



For Immediate Release: September 14, 2016
HTA Release (16-50)

Hawaiian Culture Being Showcased at the Hawai'i Tourism Conference, Sept. 26-30

10 Sessions – the Most Ever – to Address How Hawaiian Culture is Transforming, Strengthening the Hawai'i Experience

HONOLULU – The Native Hawaiian culture and how its legacy continues to strengthen the experience of living in and visiting the Hawaiian Islands in modern times, will be a major point of emphasis at the 2016 Hawai'i Tourism Conference, Sept. 26-30 (www.hawaiiitourismconference.com).

Under the theme Transforming Tourism Together, the conference is being presented by the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) and hosted at the world-class Hawai'i Convention Center.

Kalani Ka'anā'anā, HTA director of Hawaiian cultural affairs, noted that in keeping with the theme's spirit, there are 10 conference sessions – the most ever – focused on how the Native Hawaiian culture is transforming the way people experience the Hawai'i of today (schedule below).

"Anyone who is committed to seeing the host culture of these islands thrive within the broad scope of Hawai'i tourism will be interested in the topics being discussed," said Ka'anā'anā. "The sessions will be inspirational, educational and reinforce our cultural connections to the state's largest industry."

Ka'anā'anā added that the Native Hawaiian culture is at the foundation of everything HTA does in promoting the Hawai'i travel experience. "The cultural traditions of the Native Hawaiian people are what makes our islands such a desirable and welcoming destination to travelers worldwide."

Altogether, the conference will feature 60 sessions covering a wide variety of topics important to the future of travel and the Hawaiian Islands. In addition to Hawaiian culture, other topics being addressed include the environment, climate change, technology, global marketing, and LGBT travel.

For more information and to register for the conference, visit www.hawaiiitourismconference.com. Discounts are available for groups, educators and students. Optional island tours are available on the pre-conference opening day, Sept. 26.

Schedule of Hawaiian Culture Sessions

Sept. 27

Hawaiian Culture in Retail

9:45 – 11:15 a.m., Room 313

Moderator: Kalani Ka'anā'anā, Hawai'i Tourism Authority

Speakers: Maile Meyer, Na Mea Hawai'i
Kapono'ai Molitau, Native Intelligence
Monte McComber, Royal Hawaiian Center

Description: Hear unique success stories from Native Hawaiian entrepreneurs on triumphs and challenges in the retail sector, with a focus on international consumers and the expanding marketplace.

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Cultural Festivals: A Formula for Success

11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Room 316

Moderator: Kalani Ka'anā'anā, Hawai'i Tourism Authority

Speakers: Lawrence "Bo" Campos, Queen Lili'uokalani Canoe Race
Melissa McFerrin Warrack, Kōloa Plantation Days

Description: Turning grassroots gatherings into signature events with real community and economic impact.

From Family Lands to Landmark Destinations

2:30 – 3:45 p.m., Room 311

Moderator: Pohai Ryan, Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association

Speakers: John Morgan, Kualoa Ranch
Lani Weigert, Hawai'i AgriTourism
Matt Yamashita, Sons of Hālawa
Pilipo Solatorio, Sons of Hālawa

Description: The evolution of Hawai'i's 'ohana farms into sustainable tourism practices is a unique legacy. Learn how to overcome challenges particular to keeping a property viable while turning them into destination opportunities.

Museums, Monuments and Mansions: The Transformation of Hawaiian History into Destination Attractions

4:00 – 5:15 p.m., Room 312

Moderator: Kainoa Daines, O'ahu Visitors Bureau

Speakers: Albert "Chucky Boy" Chock, Kaua'i Museum
Mahealani Bernal, Queen Emma Summer Palace
Sunshine Chip, Hulihe'e Palace

Description: Learn about the process and community support that set a model for transforming historic properties into Hawaiian cultural cornerstones.

Sept. 28

Sharing Mo'olelo of Resorts

9:45 – 11:15 a.m., Room 313

Moderator: Ku'uipo Kumukahi, Hyatt Regency of Waikiki

Speakers: Daniel Kaniela Akaka, Mauna Lani Resort
Clifford Naeole, The Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua
Kahulu De Santos, Aulani, A Disney Resort

Description: The importance of embodying and honoring the Hawaiian sense of place in creating exceptional visitor experiences.

Cultural Heritage Tourism and Native Peoples

11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Room 316

Moderator: Pohai Ryan, Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association

Speakers: Edward Hall, Aianta/BIA
Aimee D. Awonohopay, Aianta
Maurice Manawatu, Maori Tours Kaikouru

Description: Collaborate on the growing interest in cultural heritage tourism and native communities, and how to share it with the world.

Aloha Today and Beyond

1:45 – 2:45 p.m., Room 312

Moderator: State Senator Brickwood Galuteria

Speakers: Peter Apo, OHA Trustee
John De Fries, County of Hawai'i, Office of Economic Development

Description: This session examines the vision of Dr. George Kanahale and the role of Hawaiian culture in the tourism sector. The second portion of the session will attempt to define the next generation of aloha by John De Fries.

Kūkākūkā: A Talk Story with Hawai'i's Cultural Specialists

3:00 – 3:45 p.m., Room 312

Moderator: Kainoa Daines, O'ahu Visitors Bureau

Speakers: All Participants

Description: This session will give participants a unique opportunity to talk story and share their successes, challenges and emerging trends for cultural resources at Hawai'i's resorts and retail operations.

A Hawaiian Worldview: Practical Applications in Business

3:45 – 5:30 p.m., Room 312

Moderator: Doug Chang, The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Waikiki Beach

Speakers: Debbie Nakanelua-Richards, Hawaiian Airlines
Corbett Kalama, Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation
Gordon Umi Kai, Avis/Budget

Description: Explores strategies for creating systemic change in the visitor industry that promote Hawaiian values.

'Imi Noi'i: Hawaiian Research and Resources for Today's Hawaiian Cultural Resource Specialist

4:45 – 5:30 p.m., Room 312

Moderator: Hi'ilani Shibata, Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association

Speakers: Puakea Nogelmeier, Awaiaulu
DeSoto Brown, Bishop Museum
Cy Bridges, Kumu Hula

Description: Explores the essential resources of Hawaiian 'ike, or knowledge, to access and utilize these materials.

About the Hawai'i Tourism Authority

The [Hawai'i Tourism Authority](http://www.hawaii-tourism-authority.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.hawaii-tourism-authority.org. Follow updates about HTA on Facebook, Twitter (@HawaiiHTA) and its YouTube Channel.

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HTA Media Contacts:

Charlene Chan

Director of Communications

Hawai'i Tourism Authority

808-973-2272 (o)

808-781-7733 (m)

Charlene@gohta.net

Patrick Dugan

Senior Vice President

Anthology Marketing Group

808-539-3411 (o)

808-741-2712 (m)

Patrick.Dugan@AnthologyGroup.com