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## **Kaua`i Polynesian Festival Launches Website**

### Internet Proving to be Essential to Recreation Business Success

LIHU`E, Hawai`i, April 24, 2006 – On Memorial Day weekend, May 25 through May 28, The Kamanawa Foundation will present its 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Kaua`i Polynesian Festival, three days of a colorful variety of cultural offerings, including dance competitions, crafts, food, workshops, and other entertainment. This year, The Kamanawa Foundation launches its new, improved website, [www.kauaipolynesianfestival.org](http://www.kauaipolynesianfestival.org), to serve its patrons and align with the trend that more people receive their information and make their recreation plans online.

In April 2006, SMS Hawai`i reported that “Eighty three percent (83%) of Hawai`i adults say that they have used the Internet in the past 30 days somewhere (not necessarily at home).” Also according to SMS Hawai`i per the Kaua`i Visitor Survey for the 2003 Shoulder Period, 71% of visitors use the Internet to plan a portion of their trip to Kaua`i during the 2003 peak season. Twenty-six percent of those surveyed used the Internet to find recreational activities for their Kaua`i trip.

“Since the first annual Kaua`i Polynesian Festival in 2000, the use of the Internet has grown immensely,” stated Kapu Kinimaka-Alquiza, director of the Kaua`i Polynesian Festival. “And, we know that people, especially visitors, make their recreation decisions from information and services on the Web.” Last year, the Kaua`i Polynesian Festival incorporated more Internet promotions than before via posting their event information on various travel and entertainment industry websites as well as utilizing increased email communication. As a result, attendance nearly doubled from the year before. “Because of this and recent Internet-use statistics, we chose to upgrade the offerings on our website, which, today, better serves all those that attend our Festival as participants or spectators,” said Kinimaka-Alquiza.

The Kaua'i Polynesian Festival's enhanced website includes online reservations for tickets to the events as well as applications for dance competitions and food and craft booths. Payment that goes along with these transactions may also be done through the website via secure channels.

"Adding these interactive components to the website were important as it makes it more convenient for folks to do business with us," asserted Kinimaka-Alquiza. "Furthermore, it streamlines processing on our side so that we have more time to work on the actual activities and entertainment that we'll present to the audience. This is great news for both our organization and our patrons."

Kinimaka-Alquiza noted that although the Kaua'i Polynesian Festival is a four-day event, which is fairly short given that most businesses operate full-time year-round, it is even more imperative for their event to have a strong Internet presence. "We need to stay top-of-mind with our target audience during the off-season and make a credible first-impression to influence individuals to join the festivities. I would encourage all event organizers to consider implementing upgrades to their website," she said.

The Kaua'i Polynesian Festival kicks off on Thursday, May 25, at 6 p.m. at the Sheraton Kaua'i Resort with a lavish dinner buffet and pulsating Polynesian dance at its finest, performed by experts in the traditional style of the islands, complete with authentic costumes, music and royal ceremonial protocol.

But that's just the beginning. On Friday, May 28, at noon, gates open at the Vidinha Stadium soccer field in Lihue, and the festival drives into high gear with a gastronomic extravaganza of island foods, authentic arts and crafts, and events for children. In the afternoon, a Polynesian fashion show of apparel and accessories offered by the event's artisans and vendors is followed by a welcoming ceremony of the host culture, Hawai'i, for the representatives of New Zealand followed by action and "poi ball" dance competitions. The Hawaiian Hula competition follows with groups of various ages performing ancient Kahiko dance and more modern Auwana dance.

The show goes on Saturday and Sunday, with morning workshops for those who want to learn more about the intricacies of Tahitian, Samoan, Hawaiian and Maori dance and culture. By the evening, the pageantry begins again on Saturday, May 27, with competitions showcasing Tahitian group Otea, Aparima and Ahupurotu

followed by the Samoan Fireknife dance competition. A Tahitian-focused competition happens Sunday, May 28, culminating in an award ceremony for everyone who took part in the event.

Tickets are \$8 each day, or \$15 for all three days. Workshops are \$25 each. Tickets for the opening dinner on May 26 begin at \$50 each. Tickets may be purchased at [www.kauaipolynesianfestival.org](http://www.kauaipolynesianfestival.org), Scotty's Music, Progressive Expressions, Deli & Bread Connection, Larry's Music Center, Hula Girl Restaurant, Eggberts, Hanalei Surf Co., Western Motors, and at the door.

Sponsors for the event include, B&B Tahitian Pearls, County of Kaua`i, Dollar Rent a Car, Hawaiian Airlines, Hawai`i Tourism Authority, Hawai`i Visitors Bureau, Hilo Hattie, Kaua`i Beach Hotel and Resort, Lomi Records, Polynesian Cultural Center, Sheraton Kaua`i Resort, The JK Show, and Wala`au.

Established in 1994, the Kamanawa Foundation is a Kaua`i-based non-profit organization. Its mission is to preserve, promote and perpetuate the Native Hawaiian culture, including the language, social values, arts, crafts and music, primarily through the study of hula. The Kamanawa Foundation hosts three annual events that highlight hula and Polynesian performing arts including the Kaua`i Polynesian Festival, Holiday Hula Celebration, and Kaua`i Hula Exhibition.

For more information about the Kaua`i Polynesian Festival, visit [www.kauaipolynesianfestival.org](http://www.kauaipolynesianfestival.org) or call (808) 335-6466.

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PHOTO CAPTION: A Samoan fire knife dance dazzles crowds at last year's Kaua`i Polynesian Festival. This year, the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Kaua`i Polynesian Festival will kick off on Thursday, May 25, at 6 p.m. at the Sheraton Kaua`i Resort with a Polynesian Pageant, Dinner & Entertainment. The Festival continues May 26 through May 28 at the Vidinha Stadium soccer field. Photo courtesy of Terry Lee Photography.