

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW "ISLAND GRADUATE" PROGRAM HELPS TRAVEL TRADE SELL HAWAII

HONOLULU – Answering the demand of travel trade professionals in the U.S. and Canada, the Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB) has introduced a new education program to help them sell the uniqueness of each island to travelers.

HVCB's "Island Graduate" certification program offers six island specific, self-study training courses online at www.Agents.GoHawaii.com covering Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, Maui, and Hawai'i's Big Island. All six courses are free of charge and each can be completed in an average of 3-4 hours.

A complement of HVCB's *Ke Kula 'O Hawai'i* (The School of Hawai'i) Destination Specialist program, the new Island Graduate program was developed in conjunction with HVCB's Island Chapter bureaus.

Travel trade professionals go through an advanced learning module that provides them with a deeper understanding of each island, particularly the attractions, activities, and unique qualities that help sell a Hawai'i vacation to travel consumers.

"Our travel trade partners are constantly seeking new information about Hawai'i and the Island Graduate program is a way to meet their needs and help keep the destination fresh and top-of-mind when selling trips to their clients," said Julie Zadeh, HVCB's managing director of travel trade marketing.

"This newest feature of HVCB's destination specialist program is an evolution of our outreach efforts to empower the travel trade community about what travelers enjoy most when visiting each of the islands," said Zadeh. "While *Ke Kula 'O Hawai'i* is an excellent introduction to the destination as a whole, this new program allows travel trade providers to learn for themselves what makes each island special."

The Island Graduate program is easy to navigate, intuitive by design, and allows participants to conduct the coursework at their own pace. Upon completion of each island course and passing a final exam, they become HVCB certified as an Island Graduate and qualify to earn continuing education credits from The Travel Institute.

Program graduates also receive access to complimentary sales and marketing tools provided by HVCB, such as island maps, brochures, visitor guides, posters, scenic images, and promotional DVDs, as well as timely information about market trends research and product updates.

"Competition for the travel dollar is fierce. These resources give the travel trade community even more of an opportunity to sell Hawai'i as a traveler's first choice for an unforgettable vacation experience," said Zadeh.

For travel information about Hawai'i – the Islands of Aloha – visit HVCB's website at GoHawaii.com or call 1-800-GOHAWAII.

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Contact:

Darlene Morikawa
Director, Public Relations/Communications
Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau
dmorikawa@hvcb.org
(808) 924-0259

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