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Tourism Conference Focusing on Hawai'i's Travel Future, Sept. 26-30

HONOLULU – Nationally recognized speakers, new marketing initiatives and new strategies to reach the global travelers of tomorrow highlight the 2016 Hawaii Tourism Conference, Sept. 26-30 (www.hawaiitourismconference.com).

Presented by the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) and hosted at the world-class Hawaii Convention Center, the conference theme captures its focus: Transforming Tourism Together.

Although Hawaii is on track for a fifth consecutive year of record-setting visitor arrivals and spending, HTA President and CEO George D. Szigeti notes the conference's primary objective is planning for Hawaii's travel future.

"Global travel and the interests of consumers are evolving and Hawaii is adapting to how we reach them, especially millennials," said Szigeti. "The tourism conference will combine the greatness of our islands, our host Hawaiian culture and natural beauty, with new strategies and insights on how to keep Hawaii foremost in the minds of travelers."

An impressive roster of speakers and panelists has been secured from markets internationally and throughout the Hawaiian Islands, all to collaborate on how tourism, Hawaii's most important industry, can remain vibrant and successful in 2017 and beyond.

On Sept. 27, internationally renowned photographer Steve Uzzell will present the keynote address at the opening general session.

Later that day, surfing – one of Hawaii's gifts to the world – and two of its modern-day legends, Buffalo Keaulana and George Downing, will be honored at the Legacy Awards Luncheon.

The day will also feature a Global Student Debate, in which local, national and international students will compete in a public forum debate on issues faced by tourism worldwide.

On Sept. 28, Don Wildman, the popular Travel Channel host, will serve as moderator for the general session, Immerse Yourself in Culture, Live Like a Local.

Later that day, Noah Tratt, global senior vice president of Expedia, will offer his insight in the general session, Flatter Than Ever: Defining the New Global Marketplace and Relating to Change.

On Sept. 29, Wildman will moderate the general session, Customized Travel and the Optimal Customer Experience: The Choice to Vacation Exactly How You Want with the Service You Deserve. It will feature Tom Merchant, CEO of Black Tomato, and Nick Hall, CEO of Digital Tourism Think Tank.

On Sept. 30, the general session, From Farmer's Market to Market Square: The Global Guide to Culinary Tourism, will have Adam Richman of the Food Network serving as moderator, and be highlighted by two of the nation's most celebrated chefs, Jonathan Waxman and Roy Yamaguchi.

Also that day, the advice of Gillian Zucker, president of the Los Angeles Clippers, and Chris Klein, president of the Los Angeles Galaxy, will be showcased in the general session, Game On: Sports as a Global Marketing Platform.

The conference will conclude with a general session Aloha Farewell Luncheon featuring a special presentation about the upcoming 75th anniversary commemoration of the Dec. 7, 1941, attack at Pearl Harbor that launched the United States into World War II.

There will also be 60 concurrent sessions throughout the conference addressing a wide range of topics important to the future of travel and Hawai'i, including culture, the environment, LGBT travel, climate change, technology, and global marketing.

New marketing campaigns will be unveiled to support Hawai'i tourism, with travel agencies and marketing partners from around the world in attendance. HTA will unveil its new virtual reality marketing for the Hawaiian Islands, introduce the next phase of its GoHawaii mobile app, and present a sneak peek of its new GoHawai'i website that debuts next year.

The GoHawai'i mobile app is free and can be downloaded in the Google Play Store and Apple iTunes Store. It is offered in English, German, Japanese, Korean, Simplified Chinese and Traditional Chinese.

To register for the conference, visit www.hawaiiitourismconference.com. The deadline is September 15.

Discounts are available for groups, educators and students. Optional island tours are available on the pre-conference opening day, Sept. 26.

About the Hawai'i Tourism Authority

The [Hawai'i Tourism Authority](http://www.hawaiiitourismauthority.org) is responsible for strategically managing the State of Hawai'i's marketing initiatives to support tourism. HTA's goal is to optimize tourism's benefits for Hawai'i, while being attentive to the interests of travelers, the community and visitor industry. Established in 1998 to support Hawai'i's leading industry and largest employer, HTA continually strives to help ensure the sustainability of tourism's success.

For more information about HTA, please visit www.hawaiiitourismauthority.org. Follow updates about HTA on Facebook, Twitter (@HawaiiHTA) and its YouTube Channel.

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