

# HTA CEO REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2024

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) provides this report as a resource to the Board and the public to better understand the activities and actions taken by the team in the month of August 2024 in support of the organization's overall mission, its strategic plan, and the community-led Destination Management Action Plans. This report on activities in August is presented at the board meeting that would have been held at the end of September, but was instead held to coincide with the 2024 Hawai'i Tourism Conference.

Office of the President & CEO: Recruitment for vacant positions was ongoing while continuing to process the proposed reorganization plan through DBEDT and DHRD.

Destination Stewardship: August was another bustling month with major events like the 2024 Duke Kahanamoku Ocean Festival as well as other Signature and Community Enrichment events. HTA staff also worked closely with Kilohana to launch the Community Tourism Collaboratives and Foundational Technical Assistance Programs. Finally, on August 1, 2024, we released the 2025 Term 1 'Umeke RFPs for projects taking place from January to June 2025 as we transition those programs from calendar year to fiscal year.

Brand and Marketing: The Brand team has been working on mid-year evaluations for all 2024 Brand Marketing Plan contracts while concurrently reviewing all 2025 Brand Marketing Plans. The HTA RFP 25-05 Hawai'i Tourism Destination Brand Marketing Services for the Korea Major Market Area has concluded as of September 6, 2024, and a new contract with Aviareps Marketing Garden for the 2025 Brand Marketing Services is currently being executed. This month, the Brand staff also assisted with various tasks related to the upcoming tourism conference week.

## II. OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & CEO

**Functional Statement:** The Office of CEO is responsible for implementing the policies and instructions of HTA's Board of Directors and administering the activities of HTA by planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and reporting its work.

- Leads relationship with Governor, Legislature, Board and state agencies
- Leads relationship with national tourism policy and strategy, Congressional offices, and national and international industry organizations
- Oversees HTA's strategic direction and performance
- Oversees HTA's administration, resource allocation, vision, and culture

## ***Proposed Reorganization***

The HTA organization continued to transition into the structure presented and approved by the HTA Board at its July 2023 meeting. The objectives of this structure were to strengthen island-based management, increase resources for destination stewardship, and have dedicated leadership for branding and marketing. The Request to Reorganize documents were submitted to DBEDT and are still under review by DBEDT staff. Since the positions are now funded through general funds, all requests to fill or establish positions must go through the Governor. Of the HTA's 30 positions there are currently 13 vacant positions including the five new Destination Manager positions, the CEO, Chief Brand Officer and the recent vacancy of a Brand Manager position. Currently seven positions are in the recruitment process (Destination Managers [5], Administrative Assistant and Account Clerk III), two have been approved by the Governor and are being processed for recruitment (Brand Manager and Contracts and Administrative Manager), two are in process of approval with the Director (Planner and Destination Manager), and the CEO and Chief Brand Officer are not being processed at this point until the Board PIG has provided their report.

**Lieutenant Governor's Korea Mission: "Island Connections: Reimagining Tourism"**. The primary objective of this mission was to strengthen bonds of friendship and collaboration between Hawaii and the Republic of Korea, fostering greater cooperation in tourism and promoting mutual good will. The Mission included LG, DBEDT Director James Tokioka and CNHA CEO Kuhio Lewis. We attended official meetings with the Mayor of Seoul, the Governor of Jeju Island and Jeju Tourism Organization. Our Hawaii Tourism Korea staff and our Meet Hawaii staff arranged meetings with top leadership at Korean Airlines, Air Premia (new route to Hawaii in 2025), Mode Tour (top tour operator), and Smilegate (tech gaming company that sends incentive groups to Hawaii every year). The Mission gave us a better understanding of the current economic and consumer landscape in Korea and outlook from market partners (the current state of the Korea market is stable though not in a strong growth phase). These insights will allow us to better assess the future market potential of Korea and strategically plan our marketing. Many of the government discussions centered around sustainable tourism, particularly on Jeju which has similar island resource constraints and cultural impact concerns. Talks also resulted in identifying potential new segments such as eGames tournaments and working closer with Korean government officials for business and conference exchanges.

## ***Public Affairs***

## **Maui Wildfires Recovery**

One year following the August 8, 2023 wildfires, HTA staff continues to focus on tourism's support for Maui's overall recovery. Pursuant to HRS §201B-9, a gubernatorially-declared tourism emergency is in effect until November 16, 2024 by order of the 17th Proclamation Relating to Wildfires.

## **News Releases/Reports/Announcements**

- HTA Message: Haleakalā Crater Road Fire Update #2 (August 6)
- HTA Message: Dr. Aaron J. Salā Appointed President & CEO of the Hawai'i Visitors & Convention Bureau (August 15)
- News Release: Hawai'i Tourism Authority Announces Selected Organizations for Community Stewardship and Regenerative Experiences Programs (August 20)
- Report: Hawai'i Hotel Performance Report for July 2024 (August 21)
- Report: Hawai'i Vacation Rental Performance Report for July 2024 (August 23)
- HTA Message: Visitors Urged to Remain Vigilant as Tropical Storm Hone Approaches - Update #1 (August 23)
- HTA Message: Visitors Urged to Remain Vigilant as Hurricane Hone Passes The Hawaiian Islands - Update #2 (August 25)

## **News Bureau**

- Coordinated and/or assisted with the following interviews and statements, including:
  - Bianca Byers, FOX Weather: IG interview on Hurricane Hone preparation and implications for the surfing community. (August 23)
  - Paul Drewes, KITV: IG statement on potential hotel strike. (August 28)
  - Alina Lee, KHON: HTA and DBEDT statement on potential hotel strike. (August 28)
- Coordinated and/or assisted with the following media relations, including:
  - Allison Schaefer, Honolulu Star-Advertiser: Provided information on the estimated economic impact of Pokémon's World Championships. (August 14)
  - Catherine Toth Fox, Honolulu Civil Beat: Provided information on the estimated economic impact of Pokémon's World Championships and confirmed that HTA did not provide monetary support for the event. (August 14)
  - Hanqing Chen, The Capitol Forum: Provided background information in response to inquiry on Alaska Airlines' planned acquisition of

Hawaiian Airlines and its potential impacts on tourism to Hawai'i.  
(August 19)

### **Community Initiatives and Public Outreach**

- Hawai'i Tourism Conference
  - Updated website homepage and events page with conference dates and updated information. (Ongoing)
  - Drafted e-blast message encouraging the public to register and attend. (August 17)
  - Drafted news release announcing the conference dates and schedule. (August 20)
- Pokémon World Championships
  - Drafted DN quote for inclusion in news release.
  - IG participated in blessing ceremony at Hilton Hawaiian Village. (August 14)
- Hotel Labor Negotiations
  - Monitored situation and drafted holding statements and letter for MCI clients.
- ESTO Awards
- Drafted news release announcing HTA campaigns included as finalists for annual USTA travel awards.

### **Crisis Communications**

- Crater Road Fire
  - Monitored evolving situation and drafted additional HTA message informing the public that the road has been reopened.
- Hurricane Hone
  - Drafted and distributed two e-blasts (August 23, 25) informing the public about safety guidance related to the storm.

### **Internal Communications**

- Managed 2024 Communications Calendar on an ongoing basis.
- Conducted weekly communications calls with HTA leadership.
- Reviewed and provided input to FY26-27 budget talking points.

### **Administrative**

- Finalizing updated Public Affairs planning as we prepare to rescope and procure contracted support for Communications & Public Affairs Support Services, HTA Website Services, and production support for the Hawai'i Tourism Conference and Spring Tourism Update in the coming months.

### Government Affairs

The Public Affairs Office continues to monitor the impacts of newly enacted legislation from the 2024 Legislative Session, as well as proceedings at our county councils.

## III. DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP BRANCH

**Functional Statement:** The Destination Stewardship Branch is responsible for implementing projects and programs that seek to balance and meet the economic, environmental, and social/cultural needs of Hawai'i while working in close partnership with the visitor industry and residents.

### *Natural Resources Initiative*

**Overview:** Support programs that protect, maintain and enhance Hawai'i's natural resources and cultural sites to improve the quality of life for all of Hawai'i's residents and to enhance the visitor experience in alignment with the Authority's mission to strategically manage Hawai'i tourism in a sustainable manner consistent with economic goals, cultural values, preservation of natural resources, community desires, and visitor industry needs. The [HTA's Five-Year Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#) lays out the Natural Resources Pillar objectives to "encourage and support sustainable and responsible tourism; engage and encourage active natural and cultural resource management strategies in areas frequented by visitors; and to promote visitor industry alignment with the Aloha+ Challenge, Hawai'i's recognized model to achieve the UN's SDGs, especially for energy and water."

No Kahu 'Āina projects/events to report on the month of August. Most awardees have already been monitored.

### *Hawaiian Culture Initiative*

**Overview:** Support programs that perpetuate and recognize the uniqueness and integrity of the Hawaiian culture and community and their significance in differentiating the Hawaiian Islands through unique and genuine visitor experiences.

### Ma'ema'e Program

In the Hawaiian Culture pillar of the current Hawai'i Tourism Authority Strategic Plan, one of the Milestone Measures for Objective 4 calls for the establishment of a system for measuring and reporting the number of lodging industry entities with on-site cultural

practice programs and practitioners. HTA recently awarded contract PON 24025, to the Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association (NaHHA) for the professional services of developing a comprehensive database to accurately identify and update contact information for Native Hawaiian Cultural Practitioners, Organizations and Visitor Industry Partners. This Hawaiian Culture Database will be owned and managed by the Hawai'i Tourism Authority with results to be tracked and reported annually. The contract was fully executed on June 4. The project has made substantial progress in the month of August and is currently in the final stages.

### *Kūkulu Ola Program*

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority's Kūkulu Ola Program, consistent with Chapter 201B-7(a) of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes ("HRS") which allows HTA to "enter into agreements that include product development and diversification issues focused on visitors"; and Chapter 201B-7(5), which gives the HTA responsibility for "perpetuating the uniqueness of the native Hawaiian culture and community, and their importance to the quality of the visitor experience, by ensuring that Hawaiian cultural practitioners and cultural sites that give value to Hawai'i's heritage are supported, nurtured, and engaged in sustaining the visitor industry"; and Chapter 201B-3(a)(20) which states that HTA "may coordinate the development of products with the counties and other persons in the public and private sector, including the development of sports, culture, health and wellness, education, technology, agriculture, and nature tourism. In addition, the HTA Five-Year Strategic Plan 2020-2025 lays out HTA's plan to support Hawaiian Culture as stated above.

The Mana Mele Program is funded through HTA's Kūkulu Ola partnership opportunity. In 2024, Mana Mele was awarded \$40,000 to create high quality audio and video Knowledge Resource Products (KRP) and deliver live events that enhance the visibility of Native Hawaiian programs, cultural practitioners, musicians and entertainers. The Kilohana team attended the Mana Mele Concert Series on 8/17 at the Royal Hawaiian Shopping Center. Kilohana monitor remarked that the event exceeded expectations of proposed goals and objectives. Monitor remarks surveying and data collection was high level with a combination of emcee polls, digital and hard copy data collection with prize incentives for participation (including a signed custom-made 'ukulele give-away). Public access was well managed through a collaborative effort with Monte McComber. Surrounding shops and restaurants were noticeably busy and picked up volume as a direct result of the live entertainment.

### **Visitor Experiences Initiative**

**Overview:** The primary objective is to enhance the visitor experience while also preserving and promoting Native Hawaiian culture in addition to Hawai'i's multi-ethnic cultures and communities. This is achieved by fostering genuine, respectful, and accurate visitor activities and programs that connect tourists with the rich heritage of Hawai'i, all while supporting local cultural practitioners, artists, and craftsmen to ensure the preservation and perpetuation of Hawaiian culture and the local culture of Hawai'i.

### Signature Events Program (SEP)

The HTA's Signature Events program supports major events that have broad appeal and align with Hawai'i's destination's image and brand. These world-class events help Hawai'i to remain competitive, generate media exposure for Hawai'i, increase economic benefits and ensure tourism and communities enrich each other. Signature Events aim to attract attendees and participants from outside the state of Hawai'i with extensive national and international marketing and have a significant economic impact as measured by the number of out-of-state participants. The program seeks to support and strengthen existing events and create new events for both residents and visitors.

Event Name	Organization	Island	Award Amount	Summary
2024 Duke Kahanamoku Ocean Festival	ODKF Support, Inc.	O'ahu	\$65,000.00	<p>Kilohana team attended the Legends Dinner at the Outrigger on 8/22 and the surfing competition on 8/24. Broad recognition of HTA sponsorship at both events. Signage displayed in high visibility areas and logo/branding displayed on programs, flyers, and digital channels.</p> <p>Great effort was made to ensure a comfortable experience for participants (residents and visitors alike). Bathrooms were cleaned and well stocked for the surfing event. Artful recycle bins were strategically posted to encourage site preservation. HTA inclusions were weaved in at strategic intervals in announcer's mentions.</p>



Community Enrichment Program (CEP)

The Community Enrichment Program fosters community-based tourism projects that improve and enrich Hawai'i's product offerings. These projects provide unique, authentic, and highly valued visitor experiences and represent activities developed by our community, for our community, and that the community wants to share with our visitors.

Event Name	Organization	Island	Award Amount	Summary
Ho'olaule'a o Waimea	Hi'ipāka, LLC	O'ahu	\$20,000	Ho'olaule'a o Waimea held their music concert series the weekend of 8/31 in Waimea Valley. Kilohana monitor noted over 250 attendees participated in the concert event in a series of events that include the Kalo-Awa Festival and Te Moana Nui Games. Monitor felt confident that with the upcoming events, awardee will most likely hit their targeted audience numbers as outlined in their contract agreement. Monitor notes the event had a relaxed organization style, with a combination of food and craft vendors and allowing participants to bring in their own food and beverage. There was limited vendor options which may have affected the turnout. Monitor suggests greater community outreach and advertising to enhance audience numbers. Sponsorship acknowledgement was executed via signage placement in high traffic area and announcer mentions.

Visitor Assistance Program (VAP)

**Overview:** HTA's Visitor Assistance Program (VAP) provides support, resources and guidance to visitors who are victims of crime and other adversities while traveling in Hawai'i. Services include providing phone cards, transportation, meals, hospital visits and moral support, replacing lost IDs, assisting with hotel and airline bookings, and more. Under HRS 237D-6.5(b)(2), HTA, at a minimum, is required to spend 0.5 percent of the Tourism Special Fund on safety and security initiatives.

**August Stats:**

County	No. of Cases Handled	No. of visitors served	Primary Visitor Market(s) Served	Industry \$\$ Contributions
Hawai'i	17	37	US East & West	\$50 (cash) \$7,035 (In-Kind)
Honolulu	44	135	US West & East	\$500.00 (cash) \$14,508.95 (In-Kind)
Kaua'i	7	20	US West & East	\$1,000 (cash) \$1,575.00 (In-Kind)
Maui	12	26	US West & East	\$6,535.00 (In-Kind)

*Ho'okipa Malihini Program*

Ho'okipa malihini means to welcome guests and as its name suggests, this program will enhance the visitor experience and resident-visitor interaction. Programming includes cultural programs and entertainment in various resort and visitor areas statewide that support Hawaiian programs and cultural practitioners, craftsmen, musicians, linguists and/or other artists to help preserve and perpetuate Hawaiian culture in a way that is respectful and accurate, inviting, and educational. The program will directly support the Hawaiian community and cultural practitioners by creating opportunities to involve them in the industry with industry partners and visitors. While some resort/hotel areas have cultural directors this program helps to reinforce our collective kuleana to Mālama Hawai'i.

**Resort Area Hawaiian Cultural Initiative (RAHCI)**

HTA's Resort Area Hawaiian Culture Initiative provides support to cultural practitioners and musicians who present Hawaiian experiences, entertainment, and music in resort areas.

No RAHCI/HMI events monitored in August. Most on-going performances were monitored at the beginning of the year.

**Kāhea Greetings Program (Airports And Harbors)**

Programming includes regularly scheduled, free, year-round entertainment to create a Hawaiian sense of place for the millions of visitors entering Hawai'i through our airports and harbors statewide.

Entertainment is regularly scheduled at airports. Below is the programming schedule at each airport for August:

Airport	HNL	OGG	KOA	LIH	ITO
<b>Schedule</b>	Tues & Thurs 9:30am- 1:30pm	Sundays 10:00am- 2:00pm	None	Fridays 10:00am - 2:00pm	Mondays 11am – 3:00pm

Greetings are provided at harbors as ships arrive. Below is the report on greetings in August:

Harbor/Pier	Hilo	Kona	Nāwiliwili
<b>Ships Greeted</b>	4	4	6
<b>Passengers &amp; Crew Greeted</b>	13,353	13,361	11,500
<b>Visitors Served</b>	6,676	7,021	9,200
<b>Paid Staff</b>	1	1	2
<b>Paid Musicians &amp; Cultural Practitioners</b>	3	8	18

Post-Arrival Messaging

Finalized the Maui Recovery Visitor Education & Post-Arrival Marketing campaign as part of HTA’s larger recovery initiatives in response to the Maui Wildfires. All four channels of Visitor Education and Post-Arrival Marketing – Native Ads, Digital Display, Search Engine, Social Media – are tracking well to KPIs established by our Destination Stewardship contract. The click-thru rate of social media is tracking higher than anticipated which is a favorable metric. We will be reporting specific KPIs for this quarterly. Please see the Destination Stewardship appendix for more details on this topic.

No significant updates for August.

Smart Tourism

HTA staff has asked Kilohana to pause on this part of their work while HTA evaluates how to proceed given the Maui wildfire and other factors. HTA Staff worked with Kilohana to reach agreement that the contract will be reduced by \$1,200,000 since this work was paused and removed from the scope. A change order and supplemental contract will be done once everything is finalized.

Destination Management

HTA staff are working with the island destination managers on their close-out reporting on the first phase of the DMAPs. Further, the destination managers continue to meet with community organizations and stakeholders to share the work we have done and plan to move forward.

### ***Technical Assistance & Capacity Building***

HTA staff is working with Kilohana on digesting and using the data from the technical needs assessment to inform the development of the content and format for the three community tourism collaboratives. We anticipate they will launch in Q3 2024 and focus on Foundational Technical Assistance, Community Stewardship and Regenerative Experiences.

### ***Workforce Development Program***

Pursuant to HRS 201B-3(a)(22) HTA will address the industry's evolving needs in workforce training by working with educational institutions to make training available for the industry workforce to help enhance overall skills and quality of service. Sustaining tourism's success also depends on Hawai'i's youth helping to carry the industry forward and becoming the next generation of leaders. Encouraging Hawai'i's high school and college-age students to choose tourism as their career is another important part of HTA's workforce development initiative in ensuring that there are career opportunities in the tourism industry for Hawai'i's own.

The Director of Planning attended the U.S. Travel Association's ESTO conference which brings together state travel offices and DMOs to network, learn new trends and tools, share best practices and discuss critical issues currently facing destinations. The sessions that proved most beneficial for the Director of Planning were those that focused on performance measures and metrics, destination development, workforce and advocacy. New ideas were gained on new measures to tell our story, how to present information and the type of information to focus on in conveying to our stakeholders.

The workforce training session provided insight into what other destinations are facing (very similar to Hawai'i) and projects that they pursued to build and enhance their workforce. Bottomline is tourism is growing but not our workforce. How do we bring more attention to the visitor industry and show how working in this industry is not low paying and does bring good jobs (more than just front-line workers).

HTA's Mākaukau Maui campaign was one of the finalists for the ESTO Mercury Awards under the Community Engagement Category. The Mercury Awards recognize USTA members for excellence and creative accomplishment in state and territory destination marketing and promotion; and inspire, through showcasing outstanding work, the continued development of imaginative and exciting marketing and promotional programs.

### *Tour Guide Certification*

HTA contracted Kilohana by CNHA to develop a curriculum for an online Tour Guide Certification training program, including modules on Hawaiian culture, Hawai'i's history, customer service, and safety issues. The HTA staff and Kilohana are working on meeting with UH and other critical stakeholders on the development of the curriculum. The timeline for the project has been adjusted from the original timeline in their proposal to have the draft curriculum submitted by 9/30/24.

## VI. BRAND BRANCH

**Functional Statement:** The purpose of the Brand Branch is to strengthen tourism's overall contribution to Hawai'i by taking the lead in protecting and enhancing Hawai'i's globally competitive brand in a way that is coordinated, authentic, and market appropriate. This includes the oversight of the implementation of annual brand marketing plans in select major market areas (USA, Japan, Canada, Oceania, Korea, China, and Europe), sales & marketing for single property and city-wide global meetings, conventions and incentives or MCI, Global Support Services which includes management of a digital assets library, social media tools, and the gohawaii.com consumer website, affiliate sites, and application, Island Destination Brand Management & Marketing with representation and expertise provided in each county of Hawai'i, and sports programs.

### *Major Market Destination Brand Management*

**Overview:** This initiative focuses on destination brand marketing for leisure travel in seven major market areas with pre-arrival communications to educate visitors with information about safe, respectful, and mindful travel within the Hawaiian Islands. Another key emphasis of the initiative is to drive visitor spending into Hawai'i-based businesses to support a healthy economy, including supporting local businesses, purchasing Hawai'i-grown agricultural products, and promoting Hawai'i-made products in-market, in partnership with the state's Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT) and the private sector.

### *US Major Market Area*

- In August, HTUSA continued to roll out "The People. The Place. The Hawaiian Islands." content across multiple social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, and TikTok, generated over 40 million impressions.

In Q1 and Q2 of 2024 our Campaign Effectiveness Study showed that the overall ad/campaign awareness amongst all generations was elevated when compared to 2023. In particular, Gen Z (ages 18-26) and Millennials (ages 27-42) groups were more aware at 67% and 61% respectively. This could be contributed to the steady use of platforms like TikTok, which are used primarily by those age groups.

- We've also seen in our Campaign Effectiveness Study that our campaign "The People. The Place. The Hawaiian Islands." effectively communicated that Hawai'i is a place with stunning beauty at 4.62 on a 5-point scale, and succeed in delivering on many of the other intended messages, including: deepening viewers' understanding that Hawai'i is a place that cares about its nature and culture (4.45), makes them feel good about choosing to visit Hawai'i (4.39), deepens their understanding that Hawai'i is a place that cares about its community and residents (4.38), makes people feel good about choosing to visit Maui in particular (4.36), deepens their understanding that Hawai'i is a place that cares about visitors' safety and informs responsible travel (4.33), tells them something new about Hawai'i (4.20), and represents what they want to do on vacation (4.20). Campaigns in the top 10% generate "excellent" ratings of 4.2 or higher.
- Early this year, HTA Board Chair Mufi Hannemann and President & CEO Daniel Nāho'opi'i coordinated industry partner meetings to include stakeholders in the planning of a Market Saturation in Los Angeles, California as a response to soft travel during the summer period compared to previous years. HTUSA has been busy with planning for the events during the end of September. This is an all-hands-on deck endeavor that includes paid media plans, public relations and earned media, consumer events, owned media and industry alignment meetings and communications, travel trade education and training, as well as public/private partnership programs with the Hawai'i travel industry. The goal is to drive visitation from the west coast to Hawai'i. In our August Board Meeting, we heard the need from those who participated in testifying, to build a stronger relationship with our visitors in the U.S. and that relationships grow stronger with consistency. We'll learn more about the results of this activation next month to better understand how to best move forward.

### [Canada Major Market Area](#)

- On August 6<sup>th</sup>, OpenJaw, a trusted Travel Trade Media online publication, sent out a Jim Byers article to agents about it being a year since the Maui fires. The article discussed their perception that mixed messaging may have contributed to the slow

recovery of visitor numbers. It also highlighted that the island is open and welcoming of visitors. The article also highlighted the new Qurator program, honoring Hawai'i

### Japan Major Market Area

- In August, HTJ continued its advertising efforts for the Yappari Hawai'i campaign across out-of-home, digital, and print platforms, aiming to promote Hawai'i as a premier overseas travel destination. The campaign garnered over 62 million impressions this month, with notable contributions from taxi signage (2.3 million), social media (7 million), YouTube (1.8 million), Yahoo Web Banner (48 million), TRACY/Web Media (144K), Tver & Abema/Online TV (1.6 million), and Print (350,000). Additionally, HTJ and Veltra launched a collaborative promotion including materials for a special Hawai'i page for "Yappari Hawai'i", and a questionnaire survey with airfare rewards. JAL contributed the prize and as of August 31, 5,021pax participated in the survey. The landing page received 15,608 page views and 9,386 unique users.
- As part of its romance promotion, HTJ collaborated with Mynavi Wedding to create a special Hawai'i page on the Mynavi Wedding website. This initiative highlights why Hawai'i is ideal for the romance market, provides basic information about the Hawaiian Islands, and features banners directing users to allhawaii.jp. The goal is to enhance the overall promotion of Hawai'i. In August, the advertisement generated 5,619,088 impressions.
- In August, HTJ completed filming and editing 360 videos on four islands in preparation for the JATA Tourism EXPO Japan in September. These locations will be featured in the Cosmic Aloha Balloon, allowing visitors to the Hawai'i pavilion to virtually experience flying over the scenic spots on each island. A media release about JATA TOURISM EXPO 2024 was distributed to 1,000 companies and published on the official website. This content includes details on the pavilion exhibits and the names of 18 participating companies.

### Oceania Major Market Area

- Prince Resorts Hawai'i, with support from Hawai'i Tourism Oceania, hosted exclusive events for selected agents in Sydney, Melbourne, and Auckland. In Sydney, agents took part in a hands-on activity, crafting traditional Hawaiian floral headpieces and wrist bracelets. Meanwhile, in Melbourne and Auckland, they enjoyed a cocktail-making class, learning to mix Hawaiian-inspired drinks in a relaxed and engaging atmosphere. These events not only deepened agents' understanding of the Hawaiian Islands but also strengthened Prince Resorts' relationships with key trade partners.



- Carla Grosetti's article in The Australian Travel & Luxury section (reach: 600,000). It highlighted Waiahole Poi Factory, the importance of poi and gave insight on the Hawai'i Regional Cuisine. Carla attended the Taste of Aloha Famil trip in May.
- A second episode of our Hawai'i segment aired on Discover (Channel 7), drawing an impressive viewership of 200,000. HTO supported Teigan Nash with the arrangements for this episode, contributing to its success.
- HTO hosted two top tier media to see MĀUI at Sydney Opera House, a captivating performance by Fresh Movement Collective from New Zealand. MĀUI is a vibrant retelling of the tales of the Pacific demi-god Māui, blending dance, music, theatre, and projected animation.

### Korea Major Market Area

- As part of the Hawai'i at Home campaign, HTK organized an online event with Magazine B following an offline cooking event. A Hawai'i cuisine recipe was shared on Magazine B's social media, encouraging the public to recreate the dish at home and post their results using event hashtags. As of August 30, the campaign generated a total of 91,266 impressions.
- HTK is organizing a "My True Aloha" themed photo exhibition and talk show in Seoul, in collaboration with National Geographic Traveler magazine. The exhibition will feature 25 photographs showcasing the culture, nature, and beauty of Hawai'i, captured by National Geographic Traveler Korea during visits to O'ahu and Hawai'i Island. Each photo, including captions like "Welcoming Lei" for a local flower shop, reflects moments of connection with the local people and the Aloha spirit. Additionally, a one-day talk show will take place on September 13, with 30 invited guests and a presentation by the magazine editor sharing personal travel experiences in Hawai'i.
- HTK released four campaign videos for "The People. The Place. The Hawaiian Islands" on its YouTube channel, Aloha TV. Each video, featuring a different Hawaiian island - O'ahu, the Island of Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i, includes Korean subtitles. A press release about the new campaign and videos was distributed to relevant media outlets. All four videos were uploaded on August 14, and as of August 28, the campaign has received coverage from 12 media outlets.

### China Major Market Area



- In August, HTC shared a range of articles and videos across its social media platforms, including Weibo, WeChat Official Account, WeChat Video Channel, Douyin, and Xiaohongshu. The content, which garnered significant attention, featured topics such as Melena Estes, a hand-woven Lei artist from Hawai'i, the 30th Made in Hawai'i Festival, and the Mālama Nature Care Adventure Tour on Kaua'i with highlights of the McBryde Garden & Allerton Garden, Kilohana Plantation, Līhu'e Botanical Gardens, and the Nā Pali Coastline, all showcasing unique experiences for nature enthusiasts.
- In partnership with ANA Airlines, HTC published an article celebrating the 5th anniversary of the FLYING HONU and reviewing its inaugural flight from Tokyo to Honolulu. The article highlighted the significance of the milestone event and provided an in-depth review of the inaugural flight experience. Additionally, it offered a comprehensive overview of flight options available from China to Hawai'i via Japan, showcasing the convenience and connectivity provided by ANA's routes.
- On August 20, HTC took part in a trade show hosted by Huacheng International Travel Group (HCG Travel Group) in Beijing. HTC showcased the Hawaiian Islands at a dedicated booth, aiming to attract trade partners and promote the destination. The event saw an impressive turnout, with approximately 2,300 participants in attendance. The booth featured a range of promotional materials to highlight the unique attractions and experiences offered by the Hawaiian Islands.

### Europe Major Market Area

- In August, HTE continued its "Discover Hawai'i" digital campaign across multiple platforms, aiming to boost destination brand recognition and drive engagement among affluent, responsible travelers in the UK, Germany, and Switzerland. The campaign, which promotes tour operators' websites for trip planning and bookings, achieved 1,337,029 interactions and 53,948 website visits to GoHawai'i and tour operator sites.
- HTE's co-op campaign with DERTOUR Germany launched in August to enhance awareness and bookings for the Hawaiian Islands. Running from August to November, the campaign employs a range of channels - social media, podcasts, print mailings, and digital signage, to engage both B2B and B2C audiences. Key elements include social media posting templates for travel agencies, a homepage teaser on DER Touristik's B2B portal, and targeted Instagram posts. The campaign is strategically designed to maximize visibility during the peak booking season for early 2025.

- HTE is organizing a group press trip for four media representatives who will visit O‘ahu and the Island of Hawai‘i from September 15 to 24. The itinerary includes 4 nights in O‘ahu and 3 nights on the Island of Hawai‘i. The HTE UK team has worked closely with island chapters and hotel partners to create the itinerary. The participating top-tier media outlets are The Telegraph, The Sun, PA News, and The Independent. Each outlet is expected to provide multiple coverage pieces, collectively reaching over 50 million readers.

### ***Global Meetings, Conventions & Incentives***

**Overview:** The MCI market can become a critical source of profitable “base” business booked years in advance. This base of business enables a higher yield of shorter-term leisure business. It can also help fill hotel occupancy gaps in future years by capitalizing on off-peak opportunities. To be competitive and thrive in the changing world of business tourism (MCI market), Hawai‘i must capitalize on its strategic mid-Pacific location, which conveniently connects East and West, helping organizations create business events that are international, engaging and memorable experiences. Our location also contributes to a unique experience and the group setting of these meetings, conventions and incentives allows us to further educate our markets about Hawaiian culture and our precious resources by immersing attendees and stakeholders in these activities. Primary focus is on MCI sales and marketing in the United States, Japan, Canada, Oceania, Korea, and other Asia markets as appropriate.

### **Sales & Marketing Efforts:**

- As we move into the fourth quarter, both citywide and single property teams are behind in both definite and tentative goals. Historically both teams show increased production in the last two months of the year, so it is important to stay optimistic.
- Digital marketing campaign targeting incentive business to run through the EOY.
- Meet Hawai‘i played a crucial role in bringing the exciting Pokémon World Championships 2024 to O‘ahu, an event that generated significant economic and community impact. Once confirmed, the team helped showcase Hawai‘i’s unique culture and hospitality on a global stage by offering counsel on media relations and local outreach. From participating in the opening blessing ceremony at Hilton Hawaiian Village to fielding inquiries from local media outlets like the Honolulu Star-Advertiser and KHON, Meet Hawai‘i ensured the event resonated with both visitors and residents. The successful integration of authentic local traditions with a massive

global brand demonstrated Hawai'i's versatility as a premier destination for international events.

- **Citywide:** The citywide team has some larger conventions moving forward for signings in September. A significant amount of time has been spent on 2026 relocations.
- **Single Property:** Production has slowed with the single property team, but saw considerable movement with 2026 bookings, which increased the future pace from 68 to 76 percent. Marykay, our newest team member, concluded site inspections of our key MCI hotels on all islands which will assist in her ability to close opportunities against our competition.
- **List of August Sales Activities:**
  - Client promotional events
    - August 4-6, 2024 – CEMA Summit 2024 – Seattle, WA
    - August 15, 2024 – MC&A Client Event – NYC
    - August 16, 2024 – MPIGNY x NY PCMA – New York
    - August 22, 2024 – IAEE NorCal Summer Networking – San Francisco, CA
    - Global MCI Status Report – August 2024 15 9/10/24
    - August 26, 2024 – Sales Call with HHV – Milwaukee, MI
    - August 28, 2024 – Outrigger Hotel Mahalo Event – O'ahu
  - August site visits and familiarization (FAM)
    - O'ahu – 4
    - Island of Hawai'i – 2
    - Maui – 2
    - Kaua'i – 2

### ***Island Destination Brand Management and Marketing Services***

**Overview:** The Island Destination Brand Management and Marketing Services (IDBMMS) include the support from on-island representatives on behalf of HTA for visitor education, visitor industry engagement, and public relations activities; serving as advisors to HTA on the respective islands and The Hawaiian Islands statewide brand; collaborating with HTA's Global Marketing Team to develop and implement familiarization trips and press trips to areas that are welcoming visitors; providing island-based visitor education support during promotions, trade shows, and missions in major market areas, and coordinating with city and county government officials and designated organizations during crisis management situations.

- This contract ended in June. HTA staff is working on exercising an option to extend the contract through June 2025.

### ***Global Support Services for Brand Management & Marketing***

**Overview:** The Hawai'i Tourism Global Support Services for Brand Management and Marketing support HTA's comprehensive pre- and post-arrival visitor education and destination management efforts, as well as HTA's Global Marketing Team throughout the U.S., Canada, Japan, Oceania, Korea, China, and Europe. The support services include providing market insights to boost strategy, management and development of creative and digital assets, social media, website management, including GoHawaii.com, application development and maintenance, and maximizing emerging technology to support the updating of our Ma'ema'e Toolkit and Brand Guidelines. The resources are also shared broadly with the public for the community, visitor industry, businesses, media, travel trade, and meetings, conventions and incentives industry representatives to utilize in their respective areas.

- The GSS team and HTA staff formalized a social content review process with all GMT to ensure cultural and brand alignment. Following the 2024 Spring Tourism Update, the GSS team also responded to the need for more assets for each market by compiling a wish list of digital assets to add to a shot list, which have since been added to Knowledge Bank (our digital assets library).
- As it relates to Q2 performance, our website overperformed as we provide more resources and tools for travel experiences and Maui Relief, while also performing upgrades to the site to enhance user friendliness. The number of GoHawaii website users was at 95% with returning visitors at 129%. Average engagement time was 300 mins. The performance of the App is organic and will fluctuate drastically as it has a primary usage to serving post-arrival travelers. There was a heavy growth in return visitors (606%) with an average engagement time of 168 minutes due to the app being in its maturity stages.

### ***Sports***

**Overview:** HTA is committed to continuing its support for amateur, collegiate and professional sports programs and events seeking to hold tournaments, exhibitions, and other activities in Hawai'i. Such events and programs extend the brand image of, and attract visitors to, our islands. These visitors will travel to support these events and

programs while concurrently stimulating our state and local economies. As part of this program, HTA requires all its sports events and programs to include a community engagement and benefit component as part of their proposal. Community engagement and benefits may involve activities, such as youth clinics, coaches' clinics and other activities designed to provide Hawai'i's youth with access to resources and guidance not normally available to them.

- Between Aug. 28<sup>th</sup> - Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>, the Los Angeles Clippers hosted a pre-publicity visit on Oahu and Maui to promote their partnership with HTA for their upcoming pre-season game at Stan Sheriff center against the Golden State Warriors to be held on October 5<sup>th</sup>, and their upcoming youth training camp on October 4<sup>th</sup>.
  - Clippers player Norman Powell also visited the Lahainaluna High School in Maui to meet with a group of 50 students including student athletes, at-promise students, leadership class and student council.
  - While here, Norman Powell did numerous interviews, such as TV appearances on KITV Island News sports segment, KHON2, Living 808 morning show, and a local newspaper to promote the events.
  - In social media on the Los Angeles Clippers and Norman Powell's platforms that have a global presence, they promoted Hawai'i, and the partnership with HTA.

## VIII. PLANNING & EVALUATION BRANCH

**Functional Statement:** The purpose of the Planning & Evaluation Branch is to strategically plan for the near, mid, and long-term health and vitality of our visitor industry and manage destination issues that affect communities and the visitor experience. This includes the development, monitoring, and oversight of various plans for the HTA including but not limited to the Tourism Functional Plan, Strategic Plan, Annual Strategic Tourism Management Plan, the Destination Management Action Plans (DMAPs), and the Tourism Management and Marketing Plan. Other activities include development of policy as it relates to tourism.

### ***FY 2026/FY 2027 Budget***

Staff prepared the FY 2026/FY 2027 budgets for the Planning & Evaluation and Workforce Development areas.

### Product Development

**Overview:** Develop, lead, assess, and optimize the development of new products and experiences. Leverage data and research to identify opportunities and areas where the development of programming is needed.

#### EDA’s Noncompetitive Travel, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation Grant

Work continues with DLNR in managing and monitoring their contract for their 7 projects.

## X. FINANCE BRANCH

Contracts List: Pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes §201B-7 (9), please note the below contracts executed during the month of August 2024.

Contract No.	Contractor	Description	Contract Amount	Total Contract Value	Start Date	End Date
†23013 S2	Department of Land and Natural Resources	Sub-Grantee Agreement from the American Rescue Plan Act State Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation Grants (State Tourism Grants)	N/A	\$7,200,000.00	8/07/2024	12/31/2026
25007	Bishop & Company, Inc.	Coordination and Management of Executive Search for HTA President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	\$31,937.16	\$31,937.16	8/09/2024	6/30/2025
20007 S9	AVIAREPS Marketing Garden Holdings Ltd.	Hawai'i Tourism Destination Marketing Management Services in the Korea Major Market Area	(\$35,364.00)	\$4,328,636.00	8/12/2024	12/31/2024
22011 S3	Strategic Marketing & Research Insights, LLC	Campaign Effectiveness Study of USA & Japan Markets	(\$7,500.00)	\$422,000.00	8/12/2024	6/30/2025
23007 S2	Aloha Data Services, Inc.	HTA Board Meeting Minutes	\$30,000.00	\$109,790.40	8/12/2024	12/31/2024
24002 S2	Pacific Rim Concepts LLC dba	Tourism Conference Service Provider	\$200,000.00	\$400,000.00	8/12/2024	11/30/2024

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	Pacific Rim Concepts					
21013 S4	Access Cruise, Inc.	Hawai'i Cruise Industry Consultant Services	\$55,100.00	\$405,100.00	8/12/2024	6/30/2025
23016 S1	VoX International	Hawai'i Tourism Destination Brand Management and Marketing Services for the Canada Major Market Area	(\$122,820.00)	\$2,277,180.00	8/22/2024	12/31/2025
24004 S1	Emotive Travel Marketing Limited	Hawai'i Tourism Destination Brand Management and Marketing Services for the Europe Major Market Area	(\$113,820.00)	\$1,886,180.00	8/23/2024	12/31/2025
23004 S3	A.LINK LLC	Hawai'i Tourism Destination Brand Marketing and Management Services for the Japan Major Market Area	(\$1,330,000.00)	\$20,670,000.00	8/26/2024	12/31/2027
Contract Type: • Sole Source † Procurement Exemption ⊖ Emergency			\$317,037.16			

Other activities related to procurement, contracts, Hawai'i Convention Center, and Legislative Audit will be reported in the Budget, Finance, and Convention Center Standing Committee report at the HTA board meeting.