



WHERE BUSINESS AND ALOHA MEET™

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HVCB TEAM TAKES AIME AT NEW BUSINESS DOWN UNDER

HONOLULU – A 17-member sales team led by the Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB) is taking Hawai'i's business thunder Down Under for the 17th Asia-Pacific Incentives & Meetings Expo (AIME), February 16-18, in Melbourne, Australia.

Held at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre, AIME is Australia's largest annual business event exhibition. Adele Tasaka, HVCB's senior director of accounts, noted the three-day tradeshow expects 6,000 professional and corporate conference planners worldwide to attend – a 30 percent increase over last year – along with 850 exhibitors from 50 countries.

"We have a great team going to Australia and a strong message that will get lots of attention from international planners looking to hold a special event in Hawai'i," said Tasaka. "Despite the global economic challenges, there remains tremendous interest in the marketplace to hold meetings and incentives business in Hawai'i."

The Hawai'i tradeshow exhibit will be a colorful, vibrant showcase of the islands' natural beauty and unique cultural appeal, while the sales team focuses its message on the state's first-rate meeting accommodations and outstanding offers available to groups.

Among the incentive-laden initiatives the HVCB team will be selling at AIME are:

- HVCB's new Hot Rates, Hot Dates! program offering special savings on accommodations and activities at hotels and resorts statewide through 2010.
- HVCB's value-added program offering big discounts on retail products and activities in partnership with Retail Merchants of Hawaii and Activities and Attractions Association of Hawaii.
- HVCB's Hawai'i Speakers Bureau program offering elite Hawai'i-based leaders in various fields of expertise, including high technology, Asian affairs, medicine, and scientific research, to address groups meeting in the islands.

For the past year, first in response to the volatility of travel costs and, more recently, the downturn in the global financial markets, HVCB has been putting greater emphasis on selling incentive meetings and events. Fueled by Hawai'i's popularity as a favorite travel destination, performance-based corporate incentives have historically produced a solid foundation of business for Hawai'i's meetings industry, and are more likely to generate near-term bookings. The push for business at AIME fits perfectly with this strategic approach.

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Following AIME, on February 20, HVCB will be hosting a special Hawai'i tradeshow and reception in Sydney for 60 invited major clients and new business prospects.

Joining Tasaka at AIME will be sales executives for the Kaua'i Visitors Bureau, O'ahu Visitors Bureau, Maui Visitors Bureau, Big Island Visitors Bureau, Hawaiian Airlines, Hilton Hawaiian Village Beach Resort & Spa, Hilton Waikoloa Village, Hyatt Regency Waikiki Resort & Spa, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Waikiki, Sheraton Maui Resort, The Westin Maui Resort & Spa, Aloha Holidays, Incentives Hawaii, Island Partners Hawai'i, and Maui Jim Sunglasses.

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Special note to media: The Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB) recognizes the use of the 'okina ['] or glottal stop, one of the eight consonants of the (modern) Hawaiian language; and the kahakō [ā] or macron (e.g., in place names of Hawai'i such as Lāna'i). However, HVCB respects the individual use of these markings for names of organizations and businesses.

Statewide Meetings Contact:

Michael Murray, CMP, CMM, CASE
Vice President, Sales and Marketing, CMI Division
Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau
mmurray@hvcb.org
(808) 924-0253

Patrick Dugan
Senior Vice President
McNeil Wilson Communications
Patrick.Dugan@MWC-Anthology.com
(808) 539-3411

For information about hosting corporate meetings and incentives in Hawai'i, visit HVCB's website at BusinessAloha.com or call 1-888-424-2924.

Hawai'i Convention Center Contact:

Neil Mullanaphy
Executive Director, Sales and Marketing
The Hawai'i Convention Center
nmullanaphy@hccsmg.com
(703) 647-7410

Teddi Anderson
President
The Limtiaco Company
TeddiA@TheLimtiacoCompany.com
(808) 535-9099, ext. 103

For more information, about the Hawai'i Convention Center, visit www.hawaiiiconvention.com or call (808) 943-3500. For additional information about SMG, visit www.smgworld.com.