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Hawai'i Surfing Association Contests Statewide Benefiting from HTA Support Season-Opening Meet is this Weekend, Aug. 13-14, at Kewalo Park

HONOLULU – In the spirit of Duke Kahanamoku and all that his legacy signifies to surfing and sharing the Aloha Spirit, the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) is teaming up with the Hawai'i Surfing Association (HSA) to encourage more residents to embrace surfing statewide, starting this weekend.

HTA announced the awarding of \$150,000 to a surfing association that has provided contests in Hawai'i for more than 50 years to amateur surfers of all ages and skill levels, ranging from champions, like Carissa Moore and John John Florence, to weekend wave riders. Last year, HSA had contestants from ages seven to 81 years old, all bonded by their love of surfing.

George D. Sziget, HTA president and CEO, and a lifelong surfer who once competed professionally, said the purpose for HTA's funding goes beyond helping today's aspiring surfers to improve their skills. "The Hawai'i Surfing Association has pledged to make the joy of surfing more accessible to more of Hawai'i's people, especially youths, and we wholeheartedly support their vision.

"The association impressed us with their plan to not only revitalize interest in surfing in communities statewide, but to also foster surfing ambassadors among our young people to carry forth the message of surfing with aloha and being good stewards of our beaches, ocean and marine life."

According to Glen Moncata, HSA executive director, HTA's sponsorship is empowering the association to significantly upgrade the experience for contest participants. Benefits include being able to offer more divisions to accommodate different skill levels, running four-person heats during the contests, and the introduction of a computerized scoring system. There will also be new and upgraded tents, banners and equipment, and additional staff members hired to help manage and operate each contest. Also being developed is a new website at www.hasasurf.org.

Moncata said, "We have a dedicated team of volunteers and supporters that will make these contests fun and worthwhile regardless if you're experienced or just starting out. HTA's funding allows us to make these contests a better, more enjoyable experience for everyone who comes to participate. That's important because surfing is Hawai'i's sport, Hawai'i's gift to the world."

HSA is holding 25 events on O'ahu (11), Maui (4), Kaua'i (4) and the Island of Hawai'i (6) for its new season of surf contests that begins this weekend and runs through May 2017. Many of the contests also feature competitions between student teams representing their high schools.

HSA's season-opening meet takes place this weekend, Aug. 13-14, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m., at Rennicks at Kewalo Park. Moncata expects to have 200 surfers entered in the contest.

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To register now for participation in HSA surfing contests, please call (808) 262-2488. Next week, registration will be available online at the new HSA website, www.hasasurf.org. Cost for registrants is \$25 per contest. Cost for non-registrants is \$40 per contest and can be done the morning of the event.

About the Hawai'i Tourism Authority

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

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