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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kauai Beach Explorer – the INDESPENSABLE Guide to Kauai’s Beaches

KEYPOINTS / STRUCTURE

- Objectives – be the central source for beach and ocean-related education / information
- Who is involved
- Site features
- Call to action

OVERVIEW / OBJECTIVES

The Kauai Beach Explorer project supports ocean safety, recreation, and responsible use through education – it is the indispensable guide to Kauai’s beaches.

Visitor or local – we all love to spend a day at the beach. It’s that combination of amazing natural beauty and outdoor activity that make it hard to stay away from our ocean playground. Sadly for some, a beach day that started with fun can quickly turn into tragedy. Hawai`i’s drowning rate is twice that of the nation, with the most visitor drownings occurring on Kaua`i.

Visitors are looking for fun things to do while visiting Kauai; they want to explore the beaches and activities on our island. The website provides the planning and activity information they WANT to know – and at the same time the safety information they NEED to know. It’s all about easy access to vital information.

The objective of this project is to prevent drowning, and to improve the overall beach experience on Kauai.

WHO IS INVOLVED

The Kauai Beach Explorer was conceived and created by the Hanalei-based design studio, Wasabi Marketing Elements. Principals Winston Welborn and Justin Britt, along with the rest of team Wasabi, saw the need for ocean recreation information, and chose this project to showcase the power of the web for reaching large audiences. Also central to the project is support and information from various Kauai visitor and safety agencies, including the County of Kauai, Kauai Fire Department (KFD) and Ocean Safety Bureau, Kauai Visitors Bureau (KVB), Kauai Water Safety Task Force (KWSTF), National Weather Service (NWS) and many others.

“I’m very pleased that this group has gotten together to take action on the serious challenge we face keeping people as safe as they can be on our beaches,” stated Mayor Bryan Baptiste. “Our lifeguards do an outstanding job. But we need to educate people before they even head out to the beach if we truly want to save lives.”

“We felt the Kauai Explorer website was the ideal vehicle to make this information available,” said Sue Kanoho of the KVB. “It’s our hope that this report will become THE resource for hotel concierge and front desk staff in informing visitors on how to recreate safely on our beaches.”

Dr. Monty Downs, a longtime advocate for enhanced lifeguard and ocean safety services, is Chair of the KWSTF. “This is such an important step, and it’s the first big step we’ve taken in a number of years to make a bigger impact on our drowning rate.”

In cooperation with the KFD Ocean Safety Bureau and the National Weather Service, The Explorer provides timely ocean reports in a format that is easy for a visitor to understand. Ocean Safety Bureau supervisor Kalani Viera gets daily reports from lifeguard stations around the island and that information is

updated on the website. Kalani is also featured in a safety video on the website. All of this information will be updated in real time and can also be viewed on mobile devices such as cell phones.

“Arguably our most important partner in this project is the actual site visitor.” says Welborn, “We really want to build a community via this website. Visitors can browse the entire site before they arrive on Kauai, and then use the site to check daily conditions when they are here. We are also asking that anyone in contact with the visitor industry share the information – including concierge desks, hotels, and vacation rentals. This website has the ability to reach audiences that may otherwise completely miss out on important info.”

SITE FEATURES

The Explorer site starts with a map showing all of the 16 featured beaches. Visitors can filter the map view to show only lifeguarded beaches, best snorkeling beaches, and other views based on their interest. Beach detail pages show what’s special about each location, the activities, hazards and other important information. Site visitors can add their own comments for each beach, adding a community feel to the site.

The Ocean Report features current ocean conditions which are updated by the Wasabi team based on info from the NWS and Ocean Safety Bureau. When NWS warnings are issued they are displayed on the applicable beaches and graphically in the full Ocean Report.

Starting Oct. 1, 2006 the Explorer will add a printable component of the Ocean Report. The printable Ocean Report can be distributed to people who do not have access to a computer. Wasabi will publish the printable Ocean Report in PDF format daily and upload it to kauaiexplorer.com, from where anyone can download and print as many copies as needed. “Print on demand is great because the content can be kept current, distributed easily, and there is no wasted paper.” Says Welborn “We also want to let people subscribe to the report and receive it in their email inbox. Imagine how many people we can reach if all of the hotels and visitor contacts help us distribute this info. And the visitors will have a better time as a result!”

Also on kauaiexplorer.com are various safety and activity guides. The site will evolve constantly based on the needs and feedback of visitors, and more beaches and guides will be added in the future. The basic concept is to deliver safety information via interesting content – all in an easy to use, accessible format.

The best way to learn more about the site and project is to simply visit kauaiexplorer.com – and your feedback is encouraged.

PLEASE PARTICIPATE

At the basic level we encourage people to visit and share kauaiexplorer.com. Businesses and individuals with websites are encouraged to link to kauaiexplorer.com and to include a link to the site in your visitor-related communications. A dedicated community is central to the success of any website.

Sponsorship opportunities are also available for a variety of locations on the site. “We definitely want to the Kauai Explorer to retain its informational feel and not put a bunch of ads all over the site,” says Britt of Wasabi “so we came up with a program to sponsor beaches that provide real value to selected businesses.” For more information on sponsorship opportunities please go online or contact Wasabi at 826 0026.

“We’re happy to provide this service to our community and our visitors.” says Winston Welborn, president of Wasabi. “As a former Kauai Firefighter I witnessed emergencies that could have been avoided with some simple safety awareness. If everyone in contact with our visitors participates and shares this website, then we can make a real difference in Kauai ocean safety. It’s worth it even if we only save one life.”