



Hawai'i Convention Center  
1801 Kalākāua Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96815  
**kelepona** tel 808 973 2255  
**kelepa'i** fax 808 973 2253  
**kahua pa'a** web [hawaii-tourism-authority.org](http://hawaii-tourism-authority.org)

**David Y. Ige**  
Governor

**George D. Szigeti**  
President and Chief Executive Officer

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## **HTA's Expanded Hawai'i Tourism Conference, Sept. 26-30, Focuses on Transforming Tourism Together**

*– Online early bird registration ends Aug. 15 –*

**HONOLULU** – The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) is bringing a fresh approach to the annual Hawai'i Tourism Conference, Sept. 26-30, by expanding it to a weeklong event with a focus on a more interactive format that fosters engagement amongst attendees.

Hosted at the world-class Hawai'i Convention Center, the theme for this year's conference is "Transforming Tourism Together."

HTA is bringing together leaders, visionaries, suppliers, operators, and policy makers in an innovative format of networking, sharing of best practices and discussion on topics ranging from cultural preservation, sustainability, the environment and education to enhancing the visitor experience. Technology will also be a common theme during the conference schedule.

"Our goal is for participants to walk away feeling energized, informed and better networked as stakeholders of tourism who will take action in this ever-changing global marketplace," said George D. Szigeti, HTA president and CEO.

"Our new format will foster thoughtful collaboration between a diverse group of professionals from industries tied to tourism. Hawai'i is the ideal place to host this summit on international trends, strategic alliances and emerging opportunities."

This year's new multi-track schedule will allow attendees to customize their conference experience by participating in pre-conference learning tours of the neighbor islands, and selecting the sessions, workshops and panels most relevant to their interests.

To help everyone stay connected, a custom Hawai'i Tourism Conference app will be available with personalized scheduling, live audience polling and features that enable attendees to connect for one-on-one networking opportunities.

Szigeti added, "We're moving away from having lots of 'talking heads' on panels and instead are offering moderated interactive sessions that encourages the audience to collaborate on topics important to their businesses."

The centerpiece of the conference will be the Village Square, a high-profile common area where participants will congregate each day, encouraging collaboration and providing businesses with an opportunity to showcase their products and services in a highly visible setting.

A special highlight of the conference program will be the Tourism Legacy Awards, which will honor businesses and individuals making significant contributions to perpetuating the Hawaiian culture at a luncheon on Tuesday, Sept. 27. Surfing is the focus of this year's awardees.

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Looking ahead to next year, HTA's Global Marketing Team for Hawai'i representing the United States, Canada, Oceania, Japan, Korea, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, Europe and Meet Hawai'i will share their marketing plans for 2017.

For information on attending the Hawai'i Tourism Conference, visit [www.hawaiiitourismconference.com](http://www.hawaiiitourismconference.com).

### **Registration Information**

The Early Bird registration discount ends Aug. 15 offering \$50 off full conference registration fees. All registration types are per person and include lunch on selected days and the Aloha Reception pau hana on Wednesday, Sept. 28. Registration fees do not include lodging or transportation.

- Full Conference (all four days): \$375
- Two Days (Tuesday/Wednesday): \$250
- Two Days (Wednesday/Thursday): \$250
- Tuesday only: \$185
- Wednesday only: \$185
- Thursday only: \$185

Special discounted registration fees are also available for groups, educators and students.

An optional pre-conference island tour is available on Monday, Sept. 26, for an additional fee of \$75 per person and includes on-island ground transportation and lunch.

[Special discounts hotels rates](#) are available courtesy of Outrigger Hotels and Resorts.

### **About the Hawai'i Tourism Authority**

The [Hawai'i Tourism Authority](#) 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 <http://www.hawaiiitourismauthority.org> or follow updates on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

### **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)