



ISLAND MATTERS *Mufi Hannemann*

Hawaii's Tourism Needs Tech To Thrive

In the coming months, Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association will be founding a committee in support of the hospitality industry's technology community. The committee's objectives include providing educational opportunities for members to learn about technology solutions, developing ways to recruit and retain Hawaii's IT talent, and elevating the role of IT in business and the community by providing a voice for hospitality's technology sector.

Technology has become increasingly important in every phase of a visitor's travels, from booking reservations to navigating their way through our islands through their smartphones via a Facebook livestream, or a set of photos and videos being texted to friends and families.

On top of that, there are 18,000 more wireless devices than there are residents in our state. The increased use of smartphones, tablets and other devices in everyday life creates an incessant need for our state to be equipped with the infrastructure and IT talent to ensure visitors can enjoy the speed, security and reliability of our networks as much as our beautiful attractions.

While I was mayor, along with our high-powered director of information technology Gordon Bruce, with the support of other city departments and the City Council, we totally renovated the city's IT infrastructure. We replaced ancient mainframes, set up a mirrored system at Kapolei for data backup, ditched old analog phones and installed modern VoIP units, renovated the microwave towers

that ensure first-responder communications around the island, launched free Wi-Fi coverage and replaced the city's entire ERP management software. Honolulu was soon named one of the top 10 American cities that excel in the digital arena, and was named America's No. 1 digital city shortly after I left office, based on the momentum created by the major upgrades and innovations that were completed.

Though we have come a long way and are excited about advancements to come, especially as we launch HLTA's inaugural Information Technology Committee, there is much more work we need to do as a state on this front.

Currently, the traffic on the state's wireless infrastructure — combined with the data use of the more than 1.4 million

kama'aina who populate our islands — results in slower download times, weaker connectivity and frustrated users.

It's time that we make a stronger investment in our statewide network. The state's leading wireless carriers and telecom operators have found a way to do just that through the deployment of small wireless facilities, or "small cells," that essentially help to strengthen network capacity and create the framework for fifth-generation (5G) wireless networks.

It's time for state lawmakers to pass legislation that would allow small cells to be installed by streamlining the review processes in the state and counties.

Small cells would accommodate the public's insatiable need for more data by paving the way for 5G, giving visitors



Perry Arrasmith of Aiea High (center), who enrolled at Harvard, pictured with HLTA's Mufi Hannemann and Dean Nakasone, was one of two \$2,500 Citizen-Scholar Award recipients in 2016 PHOTO FROM GREGG HIRATA

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Citizen-Scholars Set A High Bar

a connection that is 10 times faster. The size of a shoebox, small cells are visually unobtrusive, and would be discretely installed on existing structures such as utility poles, streetlights and traffic-signal poles. The dense deployment of small cells would provide faster connectivity in even the most rural parts of the island.

The installation of small cells will position Hawaii for better business opportunities, a memorable vacation, and a better quality of life for Hawaii's present and future generations.

From the Mainland to Asia to every destination in between, tourists have a plethora of options on how to spend their dollars. Visitors expect the very best connectivity, no matter where they travel.

Let's set Hawaii up for success. The better our visitors and kama'aina stay connected, the more they will all share their experiences

— drawing visitors to our islands and more dollars to our local economy.

HLTA's Citizen-Scholar Awards

On April 27, 42 public high school seniors from across the Hawaiian Islands each will receive \$1,000 scholarships for their postgraduate education from Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association at a luncheon at The Modern Honolulu. In addition, the top scholarship awardees from each of the counties will receive an additional \$2,500 award.

The scholarships, known as Citizen-Scholar Awards, are the result of a strong partnership among Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association, *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* and the state Department of Education. Funding for the scholarships is provided by HLTA members.

For the past 12 years, through this award program,

HLTA has honored one outstanding senior from every public high school in Hawaii who best exemplifies citizenship in the classroom and community. The students are selected by the Department of Education for scholastic achievements, as well as their school and community service. Each must have a minimum 3.2 grade point average and have an extensive record of school and public service.

Last year, for the first time, HLTA presented two additional \$2,500 scholarships to the top student from Oahu as well as the top student representing the Neighbor Islands to help them advance their studies.

This year we are revising the format as part of HLTA's 70th anniversary by presenting four \$2,500 scholarships to the top students from Oahu, Hawaii island, Kauai and Maui. These exceptional students will be selected by an HLTA committee.

The Citizen-Scholar Awards is all about recognizing those students who have contributed to making their schools and community a

better place — we're looking forward to seeing these talented citizen-scholars fulfill their potential in the the years to come in becoming produc-

tive and leading members of our society.

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PERFORMANCE DATES

Friday, April 7 - 7:30 pm
Saturday, April 8 - 7:30 pm
Sunday, April 9 - 4:00 pm

MARCH 31 - APRIL 9
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