, I believe that undocumented workers will in essence run out of work and return home in an effort to become documented. I would like to see H2B programs strengthened as opposed to weakened.



wadsworth
GOLF CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

"AMERICA'S PREMIER GOLF COURSE BUILDER"

ATLANTIC OFFICE

Patrick Karnick, Vice President

9 LaCrue Ave. – Suite 100 Glen Mills, PA 19342

Phone: (610) 361-7804 Fax: (610) 361-7805

E-mail: atlantic@wadsworthgolf.com

Web site: www.wadsworthgolf.com

