

INSIDE: CONVENTION PLANNING * KAUAI HOSPITALITY * DOH PLACARDS

HAWAII *hospitality*

LODGING & FOODSERVICE | JULY/AUGUST 2017

**When a social media post harms
your company's image, *what should you do?***



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checking in

Meetings, conventions and incentives are a vital part of Hawaii's hospitality business, estimated to have attracted nearly 200,000 visitors to the Islands through April. One MCI event, the International Microwave Symposium, was attended by 8,000 conventioners who reportedly spent \$38 million over six days in June, according to the Hawaii Tourism Authority.

More MCI events, some large, some small, fill the 2017 calendar and beyond. In this issue, Assistant Editor Brett Alexander-Estes reports on the economic impact of MCI events and how they are helping to sustain Hawaii's tourism-driven economy.

And as we know, many conventioneers do not travel alone—their families are likely to tag along on the trip to the Islands. In our report, we take a look at how Hawaii hotels and resorts are keep family members entertained,

How does a business repair a reputation damaged by poor online reviews? We offer three social media strategies from the state's marketing gurus on ways to restore your brand.

Also in this issue, we preview happenings on Kauai, with a focus on the upcoming run in September. And columnist Don Chapman talks with Chef David Lukela, whose creations will be available for sampling this month at the ninth annual Mangoes at the Moana.

And don't miss the 2017 Hawaii Lodging, Hospitality & Food-service Expo on July 12-13 at the Neal Blaisdell Center. Read our story on the Expo's new and large exhibit this year for the Hawaii Restaurant Association. Stop by their pavilion and learn more about the HRA.

Aloha!

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Chef Lukela readies for Mango Fest

'Tis the season to eat mango—whether Common, Rapoza, Haden or Piri, and whether eaten fresh, pickled, chutneyed or in a muffin. At the Moana Surfrider it's also the time to celebrate all things mango during the ninth annual Mangoes at the Moana, happening July 15.

"Nothing speaks to summertime in Hawaii like a mango," says chef de cuisine **David Lukela**, whose mango memories go back to "my grandpa's house in Waialua—as a kid I had to catch mangoes" picked by adult family members high in the tree. "Sometimes,



David Lukela

you're not paying attention, you get it in the head."

Mangoes at the Moana is a wonderfully creative example of turning the most common of Hawaii backyard foods into a festival that is fun, tasty and even educational. Based on past attendance, it's something both *kamaaina* and *malihini* embrace.

"There are a lot of events in Waikiki, but locals really come out for mangoes," says Chef Lukela. "They understand and appreciate the mango and what it means to Hawaii. It's a phenomenal event. And our visitors love it, too."

You could say that they really eat it up.

Events include a "mango throw-down" for chefs and a "mango mix-down" for mixologists. Chef Lukela's offering is a mango-cauliflower pudding. This elicits a double-take from

"Nothing speaks to summertime in Hawaii like a mango."

— DAVID LUKELA

yers truly: "A mango-what pudding?!"

The chef assures that it's tastier than it sounds at first, explaining he was inspired by a chocolate-cauliflower



Mangoes will be offered in many dishes and drinks at the Mangoes at the Moana event.



pudding prepared by **Lauren Tamamoto**, his elementary school classmate who is now a Ph.D. and food science professor at Kapiolani Community College. Cauliflower, he says, is one of the crops the state Department of Agriculture is promoting for local farmers and gardeners. For pudding, he adds, "it's healthier than heavy creams." And if you didn't know the recipe calls for cauliflower, you'd never know by taste.

Given his first career, it's no surprise that Chef Lukela is drawn to food science, "food at the molecular level." After graduating from Kamehameha Schools, he earned a degree in biochemistry at Occidental College in California and came back home with the intention of going to medical school.

"I got a job at John Burns (medical school) with the Hawaii Center for AIDS, doing research, running labs,

and then I got bored of it. Pretty boring working in a lab all day," he says. "I always wanted to be a doctor when I was a kid, I never really thought about any other options until I was like, I don't want to do this. It's so morbid. I used to watch a lot of people die of AIDS, and I was like, this industry is such a bummer, let's go do something fun.

"Our lab used to be right across from KCC, at Leahi Hospital, and I'd see kids going to school, so I started taking classes at KCC, to see if I liked it. I took a fundamentals class with Chef **Dave Hamada**, and I got the bug for cooking and started to go deeper and deeper. Eventually, through schooling, I had the confidence I could do this and start my career all over again. So I just ran with it."

Thus he exchanged a white lab coat for a white chef's jacket.

It turns out cooking runs in his family. "Everyone in my family is a good cook," he says. "I'm OK, I can hang. My grandma was the classic cafeteria lady at KCC. My uncle just opened Happa at the New Garden Hotel (Los Angeles). My grandpa worked on the plantation, but he always made it a point to take us dining—he wanted us to dine at a very young age. I grew up in Waipio, so fine dining on that side of the island at that time was Pearl City Tavern. I remember

Mangos at the Moana

• Best Mango Contest, 9 a.m., Vintage 1901

Think you've got what it takes to win "Best Mango of the Year?" Guests are welcome to submit two homegrown mangoes. Each will be examined by a panel of judges, who will decide which mango has the best flavor, skin, texture and aroma. The winner of the grand prize will receive a two-night stay at the Moana Surfrider. Registration for the contest begins at 8 a.m. and closes at 9 a.m.

• Makaha Mangoes Farmer's Market, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Lobby

Local farmers give you the opportunity to taste the mangoes that they produce. Learn what it takes to create the perfect product. Guests will also have the chance to purchase fresh mangoes.

• Royal Hawaiian Bakery Pop-up Bake-shop, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Lobby

Stop by the pop-up bake shop and grab delicious goods made by Executive Pastry Chef Carolyn Portuondo of the Royal Hawaiian bakery. A portion of the proceeds will go to the Kapiolani Community College Culinary Arts Program.

• Moana Surfrider Pop-up General Store

Baked goods, crack seed snacks, drinks, T-shirts and other items for sale.

• The Ultimate Mango Throwdown, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Banyan Courtyard

Chefs are tasked with making the ultimate mango-centric dish. All guests are welcome to taste each chef's creation. Featured chefs include Andrew Le, Pig and the Lady; Wade and Michelle Ueoka,

MW Restaurant; Lee Anne Wong, Koko Head Café; Ronnie Nasuti, Tiki's Bar and Grill; Hiro Mimura, Taormina; Robynne Maii, Fête Hawaii; James Aptakin, Turtle Bay Resort, and John Salcedo, RumFire.

• Mango Cocktail Mixdown, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Banyan Courtyard

Guests will have the opportunity to enjoy mango-centric cocktails, sponsored by Southern Wine and Spirits. Micah Suderman of Azure at the Royal Hawaiian and Jesse Suderman of the Princess Kaiulani's Splash Bar will prepare the drinks.

• Seminars, 10 a.m.-Noon, Beach Club

Hosted by Makaha Mangoes, learn about the work and dedication that goes into producing these fruits. Guests will learn all about the different varieties of mango produced in Hawaii, and how to identify each type. Experts will share their tricks of the trade.

• Mango Cooking Demonstration, Noon-1:30 p.m., Grand Salon

Led by David Lukela, chef de cuisine, as well as Nanako Perez-Nava, executive pastry chef, guests will learn how to make mango-inspired dishes at home. Perez-Nava will create a mango cream puff.

• Live Music and the Mango Throwdown Winner, 1:30-3:15 p.m., Banyan Courtyard/Beach Bar

Bringing a close to this year's Mangoes at the Moana, local artist Sean Na'auao will perform.

For more information about the Mangoes at the Moana festivities, please call the Moana Surfrider at 922-3111 and ask for the concierge desk.

It's a different mentality and approach to food—not high volume, more meticulous attention to detail. Your standard is perfection, and living up to that every single moment in the kitchen. It's a ton of pressure; I thought I was going to get fired every single day. It was like anxiety. When you're charging \$300 a head, if it's not perfect don't serve it. And it carries over to everything we do, from washing dishes to cleaning floors to washing hoods to setting up stations. Grind 14 hours a day, six days a week. A tough, tough environment. Pressure makes diamonds, they say. I loved it. And when Chris was away, I was the guy."

For the past three years he's been at the Moana's Beachhouse, the last year-and-a-half "the guy" as chef de cuisine. He's just introduced a new menu for lunch and dinner, featuring lighter and more local ingredients. His "Makana Salad," for example, is a culinary tour of the islands, offering ingredients from around the archipelago. His version of loco moco is actually a variation of a Scotch egg—an egg wrapped in Wagyu beef and then katsu'd, served over rice with Spam croutons.

When the sun goes down and the tiki torches come on, the Beachhouse has long been known for its steaks, but Chef Lukela is broadening the dinner menu with items such as fresh kanpachi from the Big Island, an appetizer of twice-cooked tako (octopus), miso salmon and a rich, San Francisco-style cioppino.

And he's always aware of where he's cooking, the first hotel on Waikiki beach.

"It's an opportunity," he says, surveying the graceful Banyan Courtyard from the Beachhouse veranda. "This is such an iconic venue, so all we have to do is just put together a menu that complements our setting. The First Lady is the First Lady, she's beautiful. This has such a warm ambiance."

And if you can't make it to Mangoes at the Moana, throughout the month of July the hotel is offering mango fare such as "mango soft shell crab taco" and "tiki mango cocktail."



Have a good story about a good person in the Hawaii hospitality industry? Please e-mail me at don@tradepublishing.com.

dressing up, shirt, slacks, and my dad, grandpa, uncle sitting at the Monkey Bar, and they would give me money to order my own drink: 'Excuse me, bartender, could I get a Shirley Temple?' And I'd sit there with them having a drink and watching the monkeys."

Of food, he says, "it's part of my DNA. But it's weird—it's not the path I chose first, but somehow came back around to it."

An internship at Sheraton Waikiki

during his KCC days turned into a full-time job there, and that led to a move that changed not just his career but in many ways his life.

"The Vintage Cave," he says. "Chris Kajioaka picked me up as a sous chef, started from before day zero, literally opening boxes and figuring where are we going to put things.

"I was a banger on the line, but they made me a high-finesse cook. They were hard on me, but it's for the better.

Post-Operative Care

When a social media post threatens your company's image, what should you do?

BY CATHY CRUZ-GEORGE

Perhaps your business is booming this year. Customer satisfaction is high. Sales are on track to shatter previous records. And your employees earn stellar reviews on Yelp and TripAdvisor.

Then the inevitable happens: An irate customer uses social media to bash your company. Dozens of customers repost the viral complaint—fueling online discussions and sarcastic, new #hashtags ridiculing your brand.

Unfortunately, a sole customer's post can immediately spiral into a public-relations nightmare, even among the most reputable companies.

What should you do?

Here are three basic, social-media strategies from marketing experts in Hawaii:

1. Stay calm and be quick to respond.

Do not fire back with angry replies on social media, even if the customer does not have his or her facts straight. "This can lead you into a darker path, not only with this person, but for your social community to see on these open channels," warns Brandon Suyeoka, director of marketing for Honolulu Cookie Co.

Do not ignore or delete the customer's complaints, either. Social media posts are akin to face-to-face conversations and phone calls and should be handled in a similar fashion. In other words, use respect and diplomacy.

The smartest strategy is to respond to the complaint within

Engaging Online Strategies

Huy Vo

Director of Resort Marketing, The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Waikiki Beach



"In the past, I handled public relations for an iconic luxury resort in Honolulu that offered a popular dolphin attraction for guests. Although the offering was a key feature of the resort, it was also a sore spot because the hotel was bombarded with negative comments and social media posts from dolphin supporters. For a while, the hotel remained quiet on the issue, but I urged our leaders to have a share of voice. We used social media to not only let our concerned audiences know that we were listening to their feedback, but to also reinforce our key messages that we were committed to the highest standard of care for our dolphins to provide an enriching and educational experience for our guests. Although this will continue to be an ongoing issue, social media helped the resort share its story and position with the community in compelling ways."

Brandon Suyeoka

Director of Marketing, Honolulu Cookie Co.



"Several years ago I freelanced as an online marketing publicist for a worldwide book publishing company. When my business partner and I came in, the publisher had no online or social presence. They had signed up and established social channels, but were either underutilizing or ignoring them altogether. It was no wonder why they had horrible reviews, especially on Facebook! Complaints or questions went unanswered or were completely ignored. These actions, of course, can directly affect sales. How did we know this? Because once I took hold of their social pages and addressed problems, complaints and questions, while focusing on engaging content, our reviews got better. Over time, as these reviews improved and we started engaging more of our users, our sales also began to increase."

24 hours—although the window depends on the platform's features.

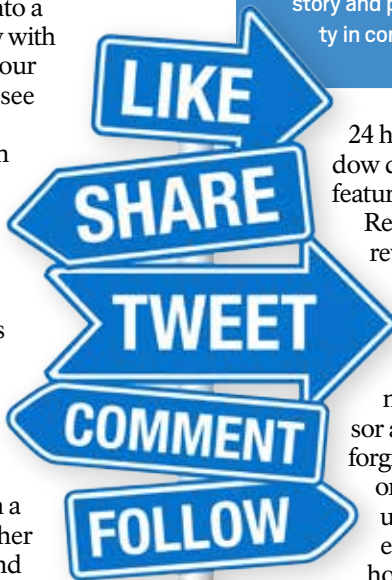
ReviewTrackers, an online review management tool, found that 52 percent of customers expect companies to reply within seven days of an online, negative review. TripAdvisor and Yelp users are more forgiving and will wait up to one week for a reply. Twitter users (53 percent), however, want a reply within one hour, according to Search Engine Watch.

"Businesses that want to have a social media presence need to be active in

it," says Jessica Adyette, a restaurant administrator for Highway Inn. "You need to help those see what makes your company/brand different from your competition. If your main goal is to bring in customers, you have to stand out and make people remember you." Adyette recently completed her Ph.D. dissertation, "Facebook Interactions With Generation Y Brand Loyalty."

2. Make yourself available, publicly and privately.

Craft an apology that empathizes with the customer, and publicly post the reply. But don't make excuses such as, "A couple of employees were out sick that day," or "Our supplier ran out of fresh strawberries."



In your public reply, include a phone number and email address, and encourage the customer to contact you directly. Also, mention that you will speak with the customer via private messaging on the social media platform. Then fulfill that promise. “This allows for a more frank and unfiltered communication that you can have with the reviewer to find a solution,” Suyeoka says.

Sometimes, the situation warrants a full refund to the customer, or an apology gift sent to the customer via snail mail. Once you’ve regained your customer’s trust and loyalty, ask for a re-review of your company.

Suyeoka is familiar with the intricacies of social media. He tracks customer feedback on Instagram and Facebook, reaching out to cookie enthusiasts from across the globe.

Hawaii’s picturesque location already is a perk for social-media managers, he

adds. “How many cookie companies can take a photo of their pineapple-shaped cookies with a Hawaiian sunset backdrop in the shadow of Diamond Head and hashtag it with #Hawaii #Aloha and #Cookies?” he says.

3. Your customers’ well-being is a top priority.

In the first half of 2017, more than a dozen people in Hawaii contracted rat lungworm disease from consuming foods tainted with parasitic slugs, and as a result, local farmers and restaurants saw declining sales of leafy greens.



Understandably, consumers stopped buying local produce. National media followed the story for several weeks, while social media lit up with hashtags #ratlungworm

Continued on Page 33

New to Social Media?

Need a refresher? Here are nine points:

1. Be accurate. Before posting to social media, always check spelling and grammar. Edit photos for content and size. And verify the proper usage of hashtags and links. Errors can tarnish your company’s reputation and affect sales.

2. Invest in social media marketing. Use photo-editing, analytic and productivity tools to improve your content. If online marketing isn’t your forté, outsource the task to an agency or consultant, or hire a dedicated, social-media manager.

3. Carefully select your platforms. Your company doesn’t have to blanket the social-media sphere. If your company is B2B, focus on LinkedIn. If you run a skydiving tour or a coffee shop, post daily photos on Instagram and Facebook. Companies burn out on social media when there isn’t a clear strategy.

4. Navigate the changes. Social media services constantly roll out new features. Instagram’s new Story Ads resonate with Snapchat’s disappearing videos and photos. Facebook’s recent crackdown on clickbait comes as it launches new tools to help ad placements. How can your company profit from the changes?

5. Have a consistent voice. Are your posts funny and insightful? Busi-

ness-to-business and informative? Use similar tones across all social-media platforms to engage customers.

6. Experiment until you find a balance. To understand your customers’ online behaviors, post at different times of the day, and at various frequencies. Hook your customers with visually appealing photos and well-executed videos, messages and blogs.

7. Stay on-point, and stay focused. Companies lose customers by posting irrelevant, useless content. Know what’s trending among your customers. Ask thought-provoking questions, and reply instantly. Remind your customers why your brand is best. But don’t use social media as free advertising.

8. Piggyback off other users. Repost content from your customers’ sites. Form partnerships with social media influencers. Doing so will widen your audience and build brand loyalty. But don’t forget to give props to others when re-posting their original content.

9. Don’t feed the trolls. Some users of social media have nothing better to do, than to smear your company’s image, and waste your valuable time. Re-direct trolls to a company’s phone number or email address. If all else fails, ignore the sad and lonely, attention-hungry trolls.

Who Uses What...

- **Facebook**, a social-networking site, has 1.9 billion unique monthly users. The average, daily time spent on Facebook: 20 minutes.
- **Pinterest**, a visual-bookmarking tool that draws users with similar interests, is predominantly female (45 percent). Pins have the longest life, compared to tweets and Facebook posts.
- **Reddit**, which allows users to vote on content, is heavily male (67 percent) and skewed toward the 30-and-under crowd.
- **YouTube**, a video-sharing site, boasts 2 million video views per minute and has more influence than any cable network in the U.S.
- **Instagram**, a photo- and video-sharing app, raked in \$1.53 billion in mobile ad revenues in 2016. The majority (90 percent) of Instagram users are under age 35 and are the most brand-loyal among social-media users.
- **Twitter**, which limits messages to 140 characters, is the most popular app in Brazil, Japan and Mexico. Interestingly, 53 percent of Twitter users do not post tweets. Instead, they use Twitter to follow others.
- **Snapchat**, which “self-destructs” sent images, videos and messages within 10 seconds, is the fastest-growing app among 12- to 24-year-olds.

Sources: *tracx.com, Omnicore Agency, Snapchat Inc.*



Go-To Meetings

In 2017, the HTA and Island properties are buffering Hawaii's MCI brand

BY BRETT ALEXANDER-ESTES

Sustainability” is the theme of the 2017 Global Tourism Summit, presented by the Hawaii Tourism Authority this fall at the Hawaii Convention Center.

The meetings, conventions and incentives event, scheduled for Sept. 19-21 and expected to draw 2,500 participants, shows how MCI initiatives can sustain Hawaii's visitor industry.

The proof?

- 198,352 visitors—that's the HTA's

preliminary estimate of net MCI traffic statewide through April 2017, just .5 percent shy of the statewide net as of April last year.

- \$38 million in six days—that's the total visitor spending expected from the 8,000 participants who attended June's International Microwave Symposium at the Hawaii Convention Center. The symposium, the state's largest this year, was a joint effort by the University of Hawaii's College of Engineering, the HTA and Meet Hawaii, the Hawaii Convention Center's

outreach arm.

“(MCI) is a lucrative segment of travel for Hawaii, generating an excellent return on visitor spending and requiring a greater range of services



George Szigeti

to fulfill a robust itinerary for participants, thus extending the economic impact to a wider segment of our industry,” says George Szigeti, HTA president and CEO.

More MCI events, from the LA Clippers Hawaii Classic to the American Dental Association 2018 Annual Meeting, are in the works. And more are on the way.

“The HTA has awarded contracts to global marketing teams around the (world) with the express purpose of attracting more MCI business to the Hawaiian Islands,” says Pris Texeira, Hawaii Tourism Global MCI managing director. “The new contract for Hawaii Tourism Global MCI, based in Honolulu, will be the oversight of these efforts to provide consistency of the Meet Hawaii brand.”



Koloa Resort offers 39,000 square feet of indoor/outdoor MCI space.

PHOTO COURTESY KOLOA LANDING RESORT AT POIPU

A recent example of this effort, Teixeira says, was the inaugural Experience Aloha Business Exchange on Hawaii Island. A hundred international clients, representing incentive travel companies, corporate end-users, multilevel and direct selling organizations experienced first-hand the Hawaiian Islands as an



Pris Teixeira

incentive destination, she says.

"Fifty Hawaii stakeholders had one-on-one appointments with English-speaking hosted planners and had group presentations for Japanese, Chinese and Korean speaking delegations," Teixeira says. "Each HTA-hosted buyers' delegation also had a pre-or post-site excursion on Maui, Kauai or Oahu."

Hawaii's Chamber of Commerce applauds these efforts, and is making a few of its own.

"The Chamber works with Meet Hawaii, the Hawaii Visitors & Con-



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Westin Maui Resort & Spa beach cleanup.

PHOTO COURTESY ERIC FRANKUM/THE WESTIN MAUI RESORT & SPA

vention Bureau's meetings and conventions division, and other partners as much as possible to drive (MCI) business to Hawaii," says Chamber President and CEO Sherry Menor-McNamara. "In addition to referring contacts to Meet Hawaii, we have worked to bring meetings and conventions to our state."

Of particular note, says Menor-McNamara, is the 2017 Council of State Chambers Annual Meeting.

The Council—the national organi-



Sherry Menor-McNamara

zation for state Chambers of Commerce—in-cludes Chamber CEOs and executive leadership, says Menor-McNamara. The convention, to be held Aug. 20-23 at The Modern Honolulu in Waikiki, will be the Council's first in the Islands.

signed to enhance collaboration among industry partners and help drive new MCI business opportunities."

Early-bird Summit registration is available through July 31, with the following discounted rates:

- Individuals: Full Conference, Sept. 19-21: \$325, a savings of \$70
- Groups of 8 or More: Full Conference, Sept. 19-21: \$300 per person, a savings of \$65 per person. (Groups can mix and match different attendees during the conference)
- Student and Faculty Members: Full Conference, Sept. 19-21: \$150
- Individuals, Partial Conference, Sept. 19-20: \$275
- Individuals, Partial Conference, Sept. 20-21: \$265

Register: globaltourismsummithawaii.com

View Summit updates via the HTA on Facebook, Twitter (@HawaiiHTA) and the HTA YouTube Channel.

Corporate Retreats

In 2017, Hawaii hospitality properties with substantial MCI facilities are also enjoying substantial revenue.

On Kauai, preliminary MCI traffic reports already show a 4 percent rise over last year, and The Koloa Landing Resort at Poipu is reaping the benefits.

"We are the newest product on



Sally Halm

Kauai," says Sally Halm, the resort's director of sales and marketing. Since the property's new MCI facilities opened in January, she says, business "has been increasing exponentially.

This is the first time the resort has had true meeting space—18,000 square feet of it, in fact—and we are finally able to meet the demands of meeting planners and groups who have wanted to hold events or functions at our property for years."

Koloa Resort offers 39,000 square feet of indoor/outdoor MCI space. The 12,000-square-foot Koloa Ballroom can provide seating up to 1,000, and can be configured into seven unique spaces.



(Top) One of Fairmont Kea Lani's conference rooms. (Above) An MCI evening event at Maui's Fairmont Kea Lani.

PHOTOS COURTESY FAIRMONT KEA LANI

2017 Global Tourism Summit

Sept. 19-21, Hawaii Convention Center

"The Hawaii Tourism Authority's Global Tourism Summit will address key issues facing tourism and seek new strategies and sharing of information that help to strengthen the future of Hawaii's leading industry," says George Szigeti, HTA president and CEO. "Supporting the growth of meetings, conventions and incentives is a vital component to this discussion.

"Our Global Marketing Team will be presenting marketing initiatives in sessions the first two days of the summit to help drive MCI bookings from their respective markets. On the summit's third day, there will be two sessions: "The State of the Meetings Industry" and "Hawaii, The Ultimate Global Gathering Place," which will address the significance of the Hawaiian Islands as a premier meetings destination. All of these sessions are de-

Strictly Local

Where can buttoned-down business types share lei with beaming elementary school kids? Only in Hawaii—and via the “Events With Aloha” program at The Westin Maui Resort & Spa on Kaanapali Beach.

“People definitely engage with these kind of activities,” says Brent Lausterer, Westin sales and marketing director, of the property’s “voluntourism” activities. Besides a recent lei donation to a Hawaiian language school, Westin’s group service program on Maui includes beach cleanups, fishpond wall repairs, maintenance of heritage hiking trails and restoration of native wildlife habitats.



Brent Lausterer

The MCI physical plant at The Westin Maui Resort & Spa is equally robust, and offers multiple meeting venues ranging from sweeping lawns to more than 45,000 square feet of indoor/outdoor pavilions, ballrooms and terraces.

“As we move forward, Koloa Landing’s MCI business will increase due to the many options we have to offer our guests—from our luxurious and expansive guest room product, open-air meeting options, and the many different locations for outdoor dining,” Halm says.

Soon, the HTA will issue its 2018 Brand Management Plan for all of its contractors. Meanwhile, Teixeira and other HTA experts are employing diverse means to boost MCI travel in the here and now.

These include “participating in MCI industry trade shows and events, conducting in-market sales missions, and the process of developing sales and marketing initiatives. The aim, Teixeira says, is to “capitalize on Hawaii’s strategic location as a bridge to East and West and the synergy of our global MCI marketing team.”

Rising costs are expected to outpace increases in meeting planners’ budgets, she says, but “the Meet Hawaii team is keeping a close eye on possible impacts this may have.

“HTA Global MCI will be a strong ally in removing barriers that could impede the booking pace moving into 2018.”



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Keeping Conventioneer Families Happy, Healthy

Hawaii's hotels provide world-class entertainment and culture for kids and adults who tag along on a business trip

BY BRANDON BOSWORTH

It happens all the time: X is sent to Hawaii to attend a convention, and his or her family opts to come along. When they get here, the family members find themselves stuck at the hotel—often without a rental car—for a better part of the day while X is at the convention.

While this could turn into a recipe for boredom and a dull trip, hotels are

taking steps to make sure family members have plenty of things to do to stay entertained and enjoy themselves in these sorts of situations.

“It is nearly impossible to feel bored at

Halekulani,” says chief concierge Frank Hernandez. “While on property, guests can be pampered at the award-winning SpaHalekulani, learn to surf, partake in a number of fitness classes, embark on a historical walking tour of the hotel and more.”

The hotel makes it easy for adults to explore the island as well. “Halekulani is also a portal to the many attractions and experiences that Oahu has to offer,” Hernandez says. “From the ‘For You, Everything’ program to the suggested running trails and close proximity to Honolulu’s shopping, there are endless activities for those who want to explore the island.”

The “For You, Everything” program offers guests complimentary access to many of the island’s arts and cultural attractions, including Bishop Museum, Doris Duke’s Shangri-La, Hawaii Pops

and the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra, Iolani Palace and the Honolulu Museum of Art. Halekulani also recommends an art and architecture tour for guests interested in Hawaiian architecture. Via a private tour arranged by the concierge, guests can visit the Liljestrand House, a mid-century modern home built by architect Vladimir Ossipoff. The tour also includes a docent-led walk around the historical Spalding House campus of the Honolulu Museum of Art.

For nature-lovers, Westin Maui features a botanical tour of the property. “Guests can look forward to experiencing a botanical tour within the resort’s 87,000-square-foot aquatic playground featuring outdoor gardens complete with meandering streams, waterfalls and five amazing pools,” says Stephanie Zrelak, director of meetings and special events. “In addition

to weekly guided tours, guests can embark on their own self-guided tours using the botanical tour maps available at the concierge desk. The complimentary activity showcases almost 50 flora and fauna.”

Continuing with the plant-based theme, tropical agriculturist Michael

Schenk, aka “Pineapple Mike,” has been giving regular talks about Hawaii agriculture to guests of the Westin Maui for more than two decades. True to his nom de fruit, Schenk often



Stephanie Zrelak

shares Maui-grown pineapples with guests. “Everyone loves fresh products from Hawaii,” he says. “There’s a mystique.”

Guests staying at the various Marriott Waikiki Complex such as The Royal Hawaiian or Sheraton Waikiki can enjoy a variety of learning opportunities.

“There are cooking classes where guests can learn about healthy cooking



Frank Hernandez



Halekulani offers surf lessons for kids and adults.

PHOTO COURTESY
HALEKULANI



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available every day,” says Monica Wu, conventions manager for the Marriott Waikiki Complex. “Bouquet classes teach how to make a tropical bouquet



Monica Wu

you can put in your room. We also offer aromatherapy classes. You can create your own scents to take home with you.”

Yoga and hula lessons are also available.

Wu notes that with so many business people from Asia and the Pacific, especially Korea, China and Japan, there can be communication issues. “We take care to understand their culture,” she says. “Sometimes there is a language barrier so we have language specialists. Sometimes there are hula classes with interpreters.” She adds that “with younger kids, language is not a barrier. Many of them speak English.”

Some guests might be looking for a bit of pampering and luxury, and many hotels offer spa treatments. At the Westin Maui Resort & Spa, a trip to the spa can serve as a bonding experience for parents and their kids.

“Spa director Sheila Bracewell introduced the parent-child spa indulgence as an engaging experience for parents to enjoy downtime with their children while on vacation,” says Stephanie Zrelak, director of meetings and special events. “Whether it is a side-by-side massage for teen-and-parent rejuvenation or manicure-pedicure pampering for a child-and-parent, Westin Maui’s spa team can easily customize spa experiences for meeting planners as optional offerings for meeting attendees.”

Bracewell says their “50-minute combined manicure-pedicure pampering, for example, concludes with two refreshing shave ices. It is the perfect way for parents to connect with their young’un in an island paradise.”

With such a variety of recreational options, hotels have to make sure guests are aware of what’s available. Halekulani addresses this by sending pre- and post-booking emails informing them of what is available. Guests are also provided marketing materials at check-in. Wu adds that “one good thing about social media is almost all



PHOTO COURTESY DISNEY AULANI

Keeping Kids Busy

Bringing children or teens along on a business trip poses challenges for busy parents. However, local hotels have taken steps to make sure there are plenty of options to keep young travellers busy and happy.

“At Sheraton Waikiki, the Helumoa Playground features two freshwater swimming pools, a 15-foot high by 70-foot long waterslide and an interactive activity area for kids,” says Monica Wu, conventions manager for the Marriott Waikiki Complex. “Young children enjoy the exciting pool offerings every day.

“There are also shows with storybook characters, and we’re working on a new deck with three teepees. One of our Maui properties had them and the kids love it. We’re very excited about it. In addition, we are in the planning process of a video game room for older kids. Our team is very creative and young at heart. With all these facilities there are endless possibilities.”

Halekulani offers the Keikilani Club for kids five through 12 years old. The club is the result of a partnership with Kamaaina Kids of Oahu, a nonprofit organization licensed by the state of Hawaii as a child-care provider. The program offers activities, arts and crafts, excursions and lunch. The activities included in the Keikilani Club are all immersive and child-centric. Halekulani partners with local arts and cultural venues to offer kids experiences ranging from bamboo pole fishing and introductory surf lessons to excursions at the Sea Life Park and Bishop Museum Science Center.

Theresa van Greunen, director of public relations and promotions for Aqua-Aston Hospitality, says her company’s properties offer a wide range of activities for young people.

“For example, Aston Kaanapali Shores on Maui has a year-round program focused on a variety of fun, educational and Hawaiian activities for children five to 12 years old,” she says. “Activities can include arts and crafts, nature walks, hula dancing, lei making, scavenger hunts, swimming, games, ukulele lessons and seasonal cookie decorating or kite making/flying.

“At Lotus Honolulu at Diamond Head, guests can find a newly created children’s activity book which includes a small box of crayons, fun and mind-stimulating activities relating to Hawaii. For perhaps the visiting teenager, many of our Aqua and independent properties on Oahu offer complimentary beach cruiser bicycles to explore the area or even free yoga classes to stay healthy and active at hotels like Luana Waikiki Hotel & Suites, Lotus Honolulu, The Surfjack Hotel & Swim Club, and Park Shore Waikiki.”

The Westin Maui Resort & Spa offers the Westin Kids Club for children 5-12. “From photo safari to Hawaiian petroglyph crafts and net fishing, the excitement is endless,” says Stephanie Zrelak, director of meetings and special events. “There is also a teen program for those 10 to 17 years old. Outdoor activities include volleyball, lawn bowling and horseshoe contests. In the evening or during bad weather, there are Wii games, foosball and Pop-A-Shot.”

Continued on Page 20



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A kumu provides a blessing and opening remarks at the start of the race.

PHOTO COURTESY TV JUICE PRODUCTIONS

Racing 'Round the Garden Island

The marathon started small in 2009 and now attracts 'dedicated runners from all over the world'

BY BRANDON BOSWORTH

The ninth annual Kauai Marathon and Half Marathon, scheduled in September, continues to grow in popularity among runners looking to test their ability in a beautiful setting. It's one of many events held every year on the Garden Island.



Jeff Sacchini

This year the Kauai Marathon and Half Marathon will be held on Sept. 3. The nonprofit organization was founded by Jeff Sacchini, a part-time Kauai resident and avid runner.



Robin Jumper

"Back in 2006, he went on a training run in Poipu and quickly realized that the south side of Kauai was the perfect venue for a destination marathon experience," says Robin Jumper, owner of TyZa Consulting and the race's marketing and public relations director. "He started researching course options and put together a fabulous team of marathon experts, resulting in the inaugural Kauai Marathon on Sunday, Sept. 6, 2009."

The inaugural event hosted 1,681 runners and walkers. By 2016, there were 2,044 people registered, includ-

ing 743 Kauai residents.

"The Kauai Marathon has runners coming from our top markets of California, Washington, Texas, New York, as well as the international markets of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, including one of our sister cities from Japan," says Sue Kano-



Sue Kano

ho, executive director of the Kauai Visitors Bureau. "When we started supporting this race, I had no idea that people fly in and fly out of destinations for marathons all over the world, and our Kauai Marathon has become one of the 'bucket list' opportunities



for those dedicated marathon runners.

"My goal is to get those runners to come early and stay after the race so they can enjoy the rest of our island."

New events have been added to the event over the years, including a Keiki Run and a Fun Run. The island's rich cultural heritage also helps make the Kauai Marathon special. A *kumu* provides a blessing and opening remarks at the start of the race, followed by a torch-lighting ceremony. Various points along the route feature Hawaiian entertainment such as hula.

Jumper credits the marathon's partnerships as the biggest factor in its continued growth and success.

"Our host hotel, the Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa, has been a supporter of the event since day one, and we continue to work together to enhance the race experience," she says. "They currently host the Wilcox Health Sports and Fitness Expo in their Grand Ballroom, the VIP reception in Poipu Gardens, the Keiki Run as well as many of the runners who stay at the resort during race weekend."

"Wilcox Health has really stepped in to be a part of the festivities by sponsoring the Keiki Run, as well as the Sports and Fitness Expo. For the first year we are working with the Koloa Landing Resort in Poipu on a new finish line location, which has been fantastic. Their team is phenomenal to work with, and we know that the

participants are going to love the new post-race festivities.

"Of course we could not be successful in putting on the event without the financial support of the Hawaii Tourism

Authority, County of Kauai and the Kauai Visitors Bureau and so many other local organizations."

Another partner is Kauai Coffee, providing refreshments at the sports and fitness expo and the start and finish lines.

The growth of the Kauai Marathon parallels the island's increasing popularity as a travel destination. So far, this has been a good year for Kauai's visitor industry. Citing data from the Hawaii Tourism Authority, Kanoho says visitor spending on Kauai "rose substantially in April 2017 (up 13.5 percent to \$140.6 million), bolstered by increased visitor days (up 9.2 percent) and higher daily spending (a rise of 3.9 percent to \$191 per person)."

She adds that "visitor arrivals increased (9.3 percent to 101,293),



Hula dancers provide entertainment along the Kauai Marathon route.

PHOTO COURTESY JO EVANS, dakineimages.com

led by growth from U.S. East (up 12.5 percent) and U.S. West (up 8.4 percent). For the first four months of 2017, Kauai realized a strong increase in visitor spending (up 18.7 percent to \$637.6 million) compared to the same period last year."

The Kauai Marathon and Half Marathon has donated over \$100,000 to local charities and nonprofit groups on Kauai, Jumper says. "One of our favorite things to do post-race is to write checks that will ultimately benefit the people of Kauai. We also have a Youth Running Program that is sponsored by Kauai Coffee. This year we presented three Kauai senior athletes with \$500 scholarship checks to help assist with their upcoming college expenses. We visit elementary schools in the month of August, teaching children to run, play and get excited about being healthy and active. The Youth Program culminates with a Keiki Run Sponsored by Wilcox Health for children ages 2-12. I think this may be one of my favorite highlights of the race weekend."

As a nonprofit, the Kauai Marathon strives to keep costs low.

"We are very mindful of our expenses at every level because it is important to the event to have funds to give back to the community," Jumper says. "So in terms of marketing and advertising, we rely heavily on social media, minimal print advertising and word of mouth. We also received a grant through Google AdWords, so we set up monthly internet campaigns to targeted audiences advertising event details. We also attend the Honolulu Marathon Expo in December to connect with runners from around the world."

Other 2017 Kauai Events

July

The 2017 Ohana Fit Fest takes place July 22 at Waioli Beach Park, Hanalei Bay. The event features an obstacle run, keiki beach flag games, live DJ music and a Community Expo. For more information, visit kauainorthshorecommunityfoundation.org.

The 11th annual Hanalei Bay Swim Challenge will be held July 29 at Hanalei Bay Pier. The swim, named one of the top 100 American Open Water Swims by the World Open Water Swimming Association, consists of competitive races for all ages. For more information, visit hanaleibayswimchallenge.com.

August

The Hawaii Sand Festival & Sand Castle/

Sculpture Contest is scheduled for Aug. 12 at Hanalei Pier. This not-for-profit event showcases sand sculpture artwork and an appreciation for the ocean and the Islands. For more information, visit hawaiisandcastle.com.

October

The 29th annual Emalani Festival takes place Oct. 14 at Kanaloahuluhulu Meadow in Kokee State Park. This event features hula, live music, exhibits, craft tables and a silent auction. For more information, visit kokee.org.

November

The Hawaiian Slack Key Festival "Kauai Style" will be held Nov. 19 at Aqua Kauai Beach Resort in Lihue. Now in its 25th year, the festival will feature live musical performance from a variety of artists. For more information, visit slackkeyfestival.com.

Continued from Page 16

conferences come with their own app. This makes it very easy to share information. It's a wonderful resource."

"Upon arrival, front desk and guest services agents always include timely and relevant information about



Theresa van Greunen

onsite events and programming during the guest check-in experience," says Theresa van Greunen, director of public relations and promotions at Aqua-Aston Hospitality.

"Our properties also feature 'Welcome Letters' in all elevators that not only include a list of key activities onsite but key events or festivals occurring in the surrounding neighborhood—from new restaurant openings to free hula shows guests should check out."

Westin Maui Resort & Spa strives to make sure relevant personnel know what activities are offered.

"Meetings planners are made aware



The Royal Hawaiian offers guests historical tours of the property.

PHOTO COURTESY MARRIOTT WAIKIKI COMPLEX

of the various programs as early as their first site tour of the resort and follow-up discussions with resort group sales leaders," Zrelak says. "They are also introduced to property team leaders for a partnership in crafting unique experiences for meeting

attendees and their families. This allows them the opportunity to create a program that is not only of interest to meeting attendees but also allows their families to enjoy island and resort offerings by booking in advance."

"Hawaii is a premium destination when it comes to conferences and conventions," says Wu. "Statistically compared to other United States destinations, attendees book longer reservations before and after the conference dates. This is a way of adding vacation time with the family who get to enjoy the world-class beach and sunshine."

According to a report released by the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau last year, the local meetings, conventions and incentives industry continues to grow. Data reveal that total MCI visitor arrivals in 2015 reached a new post-recession high of nearly a half-million visitors, with the North American arrivals accounting for nearly two-thirds of the segment. In 2014, MCI visitors to Hawaii spent more than \$968.9 million while in the Islands. The report also states that "Hawaii outperforms other destinations in its competitive set when it comes to environmental and recreational considerations."

The key to all the programs is making sure visitors enjoy their time in Hawaii.

And when it comes to MCI visitors, Wu says, "if the family isn't happy, the conference attendee isn't happy. Success of the convention and the vacation for the family are equally important."



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Travelers Strike Gold on the 'Net

Today's tourists turn to the internet to craft their vacation itineraries, say hospitality industry leaders

BY MARK COLEMAN

Hawaii vacations—basking in the wonderful weather, enjoying stunning geography and reveling in its welcoming culture—just aren't like they used to be. Today, the range of activities has increased almost exponentially, for a variety of reasons.



Matthew Gray

The rise of millennials or evolving consumer preferences, though vital to the tourism industry, are no longer the biggest driver of change, says Matthew Gray, owner of Hawaii Food Tours. He points to new technology—specifically the internet—making it

fast and easy for visitors to craft their own itineraries.

"Travel agents don't book our tours," Gray says. "People book their own tours. . . . They take a look at sites like TripAdvisor and Google. They type in 'Hawaii' and 'food,' and, boom, they go right there."

Gray, a former chef, is in his 13th year of running Hawaii Food Tours,

The internet has helped meet a demand that conventional companies have been slow to recognize.

which is rated No. 1 in its category on TripAdvisor.com, the world's largest travel website. Its 10 employees have taken thousands of visitors to "hole-in-the-wall" restaurants across Oahu offering local-style comfort foods.

The internet also has helped smaller

tour companies, such as Carter Lee Churchfield's Honolulu Exposed's walking tours and Simina Van Clief-Prohor's Spiritu-

al Tours Hawaii.

"Gosh, there must be 500 activities on the island, so the good reviews I have on TripAdvisor and Yelp certainly help," says Churchfield, who conducts



Carter Lee Churchfield

walking tours of Chinatown's World War II and former "red light" districts.

Van Clief-Prohor, who started her spiritual tours last year, says the internet has helped meet a demand that conventional companies have been slow to recognize.



Simina Van Clief-Prohor

"It's not easy with these kinds of tours to break into the market," Van Clief-Prohor says. Her

firm takes visitors to Native Hawaiian *heiau*, a Krishna temple, a Buddhist temple and other spiritual sites. "But I think it's going to take off once there's an awareness of them."



Shane Turpin

The internet has generated a nearly overwhelming response to tours like Lava Ocean Tours and Hawaii Game Management.

Lava Ocean Tours owner Shane Turpin says his 49-passenger vessel takes about 350 people a day from Pohoiki Boat Ramp to see lava from Kilauea volcano

flowing into the ocean. He could take more, he says, but the state is "allowing only four permits out of the harbor to see the lava," and none of his three smaller competitors is willing to sell their permits to him.

"People hear about us a lot online,



Popular local and tourist attractions, (left) Skydive Hawaii, (middle) Honolulu Exposed walking tours, (right) Hawaii Food Tours.

and we have various advertising and a lot of word-of-mouth," he says.

At Hawaii Game Management, co-owner Dexter Pacheco recently took down the company's website because it also has all the business it can handle.

It was selected four years ago to cull feral animals from Kamehameha Schools' land on the slopes of Hualalai and Mauna Loa. Initially it conducted frequent hunting tours, but now that the herds are at a reasonable size, fewer tours are offered and word-of-mouth has been sufficient to generate customers.

Of course, there were those TV hunting shows on the Outdoor Channel in which the company was featured.

Honolulu Soaring and Skydive Hawaii, both based at Oahu's Dillingham Field, have had similar experiences with free TV publicity.

Bill Star, Honolulu Soaring co-founder, says "the internet has been amazing," attracting customers from around the world. But there was "an absolute, definite change" in the glider company's clientele starting in 2013, after a film crew with seven actors from Korea rented one of his aerobatic gliders.

"Little did we know that these seven people were comedians, and are the hosts of the No. 1 TV show in Korea. They did an 18-minute segment, and suddenly we got calls from four or five (Korean) travel agents: 'Can we book your flights?' Well, I thought about that for a couple of nanoseconds, and said, 'OK.' And it hasn't stopped."

Sonny Vaoifi, manager of Skydive Hawaii, says the same thing happened at his end of the airfield.

The company caters mostly to young thrill-seekers from the Mainland, including military personnel. But recently, Vaoifi says, Skydive Hawaii started seeing a "big influx of Koreans."

"We also have done a number of Korean TV shows over the past several years," Vaoifi says.

Like Honolulu Soaring and Hawaii Game Management, Skydive Hawaii's TV cameos also were at the initiative of the shows' producers,

suggesting that Hawaii often almost sells itself, partly because of how well it comes off in print, radio, film, television and now the internet.

Mufi Hannemann, president and CEO of the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association, says the internet, in particular, has been "a very good option" for people who want "instant information and gratification in real time."

"They want options in terms of how they book; they want to be able to compare; they're on a limited budget; there's only so far that dollar will stretch. So you can't blame them for doing that," he says.

The downside, he adds, is that "it provides a lot of opportunities for people to dare to be different, to do things that perhaps are going to put their lives at risk."

To which one could add: Don't be foolish and buyer beware.



Mufi Hannemann



Sonny Vaoifi





Scan Placards, See Violations

DOH restaurant records now posted at entrance

BY BRETT ALEXANDER-ESTES

The Hawaii Department of Health's green, yellow and red food safety placards sport a new feature: QR codes.



Peter Oshiro

"We altered the placards by embedding QR codes on them to take you directly to the public website," says Peter Oshiro, DOH Department of Sanitation Environmental Health Program manager.

Once at hi.healthinspections.us/hawaii/, a would-be patron can read

a restaurant's record of food safety violations.

"It sometimes comes as a shock to the (restaurant) owners how open the inspection system is," Oshiro says. "This further encourages voluntary compliance by the industry, as no one wants to be 'outed' for food safety violations."

Starting in 2014, the DOH has been affixing post-inspection placards outside Hawaii restaurants to show whether or not a business meets state food safety standards: green (passes inspection); yellow (conditional: a violation must be corrected within two business days); or red (closed: license suspended).

"The restaurant industry as a whole has responded very positively to the placard system so far."

— PETER OSHIRO

Are Placards Enough?

With recent Hawaii health scares arising from food-borne illnesses like Hepatitis A, some may wonder if the placard program provides enough protection.

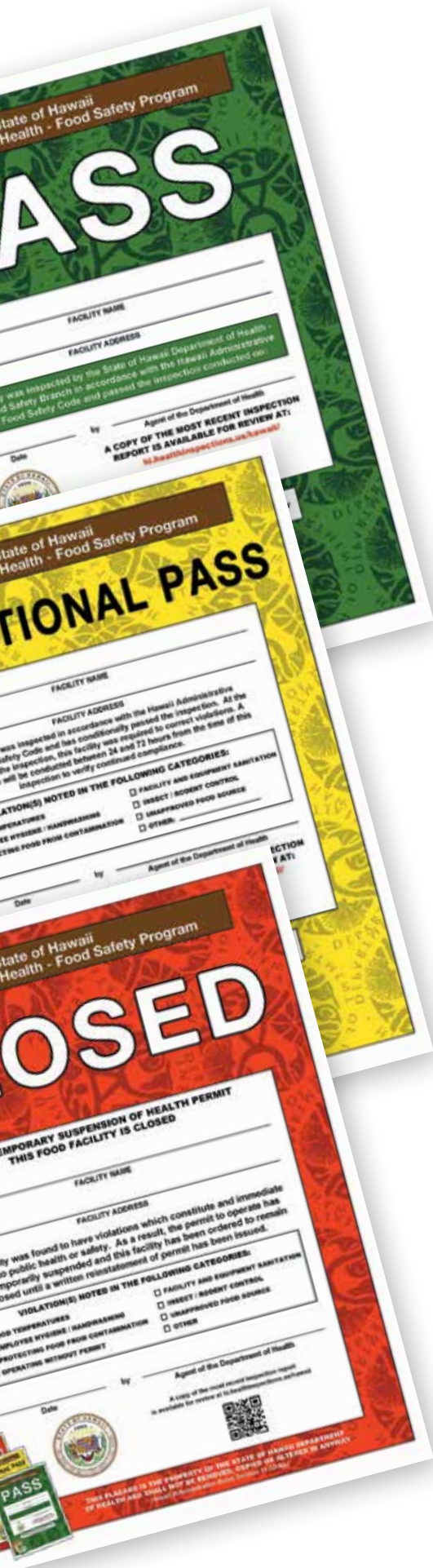
"Counting actual illnesses as a measure of performance is very deceiving in the food illness arena," says Oshiro.

"Keep in mind that we have had two very large food outbreaks recently—Hep A at Genki Sushi outlets and others, and Salmonella in ogo.

"Just the Genki food illnesses approached 300 persons ill, yet there was nothing that a restaurant could have done regarding adherence to food safety rules to prevent it. Marine Agrifuture (ogo) causes a number of Salmonella food illnesses, but the ogo farm was not even required to have a food permit, so was not under any inspection program."

A Yellow Yardstick

A better measure of the placards' effectiveness, he says, is "a significant and



“Counting actual illnesses as a measure of performance is very deceiving in the food illness arena.”

steady reduction in the issuance of yellow placards during routine inspections statewide, and especially on Oahu.”

Oshiro says that during the first quarter of 2017 (January-March) on Oahu, the DOH conducted 2009 routine inspections; 1,688 green placards and 321 yellow placards were issued. “This would put the Oahu numbers at 16 percent yellow versus low-20 percents in the last half of 2016.

“There is a clear downward trend

in the percentage of yellow placards issued,” Oshiro says, noting a nearly 20 percent drop in yellow placard citations since the program’s inception in 2014.

“The significance of the change is due to the placard system taking hold, and the food industry getting used to the focus on food illness risk factors during inspections.

“The restaurant industry as a whole has responded very positively to the placard system so far.”



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2017 HLHF Expo Highlights the HRA

Hawaii's largest annual trade show includes a pavilion devoted to the restaurant association

BY DAVID PUTNAM

For the Hawaii Restaurant Association, having its own pavilion at the 2017 Hawaii Lodging, Hospitality & Foodservice



Gregg Fraser

Expo for the first time provides a forum “to discuss exactly what we are doing and what more needs to be done,” says Gregg Fraser, HRA executive director.

“Together, we can move mountains,” he adds.

Ken Kanter, director of the HLHF Expo, says that the annual show's producer, Douglas Trade Shows, allotted an area that encompasses 24 booths to support the HRA's efforts to “raise funds for the educational programs and restaurant industry development initiatives carried out by the HRA on a day-to-day basis for its members and the greater Hawaii restaurant business community.”



Ken Kanter

The Expo, scheduled for July 12-13 at the Neal Blaisdell Center, was expected to have 530 exhibitors with hundreds of new products and services on display, and attracts more than 5,000 industry professionals each year, Kanter says.

The HRA Pavilion, Kanter says, is the result of talks with Fraser.

“Over the past year or so Gregg and I had been talking informally about

ways that the HRA could better define and communicate its core mission to Hawaii's restaurant businesses, industry professionals and students,” Kanter says.

“Gregg had asked me if there was an opportunity to accomplish this at the 2017 Expo, and we came up with the idea of an HRA pavilion. It was clear to both of us that although the HRA had been strengthening its role as an advocate for the business development needs

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of Hawaii's restaurant industry, the depth of the story of that commitment and its progress hadn't been fully told to the restaurant business community—something that could be done more effectively face-to-face at the Expo.”



Foodservice industry professionals flock to the booths at a recent HLHF Expo.

PHOTOS COURTESY DOUGLAS TRADE SHOWS

First-Timers at the Expo

Hundreds of products and services will be exhibited at the 2017 Hawaii Lodging, Hospitality & Foodservice Expo, and many of them will be on display at the annual show for the first time. Here is a sampling of the new products at the Expo:

QUIPSAFE

The California-based equipment company will be exhibiting its glass crusher and its GL Sand product for the first time at the HLHF Expo. Its recycling machine turns bottles (beer, wine) into a fine powder called GL Sand. The equipment can be used to recycle glass waste at restaurants, bars, hotels and resorts. GL Sand can be used for a variety purposes, from serving as a filtering material to road patching. quipsafe.com



MAKAWELI MEAT CO.

For those who savor the taste of wild game, the Kauai-based firm will feature its new sausage lineup that includes Maui Smoked Venison Chorizo (sourced from wild axis deer from the Valley Isle's highlands) and Niihau Smoked Antelope (eland) with red wine and apple. Another offering is its Niihau Lamb Merguez. The products can be sampled at the HFM Foodservice booth. makawelimeatcompany.com

DRAFTMORE NORTH AMERICA

Making its first Expo appearance will be DraftMore's self-regulating device that attaches to beer kegs and is designed to reduce foam at the tap. By extending the life of a keg, it's touted as saving up to 15 percent of the cost associated with product waste. draftmorena.com



ORBIT SALES

The Waipahu outlet will be displaying its "Ultra" sofa bed from Madison at the HLHF Expo. With an 8-inch inner-spring mattress, the sleeper is available in queen, full and twin sizes. It has an optional zip off, replaceable pillow top and carries a five-year warranty. And the "Slim Ultra" model extends 20 inches less into the room when open. orbitsales.com



TROPICAL J'S

Its Pergotenda retractable roof system can be deployed to provide coverage depending on the weather. If the skies turn dark, simply press the button on the remote (or hard-wired switch) to deploy the fabric. These systems, also highly effective for heat abatement, can be custom-constructed locally for hotels, restaurants, commercial buildings, schools and more. tropicaljs.com



A variety of products and services will be on display at the Expo.

The HRA Pavilion features multiple exhibits, ranging from ChefZone to the Board of Water Supply.

Fraser notes that having a strong presence at the HLHF Expo is a natural partnership for the HRA.

"It takes a lot of time and effort, by many people, to support an entire industry," he says. "HRA has 45 foodservice industry professionals on its board of directors, all volunteering their time to help Hawaii restaurants and foodservice-related companies thrive."

Says Kanter: "We believe that visitors to the HRA Pavilion will not only learn about what the association does in education, workforce development, membership services, social activities and legislative initiatives, but they will also have fun, meet a variety of vendors that help keep Hawaii's restaurant industry supplied and operating properly—and maybe even win a trip for two to Las Vegas or a Neighbor Island."

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HYPE Feasts & Learns



Elle Zhang, Stuart Kotake, Michelle Calanog Paul

PHOTOS BY NATHALIE WALKER

Forty members of HYPE received an etiquette class led by Stuart Kotake, associate director of catering and event management at The Moana Surfrider, A Westin Resort & Spa. HYPE, Hospitality's Young Professionals & Entrepreneurs, is a Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association (HLTA) organization geared for the millennial generation. After a session in which Kotake shared tips on making a lasting impression in a dining setting, the attendees were treated to a three-course plated dinner where members practiced on what they had just learned.



Deonna Lee Loy, Lauren Caliwag



Kelly Kitashima, Erinn Tomlinson, Maria Hartfield, Marissa Ross



Nick Riopelle, Jay Kitashima, Cody Assenmacher



Cody Miyasato, Koichi Takahashi



Brenda Baldos, Claire Parcon



Elton & Nadine Murata, Marissa Ross, Eun Joo Oh, Kyle Smigielski



Jason Nishimura, Marybeth Coffman, Sara Mayko, Jared Higashi



Connie He, Jay Geng



Jennelle Ichishita, Heidi Maxwell



Sarah Hamman, Gregory Valen, Mary Whitworth



Caitlin Basilio, Alex Roth



Kevin Vegas, Fabian Serkis, Alex Screen



Kelli Kajiwarra, Jack Liao, Kenix Lau

Rawlins Heads Sales at Hyatt Centric

Lauren Rawlins has been named director of sales and marketing at Hyatt Centric

Waikiki Beach by Kokua Hospitality LLC, a hotel management company based in San Francisco.

Rawlins, who attended the University of Hawaii's School of Travel Industry Management, will

oversee the property's sales and marketing department. Along with managing all sales, marketing and tourism relations, she will be working directly with the director of revenue at the 230-room boutique property, which opened in January.

Prior to joining Kokua Hospitality and Hyatt Centric Waikiki Beach in May, Rawlins was the director of leisure sales at Turtle Bay Resort on Oahu's North Shore for three years. She previously worked at The Kahala Mandarin Hotel, various Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide properties in Koloa and Honolulu, including The Royal Hawaiian.



Lauren Rawlins

2017 HLTA Charity Walk Raises \$2.2M

As of May 20, the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association's 39th annual Charity Walk posted \$2.2 million in funds raised for Hawaii charities at Walk events on six islands.



Mufi Hannemann

"Mahalo plenty to all the volunteers and participants who helped make our 39th annual Charity Walk a fun and successful event for all," said HLTA President and CEO **Mufi Hannemann** on May 20. "Last year our state reached \$2 million on the day of the Oahu Walk, and by the end of the collection period we raised over \$2.2 million for 346 charities. Today we reached over \$2.2 million, and I'm confident that



Hannemann and 2017 Charity Walk participants.

with the donations continuing to roll in, we're going to exceed last year's overall total easily this year."

The 2017 Oahu Walk, held on May 20, included more than 6,000 walkers and raised more than \$460,000 for Oahu recipients.

Founded in 1974, the Charity Walk is

Hawaii's largest single-day fundraising event by a non-profit organization. The Walk has raised more than \$32 million in funding for charities and non-profits since its inception, and is traditionally held every May on Hawaii Island, Kauai, Lanai, Maui, Molokai and Oahu. Funds raised on each island go to that island's nonprofits and charities.

Cuthbertson Leads Destination Residences Hawaii

Mike Cuthbertson is the new managing director of Destination Residences



Mike Cuthbertson

Hawaii, a resort management company that handles more than 270 vacation residences on Maui.

Cuthbertson leads the Destination Residences Hawaii's team

in overseeing all the resort properties, expanding guest service experience and

growing the brand.

"We are putting aloha into action, focusing on our homeowners and guests by delivering outstanding service, developing authentic relationships and creating experiences rooted in Hawaiian culture while celebrating life on Maui," he says.

The company manages private homes within seven resort communities in Wailea and Makena, including Wailea Beach Villas, Wailea Elua Village, Wailea Ekahi Village, Wailea Ekolu Village, Wailea Grand Champions, Polo Beach Club and Makena Surf.

Previously, Cuthbertson held management positions with Intrawest, Playground Destination Properties, Hyatt Residences Clubs, Island Outpost Hotels, Carefree Resorts and Grand Bay Hotels in destinations such as Tuscany, Miami and Aspen. He moved to Hawaii in 2012 and worked at Timber Resorts on Maui and then Kauai.

HTA Adds New Members to Board

Sherry Menor-McNamara, president and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii, and **Kelly Sanders**, area managing director of Marriott Hotels and Resorts Waikiki, were recently added to the Hawaii Tourism Authority's board of directors.

Both were nominated by Gov. David Ige and their appointment was confirmed by the state Legislature. Their terms run



Sherry Menor-McNamara

through June 2020.

"We are thrilled to have them join our board," says Rick Fried, HTA board chair. "Their knowledge and perspective will be vital as the board looks to the future and helps guide HTA in charting a path to support the state's tourism industry."

Aulani Donates \$20,000 to PVS

As part of Hokulea's recent return from its historic worldwide voyage, Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa, donated \$20,000 to the Polynesian Voyaging Society.

PVS, a nonprofit organization, works to preserve native Hawaiian canoe building and other Polynesian oceangoing traditions.

Aulani's donation funded the participation of approximately 75 students and their family members, many of them from Oahu's leeward communities, in the Malama Honua Fair & Summit, a three-day event at Magic Island and the Hawaii Convention Center celebrating Hokulea's June 17 return.

"A donation like this is really important because it helps us bring the message of *Malama Honua* (Hokulea's stewardship mission) to communities that aren't located in town," says Miki Tomita, education coordinator at PVS. "This is a wonderful opportunity to support West Oahu youth and their families, and to continue spreading the lessons of the voyage to future generations."

Aulani has fostered PVS efforts for many years, including a \$25,000 donation in 2016.



Scale model of Hokulea on display at Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa

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IMP Promotes Grosz

Breana Grosz has been promoted to assistant marketing and sponsorship director at International Market Place, where she is responsible for public relations, marketing to the local community, event management, sponsorships, community



Breana Grosz

relations and merchant communications.

Previously, she was marketing specialist for the shopping center and managed aspects of construction and redevelopment for the reimagined IMP.

Grosz, a graduate of Michigan State University, began her marketing career at Lite Electric in Detroit.

2 New Hires at Trump

Trump International Hotel Waikiki recently appointed **Susie Fujikawa** director of leisure sales and **Shun Matsumoto** assistant sales and conference services manager.

Fujikawa will spearhead the hotel's

domestic leisure segment activities, market strategy and sales initiatives. She most recently served as director of sales with Island Air and has held senior sales roles with LivingSocial, Travelocity and Starwood Hotels & Resorts.

Matsumoto is responsible for managing group meetings and room accommodations, coordinating with third



Susie Fujikawa



Shun Matsumoto

party and Japanese travel partners, as well as assisting with the sales department's overall initiatives and goals. He previously served as a sales and marketing executive for Hilton Grand Vacations Club.



Sydney Brady, center, with her parents Chuck and Cheryl Brady and HLTA President and CEO Mufi Hannemann.



Cameron Foy, center, with her father John Foy and the HLTA's Mufi Hannemann.

HLTA Awards Students of Association Members

The Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association (HLTA) presented two new scholarships of \$2,500 each for its members' immediate relatives. The inaugural HLTA Member Scholarships went to **Cameron Foy** of Iolani School and **Sydney Brady** of Kauai High School.

To qualify for the scholarship, an applicant must be a child of an HLTA member employee and be graduating from high school, admitted to a university, college, or vocational institution and hold a cumulative GPA of 3.2 or higher.

Foy received the HLTA Allied Member Scholarship. Her father, John Foy, is an area sales manager at Enterprise Rent-A-Car. She will be attending the University of San Diego and intends to major in business.

Brady received the HLTA Active (lodging) Member Scholarship. She is the daughter of Chuck and Cheryl Brady, who both work at the Kauai Marriott Resort. Brady will be attending the University of Notre Dame.

The Expo, King Tides and Awarding Hospitality's Rising Stars

To many in the hospitality industry, July means the annual Hawaii Lodging, Hospitality & Foodservice Expo is right around the corner. This year the 23rd Expo is returning to the Neal S. Blaisdell Center on July 12-13. The Expo is Hawaii's largest annual business-to-business trade show, and provides hotels, resorts, restaurants and foodservice establishments with immediate and direct access to hundreds of vendors.

HLTA will again have an expanded exhibit in the foyer between the exhibition hall and the arena. Visit our exhibit and look out for our activities. An HLTA Women in Lodging & Tourism committee educational panel on King Tides and sea level rise, along with a networking event, is scheduled for Wednesday, July 12. The panel discussion is titled "Human Trafficking: Recognizing the Signs and Taking Action."

Human trafficking is often an "invisible issue" that is prevalent on a local, national and international scale. Sadly, Hawaii has a very active human trafficking problem, especially in tourism areas. At the Women in Lodging & Tourism session, participants will learn the indicators of human trafficking, particularly in hotel settings, and the

appropriate steps to take action.

Each year, nearly 5,000 industry professionals with purchasing authority or influence attend the Expo. They conduct business, make new contacts, attend educational sessions and shop for the latest products, services and equipment for their businesses. In addition to the attendees, an additional 2,500 individuals attend to represent over 330 exhibitors in the Blaisdell Arena and Exhibition Hall. More than 90 of these exhibitors are allied members of HLTA.

While King Tides routinely return to Hawaii a few times a year, this year broke records and is expected to become the new normal as time goes on. Thus, it is imperative that our industry remains proactive on this issue. The last King Tides happened over Memorial Day weekend, and more King Tides were expected around June 23-24 and again on July 21-22. HLTA plans to hold an educational symposium on this topic at the Expo to continue the discussion on elevated water levels and re-evaluating policies and practices in preparation for the future.

July also means graduation season is over and an endless summer is at its peak. Here at the HLTA, the summer

months mark the end of our Charity Walk season and scholarship presentations. This year we awarded over \$60,000 in scholarships, including several new awards we introduced in honor of our association's 70th anniversary.

One of the new scholarships we introduced this year is the HLTA Hookipa Award, a \$1,000 scholarship presented

to graduating high school seniors who are studying in their high school's Academy of Hospitality and Tourism, and plan to pursue higher education in hospitality. The 2017 Hookipa



Awards were presented to Sharmaine Domingo of Maui High School, Melanie Matsunaga of Kauai High School, and Tien Thi Kim Nguyen of Kaimuki High School.

We look forward to growing this scholarship program among the many other awards we present annually.

Mufi Hannemann is president and CEO of the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association.

Continued from Page 9

and #Hawaii.

To reassure the public, the Hawaii Department of Health implemented new guidelines for produce washing. Restaurants and farms also used social media to inform the public that rat lungworm disease was preventable—and rare.

Fork & Salad Maui posted a Facebook video demonstrating its compliance with the health department's new policies, adding the hashtag #EducationAwarenessKnowledge to all of its social-media posts.

Similarly, Genki Sushi—center of the Hepatitis A outbreak in 2016—used

Facebook to tell customers that it was working with health inspectors to find the cause (raw scallops) and rectify the situation (sanitizing the restaurants and implementing new food-handling procedures).

Transparency is critical in the event of any foodborne outbreak, says Janice Okubo, spokesperson for the health department. Business owners should address concerns "with kindness and with good information about the food safety measures being taken at an establishment."

The public also demands regular updates on social media. "Nothing is more valuable than a person's health and well-being," Okubo says. "Ensuring a customer's health should be a priority for all food establishments."



Added Air Access Strengthens Hawaii's Tourism

The launch of flights by AirAsia X between Kuala Lumpur and Honolulu via Osaka on June 28 embodies the confidence airlines have in Hawaii as a destination.

Airlines are adding flights to Hawaii in response to strong travel demand, which, in turn, is further strengthening our state's tourism industry.

Consider the impact AirAsia X's service will have on Hawaii's economy. Flying four-times weekly utilizing a 377-seat Airbus A330-300 aircraft, the carrier's Kuala Lumpur-Osaka-Honolulu route will add an estimated \$86.4 million in visitor spending, provide \$10.1 million in state tax revenue, and support 1,053 jobs annually.

AirAsia X is one of several airlines that has added or will be introducing new service supporting Hawaii tourism. Benefiting most from this increased service are the Neighbor Islands.

Hawaiian Airlines has led the way, introducing flights to Honolulu from Tokyo's Narita Airport last July, and to Kona from Tokyo's Haneda Airport last December, while also increasing service to Honolulu from Haneda.

This May, Hawaiian increased service to Lihue from Los Angeles and Oakland, and to Kona from Los Angeles to accommodate increased demand,

especially during summer.

On June 15, Philippine Airlines upgraded its service between Manila and Honolulu by introducing a newer and larger aircraft.

In mid-September, Kona will begin receiving daily flights from San Francisco operated by Virgin America and from Narita operated by Japan Airlines.

In December, Delta Air Lines will launch daily flights to Lihue from Seattle, while United Airlines will add or increase service to Kahului, Lihue, Kona and Hilo from Denver, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

These new flights all add up to increased revenue and more jobs for our state's number one industry and the families who rely on its continued success.

Register for the Summit

Registration is open for the 2017 Global Tourism Summit, happening Sept. 19-21 at the Hawaii Convention Center. Presented by HTA, the Global Tourism Summit is an opportunity for tourism professionals to voice their opinions and collaborate on improving Hawaii's leading industry.

Sustainability is the summit's theme and will be a featured topic of discus-

sion, along with Hawaiian culture, global marketing, technology and innovation.

Register via the summit's dedicated website by July 31 to take advantage of cost-saving options that fit your schedule.

- **Individuals: Full conference, Sept. 19-21: \$325.**
- **Groups of eight or more: Full conference, Sept. 19-21: \$300 per person. (Groups can mix and match different attendees during the conference.)**
- **Student and faculty members: Full conference, Sept. 19-21: \$150.**
- **Individuals: Partial conference, Sept. 19-20: \$275.**
- **Individuals: Partial Conference, Sept. 20-21: \$265.**

Sponsorship and exhibitor information can be obtained by contacting Chris Sadayasu, HTA brand manager, at chris@gohta.net.



See you at the Global Tourism Summit.

George Sziget is president and CEO of the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA), the state's tourism agency.

A Great Way to Spend the Day

The Hawaii Restaurant Association hosted its 10th annual HRA Golf Tournament on June 8, with 232 golfers teeing off on the 27 beautiful holes at the Hawaii Prince Golf Course.

The weather was clear, the winds were light and the overall play was excellent. And to make the day even better were all of our food and beverage tents from more than 20 sponsors.

The people lucky enough to be golfing that day got to sample many great dishes and concoctions. By 5:30 pm, the buffet was set in the Bird of Paradise Restaurant at the Hawaii Prince Clubhouse. We all enjoyed great seafood and other *ono* grinds while we got ready for the highlight of the day: the prizes.

Kimo Kahoano, master of ceremonies, was at the mic. He started off the evening's festivities by naming the "closest to the pin" contest winner, then the "longest drive" and on to the "on the green/off the green" contest winners. Then it came down to lowest score, and since we take that with a grain of sand from the nearest bunker, we also awarded the 10th lowest score, being this was our 10th year.

Everyone received a gift bag and most took home prizes that ranged from restaurant gift certificates to Kona Brew cruiser bikes and gas grills from Hawaii Gas. Golf trips and golf bags rounded out the huge amount of prizes given out.

The proceeds from the tournament go

toward helping the Hawaii Restaurant Association support the foodservice industry. All in all, it was one of the best ways to spend the day. We're already looking forward to June 7, 2018 for the 11th annual HRA Golf Tournament.

Visit us at the 2017 Hawaii Lodging, Hospitality & Foodservice Expo on July 12-13 in booths 1-24. You'll see all of the great things that the HRA is doing for the foodservice industry.



Gregg Fraser, executive director of the Hawaii Restaurant Association, can be reached at gregg.fraser@hawaii-restaurant.org or 944-9105. For information, HRA visit hawaii-restaurant.org.

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