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## **Statement by George D. Szigeti, President and CEO, Hawai'i Tourism Authority**

### **RE: HTA Partners with ESPN on State Farm Armed Forces Classic in Honolulu**

**HONOLULU** – George D. Szigeti, president and CEO of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA), issued the following statement regarding HTA's support of the State Farm Armed Forces Classic to tip off the 2016-2017 college basketball season.

"HTA is proud of our partnership with ESPN and the support we are providing to help bring the State Farm Armed Forces Classic to Hawai'i on Veterans Day. College basketball fans will not find two better opening day match-ups than in Honolulu with Michigan State vs. Arizona and Kansas vs. Indiana, four elite programs that will be likely contenders for the national championship next spring.

"This basketball doubleheader is a tremendous benefit to Hawai'i's tourism industry, both in attracting college basketball fans to our Islands and generating hours of TV exposure nationwide.

"Hawai'i has become a paradise for college basketball and its followers nationwide. The State Farm Armed Forces Classic is the first of three superb college basketball events being played in Hawai'i, followed by the Maui Jim Maui Invitational and Hawaiian Airlines Diamond Head Classic, which are supported by HTA and televised by ESPN over the next six weeks. Audiences nationally will see many of the top teams and players, along with the beautiful imagery and aloha of the Hawaiian Islands.

"We are very grateful to Pete Derzis and his team at ESPN for being such big fans of Hawai'i and recognizing its value as a setting to host premier college basketball events.

"The State Farm Armed Forces Classic takes place on a day to honor the courage, service and sacrifice made by America's Armed Forces veterans around the world to protect our freedoms. It also occurs three weeks before Hawai'i hosts the 75<sup>th</sup> Pearl Harbor Commemoration and its remembrance of an event that ignited World War II, but ultimately led to peace and lasting friendships."

#### **About the Hawai'i Tourism Authority**

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

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