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**THREE NEW CULTURAL EXHIBITS UNVEILED AT HAWAII CONVENTION CENTER
– Artwork honors history of slack key guitar, surfing, and Chief Kekūhaupi'o –**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Convention Center (HCC), the state's largest meetings facility with a \$2.5 million collection of local artwork, today unveiled three new exhibits celebrating the history of *kī hō'alu* (or slack key guitar), the legendary sport of surfing, and Hawai'i's high chief Kekūhaupi'o during a special blessing and ceremony this evening on the Center's third floor concourse. More than 100 cultural, business and hospitality industry leaders attended the event.

Presented by AEG Facilities, the sponsorship of the new exhibits is part of HCC's ongoing commitment to perpetuating Hawaiian culture as the management company of the Center. The investment ensures Hawaiian culture, history and heritage remains the focus and foundation of Hawai'i storytelling and ensures an understanding of what makes places like the Hawaiian Islands and HCC so extraordinary is passed on to others. The initiative is also supported by the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Outrigger Hotels and Resorts, and the Hawaiian Legacy Reforestation Initiative.

"When the Hawai'i Convention Center opened in 1998, not only was it designed to be a world-class meetings destination, it was also designed with a Hawai'i 'sense of place' in mind," said Teri Orton, HCC general manager. "Bringing the outside natural environment in is evident in its architectural design. However, one thing AEG Facilities and our staff are most proud of is the fact that this Center also boasts an impressive collection of local art thanks to our partnership with the Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts and its 'Art in Public Places' program."

The three new exhibits debuted today:

Kī Hō'alu: Honoring The Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar Tradition

This exhibit was presented earlier this year at The Grammy Museum in Los Angeles as part of Mele Mei, a month-long celebration of Hawai'i's music, hula and culture. The GRAMMY Museum, in partnership with the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Hawai'i Academy of Recording Arts and Outrigger Enterprises Group, presented the exhibit exploring one of the world's greatest acoustic guitar traditions. With a history that dates back to the 1800s when the Spanish and Mexican cowboys came to Hawai'i with their guitars, the unique sound of slack key comes from the resonance of the tunings and techniques that mimic the yodels and falsettos rooted in ancient chants that are common in Hawaiian singing. Through artifacts and historical instruments that trace the history of this Hawaiian music tradition, the Museum's tribute to the slack key guitar served as the official kickoff of the Mele Mei 2016 celebration in Hawai'i. It now returns home to Hawai'i. [Click here](#) for more information.

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Makai – To the Sea – Seaward

This exhibit is a visual display of the importance of the Hawaiian sport of surfing, which has introduced the Hawaiian culture and Aloha spirit to the world. From Waikīkī, Mākaha and the North Shore, Hawaiian surfers brought their surfboards, culture and lifestyle to the coast of California and in doing so, often this became the first interaction between a Hawaiian and someone from the continent. This story is captured and shared in this exhibit by Allan Seymour of Classic Surf featuring a collection of four rare and vintage surfboards, surfing photos, original oil paintings, and surf memorabilia. Items on display include Duke Kahanamoku's redwood surfboard circa 1920s, George Downing's Mākaha Gun balsawood surfboard circa 1950s, Gerry Lope's Pipeline Mini-Gun surfboard circa 1970s, Wade Koniakowsky's original oil painting of Duke Kahanamoku, and much more. [Click here](#) for more information.

'Ahu'ula o Kekūhaupi'o

This exhibit honors one of the most influential and probably least known chiefs in Hawaiian history. Kekūhaupi'o was said to be a master of Hawaiian martial arts, first serving as Kamehameha the Great's combat instructor before becoming his loyal bodyguard, fearless warrior, and trusted advisor. In honor of Kekūhaupi'o's role in Hawaiian history, the Hawaiian Legacy Reforestation Initiative commissioned master feather worker Rick San Nicolas in 2016 to create a replica of the cloak and helmet worn by the chief. In ancient times, feather cloaks and capes were symbols of power and social standing in Hawaiian culture. Only high-ranking chiefs or warriors of great ability were entitled to wear these exceptional garments. The bright, velvet-like feathers came from tropical honeycreepers. Red feathers mainly from the *'iwi* and *'apapane*. Yellow feathers mainly from the *'ō'ō* and *mamo*. Although the color red was associated with chiefs and the gods, yellow became the most prized color owing to the scarcity of the feathers. [Click here](#) for more information.

"These exhibits add a lot of depth to the already impressive art experience here at the Hawai'i Convention Center and really builds upon an engaging narrative that honors the best of what Hawai'i is all about including our traditions, history and heritage, and celebrating the native Hawaiian culture," said Brad Gessner, senior vice president for AEG Facilities. "After seeing these incredible new exhibits, I'm confident even more locals and visitors alike will be drawn to explore these beautiful exhibits further when coming to HCC for meetings, conventions and events."

In addition to its support of the arts, AEG Facilities and HCC is also partnering with the Hawaiian Legacy Reforestation Initiative on the island of Hawai'i to create the "Hawai'i Convention Center Legacy Forest" on the slopes of Maunakea. HCC has committed to planting one million koa trees to give back to the land and help offset the carbon footprint of travelers coming to the islands for meetings and conventions.

All HCC art exhibits are free, self-guided and open to the public daily during normal business hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For information, visit www.meethawaii.com/convention-center.

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About AEG Facilities

AEG, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Anschutz Company, is the leading sports, entertainment and venue operator in the world. AEG Facilities, a stand-alone affiliate of AEG, owns, operates or consults with more than 100 of the industry's preeminent venues worldwide, across five continents, providing complete venue management, as well as specialized programs in operations, guest services, ticketing, booking, sales and marketing. AEG Facilities also provides resources and access to other AEG-affiliated entities, including live event producer, AEG Live, AEG Global Partnerships, AEG Development, AEG 1Earth, AEG Encore and AEG Creative to support the success of AEG venues across the globe. The Los Angeles-based organization owns, operates or provides services to the world's most elite venues, including STAPLES Center (Los Angeles, Calif.), StubHub Center (Carson, Calif.), Nokia Theatre L.A. LIVE (Los Angeles, Calif.), Sprint Center (Kansas City, Mo.), KFC Yum! Center (Louisville, Ky.), AmericanAirlines Arena (Miami, Fla.), Prudential Center (Newark, N.J.), Target Center (Minneapolis, Minn.) and BBVA Compass Stadium (Houston, Texas). Among the roster of world class convention centers and other facilities managed by the division are the Los Angeles Convention Center, Hawai'i Convention Center (Honolulu, HI), Qatar National Convention Center, Oman Convention and Exhibition Center (Muscat, Oman), Sydney International Convention, Exhibition, and Entertainment District, Cairns Convention Center and Darwin Conventions Centre. Other venues include Oracle Arena and O.co Coliseum (Oakland, Calif.), CONSOL Energy Center (Pittsburgh, Penn.), Rabobank Arena (Bakersfield, Calif.), MercedesBenz Arena (Shanghai, China), MasterCard Center (Beijing, China), The O2 Arena (London, England), O2 World (Berlin, Germany), O2 World Hamburg (Hamburg, Germany), Ahoy Arena (Rotterdam, Netherlands), Itaipava Arena Pernambuco (Recife, Brazil), Allianz Parque (Sao Paulo, Brazil), Allphones Arena (Sydney, Australia), Ülker Sports Arena (Istanbul, Turkey), Ericsson Globe Arena (Stockholm, Sweden) and the. For more information, please visit aegworldwide.com.

Special note to media: HTA 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, HTA respects the individual use of these markings for names of organizations and businesses.