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SIX ISLANDS, SIX EXPERIENCES MAKE HAWAII MEETINGS SPECIAL

*"Choosing Hawaii isn't as simple as it sounds
because there are so many Hawai'i's to choose from."*

Al Jackson, CMP
Corporate Meeting Services
Fireman's Fund Insurance Company

HONOLULU – For more than a century, the world has admired Hawai'i as a leisure destination for its incomparable tropical beauty, near-perfect year-round weather, relaxed way of life, friendly people, and Aloha Spirit tradition of hospitality.

Today, these timeless qualities – combined with first-rate meetings and accommodations facilities statewide – have made Hawai'i one of the world's most desirable locations to host business meetings and conventions.

Of particular significance is the variety of the "destinations within the destination" that Hawai'i is able to offer meeting planners and groups.

The six major islands the ancient Polynesians called "the heavenly homeland of the north" – Kaua'i, O'ahu, Maui, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, and Hawai'i's Big Island – all have similar characteristics, but each presents a different meetings experience.

It is one of Hawai'i's biggest selling points in attracting both new and repeat business, according to Michael Murray, CMP, CMM, CASE, vice president of sales and marketing for corporate meetings and incentives (CMI) at the Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB).

"Hawai'i offers six exotic islands that provide six uniquely wonderful meeting experiences," said Murray. "We have the complete destination package and our meetings infrastructure is ideal for hosting groups of all sizes, whether it's 25 senior executives for a conference or 30,000 attendees for an annual convention."

HVCB and its four island chapters, representing Kaua'i, O'ahu, Maui County, and Hawai'i's Big Island, provide groups with an experienced team of visitor industry professionals that collaborate to maximize the meetings experience in the islands.

“The island chapters are fantastic partners. We all work closely together with a single goal in mind – to make a meeting in Hawai‘i the best, most rewarding and value-added experience possible for groups wanting to combine business with the thrill of being in one of the world’s great destinations,” Murray said.

He added that today’s business world demands that meetings destinations provide an excellent return on investment, create the highest impact for attendees, and – most of all – meet their objectives.

In every respect, he said, Hawai‘i fits the bill.

“The quality of venues and range of activities that are available on a year-round basis are unmatched. Groups can choose from a wide array of resort properties on all islands ranging from luxury to budget accommodations,” Murray noted.

“Most importantly, people love to come here. Hawai‘i’s enduring appeal and the variety of locations and fascinating pre- and post-meeting activities on all islands makes it the perfect destination to bring family members and guests for an extended stay.

“Businesses, especially those providing incentives, know they can book Hawai‘i year after year and be confident they will receive an enticing and invigorating experience each time.”

The following is a snapshot of meeting assets and benefits for each island.

Kaua‘i – Hawai‘i’s Island of Discovery

Often referred to as the “Garden Isle,” Kaua‘i is cloaked in brilliant shades of green, luring groups with its lush mountains, verdant grottos, hidden beaches, and shimmering waterfalls.

Kaua‘i has four major resort areas for meetings – Po‘ipū; Kalapakī Beach and Līhu‘e; Wailua and Kapa‘a; and Princeville. The island is popular with couples and families making it ideal for incentives.

Kaua‘i offers approximately 3,000 hotel rooms and 3,000 condominium units to support a variety of meeting facilities – the largest of which is more than 20,000 square feet and can accommodate 1,500 banquet guests. Nine magnificent golf courses are a favorite pre- and post-meeting activity.

Kaua‘i’s spectacular and varied landscape keeps it in demand with Hollywood and fans of eco-travel.

For example, Waimea Canyon, known as the “Grand Canyon of the Pacific,” is a massive 10-mile gorge laced with excellent hiking trails and a vivid palette of nature’s colors that paints a new picture as the day wears on.

Another popular activity is exploring the many trails and isolated beaches found along the stunning Nāpali coastline.

For more information about Kaua’i, contact Sue Kanoho, executive director of the Kaua’i Visitors Bureau, by calling (808) 245-3971 or via e-mail at skanoho@hvcb.org.

O’ahu – The Heart of Hawai’i

Drawing more meetings than any other island, O’ahu is home to Honolulu – the state capitol and a vibrant, cosmopolitan center of international commerce – and world-famous Waikīkī Beach.

Waikīkī offers numerous resort and hotel meeting properties, which provide a wide range of top-notch facilities to accommodate any sized group and budget.

The crown jewel for the state is the award-winning Hawai’i Convention Center. Since opening in 1998, the Center has elevated the global standing of Hawai’i’s meetings infrastructure to among the world’s best. Rising from Waikīkī’s edge, it is supported by 10,000 committable hotel rooms for groups within one mile.

The air-conditioned Center features a 200,000-square-foot exhibit hall, the state’s largest ballroom at 36,000 square feet, 49 meeting rooms comprising 100,000 square feet, and two presentation theaters with tiered seating. It is also an approved foreign trade zone, allowing international clients to bypass airport customs and ship goods directly door-to-door.

State-of-the-art technology at the Center includes fiber optic and Category 5 pair cabling infrastructure throughout, six built-in concurrent translation booths, and meeting rooms equipped to handle 400 computers simultaneously.

The Center has hosted the “grand slam” of professional meeting organizations: IAEM (June 2001); MPI (January 2002); ASAE (August 2003); and PCMA (January 2005).

Away from Waikīkī, groups will find first-class meeting facilities in west O’ahu at Kō ‘Ōlina, and on the North Shore.

O’ahu, particularly Honolulu, is fast paced by island standards, but has a small-town feel with its ethnically diverse communities, multitude of open park space, and popular beaches.

Groups will find a seemingly endless list of pre- and post-meeting activities to enjoy, including world-class restaurants, tours, ocean sports, galleries, museums and the only royal palace to house a monarchy on U.S. soil – ‘Iolani Palace.

Another popular attraction for groups is historic Pearl Harbor, now home to the two battleships that signify for America both the beginning and end of World War II – the USS Arizona Memorial and the Battleship Missouri Memorial.

For more information about O‘ahu, contact Les Enderton, executive director of the O‘ahu Visitors Bureau, at (808) 524-0722 or lenderton@hvcb.org.

Maui – The Magic Isle

“Maui no ka ‘oi!”

Translated in Hawaiian, it means “Maui is the best!” a statement millions worldwide would acknowledge. For 11 consecutive years, the readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine have named Maui as the “best island in the world.”

Maui has four major resort areas – Wailea, Mākena, Kā‘anapali and Kapalua – offering a range of properties that can host meetings and conventions for up to 3,000 attendees. There are more than 16,000 rooms in 130 hotel and condominium properties, with the largest indoor hotel meeting space measuring more than 28,000 square feet.

Maui was also the island of choice for ICPA, to host its 2004 Annual Meeting, at the luxurious Grand Wailea Resort Hotel & Spa.

The valleys, golden beaches, forested mountains, grasslands and open plains that make up Maui are home to some of Hawai‘i’s most storied attractions, including the fabled whaling town of Lahaina; the world’s largest dormant volcano in Haleakalā Crater; the winding road leading to idyllic Hāna, and the gorgeous white sands of Kā‘anapali Beach.

For more information about Maui, contact Terryl Vencl, executive director for the Maui Visitors Bureau (MVB), at (808) 244-3530 or tvenc1@maui.net. MVB handles visitor marketing activities for all of Maui County, which also includes Moloka‘i and Lāna‘i.

Moloka‘i – Hawaiian By Nature

Moloka‘i is a place in which nature has carved out a rugged beauty of its own and where residents and visitors alike enjoy a relaxed Hawaiian-style ambiance. Ancient Hawaiians believed the island possessed spirituality unique to Hawai‘i; it is a sentiment that carries forth today.

Moloka'i is equipped to handle small and medium-sized meetings, and is supported by approximately 300 hotel rooms. It is especially popular with groups who enjoy solitary beaches and wild outdoor beauty.

The west end of this long, narrow, mountainous island is marked by wide plains, while the east end is a tropical rain forest featuring a rough-hewn northern coastline with deep ravines in rich green hues. Especially compelling are the towering sea cliffs – the highest in the world – plunging more than 3,000 feet into the ocean.

Lāna'i – Hawai'i's Most Exclusive Island

Seclusion and rustic beauty are the primary reasons that meetings are scheduled on Lāna'i. The island is ideal for hosting small, executive gatherings.

Once home to the world's largest pineapple plantation, Lāna'i now boasts two luxurious resorts – the Mānele Bay Hotel and The Lodge at Koele – specializing in a true “getaway” experience. Approximately 360 rooms are available.

For the high-end visitor, Lāna'i offers one of Hawai'i's most diverse travel experiences in a setting far removed from the more populated resort areas, which includes golfing on immaculate courses; four-wheel driving on rugged trails; diving in pristine bays; and miles of deserted beaches.

Hawai'i's Big Island – Aloha Spoken Here

At 4,038 square miles, Hawai'i's Big Island is twice as big as the other islands combined, and it is also the most diverse in appearance and composition.

The Big Island has approximately 10,000 hotel rooms in 185 properties. Most are luxury resorts located along the Kona-Kohala coastline.

The largest meeting-oriented hotel has 45,000 square feet of meeting space and can comfortably accommodate 2,000 banquet guests.

Ecologically, the Big Island offers a climate and terrain that ranges from tropical rain forests and waterfalls to arid, desert-like conditions.

Environmentally, it takes visitors on journeys from mountains topped by clouds (and often snow) to sprawling cattle ranches and long uncluttered beaches.

It is the youngest of Hawai'i's islands, but also the first discovered by the voyaging Polynesians, thus becoming the cradle of early Hawaiian civilization. Today, the Big Island is a fascinating collection of cultural and historic sites.

And it is still growing. Kilauea is the world's most active volcano; the incredible spectacle of lava flowing into the ocean is a popular attraction that is safely witnessed by more than one million visitors annually.

For more information about Hawai'i's Big Island, contact George Applegate, executive director of the Big Island Visitors Bureau, at (808) 961-5797 or gapplegate@hvcb.org.

The Islands of Aloha

Author James Michener once wrote, *"If a traveler fails to have a good time in Hawai'i, I would say there is no hope for him."*

Each year associations, corporations, groups, and incentives from throughout the world heartily agree.

For information about holding meetings in Hawai'i, the Islands of Aloha, visit HVCB's Web site at **MeetHawaii.com** or call the CMI division at 1-888-424-2924.

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