



For Immediate Release: August 4, 2016  
HTA Release (16-38)

## **HTA Awards Hawai'i Sports Marketing Contract to Ascendent Sports Group**

**HONOLULU** – The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) announced today that Ascendent Sports Group has been awarded a contract to provide sports marketing services on behalf of the State of Hawai'i.

The \$200,000 one-year contract, which includes an option for HTA to extend the agreement for up to four additional one-year periods, began August 2.

"We received excellent proposals from numerous entities wanting to support HTA's sports marketing on behalf of Hawai'i," said Leslie Dance, HTA vice president of marketing and product development. "Ascendent Sports Group offered the ideal balance of global sports contacts and an understanding of Hawai'i's uniqueness as a destination.

"We believe Ascendent is going to open a lot of doors for HTA and create new opportunities to showcase Hawai'i to the world."

Based in New York City, Ascendent Sports Group (<http://ascendentsports.com>) was co-founded by Stephen Ross and Matt Higgins, owner and vice chairman of the Miami Dolphins, respectively. The company has global reach and is equipped with the proficiency and personnel to provide a wide range of sports marketing services, including consulting, event production and property representation.

Ascendent's staff has extensive experience with sporting events and corporate brands globally, as well as regional markets worldwide. The company has supported clients with sports competitions and special events at the professional, Olympic and collegiate levels, as well as those focused on military, youth and community programs. Ascendent's experience with Hawai'i sports events includes the Ironman Triathlon and NFL Pro Bowl.

"We are absolutely thrilled to earn HTA's trust and confident we will exceed expectations in elevating sports marketing for the Hawaiian Islands," said Bob Brennfleck, Ascendent president and CEO. "We understand how important sports are to Hawai'i's global brand and will develop solutions to create more incentive for audiences worldwide to come experience the islands."

Ascendent was one of 12 organizations, nine from the mainland U.S. and three from Hawai'i, that submitted bids in response to the request for proposal (RFP) issued by HTA on March 30 to secure a sports marketing agency for the State of Hawai'i. Ascendent's proposal focused on its global expertise in matching sports events with the interests of specific target markets.

Ascendent's support of HTA will include the sourcing of current and emerging sports opportunities, guidance on the application and selection process for the hosting of future events and competitions, assistance with contract negotiations, and providing insight to ensure a successful event for Hawai'i. Capitalizing on its global reach, Ascendent will also make recommendations on prioritizing sports opportunities that appeal to travel consumers in Hawai'i's tourism markets.

-more-

**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](http://www.hawaii-tourism-authority.org). Follow updates about HTA on Facebook, Twitter (@HawaiiHTA) and its YouTube Channel.

**HTA Media Contacts:**

**Charlene Chan**

Director of Communications  
Hawai'i Tourism Authority  
808-973-2272 (o)  
808-781-7733 (m)  
[Charlene@gohta.net](mailto:Charlene@gohta.net)

**Patrick Dugan**

Senior Vice President  
Anthology Marketing Group  
808-539-3411 (o)  
808-741-2712 (m)  
[Patrick.Dugan@AnthologyGroup.com](mailto:Patrick.Dugan@AnthologyGroup.com)

**Ascendent Media Contact:**

**Nick Rosen-Wachs**

Director  
Derris & Company  
(646) 362-4684  
[nick@derris.com](mailto:nick@derris.com)