
Tuesday, June 14, 2016

ISLAND AIR LAUNCHES DAILY KONA SERVICE

George Applegate Named Island Air's Hawai'i Island Representative

HONOLULU — Island Air today launched daily air service to Hawai'i Island as part of its continuing efforts to expand its presence in the Islands and offer residents and visitors an alternative option for interisland travel. The airline also announced it has hired veteran tourism industry leader George Applegate to serve as its representative on Hawai'i Island.

Island Air officials, along with government, business and visitor industry leaders from Hawai'i Island and O'ahu gathered at the Kona International Airport this morning for a blessing of the airline's new check-in counter located in Terminal 1 and departure/arrival gate (Gate 5). Following the blessing, passengers on the inaugural flights arriving into and departing from Kona were greeted with lei and entertained by keiki from Waimea's Hālau Hula Ka No'eau. In partnership with the Big Island Visitors Bureau (BIVB), guests also were given a tour of the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawai'i Authority located a short drive from the airport.

During the celebration, Island Air's president and chief executive officer David Uchiyama announced that Applegate will serve as Island Air's representative on Hawai'i Island. Applegate will support the airline's sales efforts and assist in promoting Island Air's business on Hawai'i Island.

"Over the years, George has played an integral role in strengthening Hawai'i Island's tourism industry. We are excited to have him join the Island Air team as we work to grow our Kona service," said Uchiyama. "Our entire Island Air team recognizes the importance of having reliable interisland air travel options that allow local families and businesses to remain connected, support the local economy and provide alternatives for residents and visitors to enjoy Hawai'i the Island way."

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Applegate has more than 40 years of experience in the visitor industry, including 24 years with the BIVB, 13 of those as its executive director before he retired in 2013. In 2015, he served as an executive assistant to Mayor Billy Kenoi where he assisted with various tourism projects for Hawai'i Island. He continues to provide tourism-related consulting services on a contractual basis to the County of Hawai'i through his firm George Applegate Consulting.

“Having another alternative for interisland travel is critical for our community and visitor industry, which is why I am excited about this opportunity to assist with the growth of a second interisland airline that will support both residents and visitors,” said Applegate.

In addition to increasing seat capacity to Hawai'i Island with five daily roundtrip flights between Kona and Honolulu, Island Air hired 22 employees to service the new route. The Kona-based team of customer service agents and ramp agents is being led by Sharda Kaupu Lopez, who will serve as Island Air's Kona station manager and oversee the airline's airport operations. Lopez is originally from Miloli'i and started working for Island Air in 2012.

ABOUT ISLAND AIR:

Island Air is the value-leader in the Hawaiian Islands, offering 238 convenient flights each week between O'ahu, Maui, Kaua'i and Hawai'i Island. The affordable alternative for interisland travel, Island Air's 64-seat ATR-72 aircraft are able to provide captivating aerial views of Hawai'i's remarkable landscapes. Founded in 1980 as Princeville Airways, the company was renamed Island Air in 1992 and has been proudly serving the islands of Hawai'i for more than 35 years.

For more information about Island Air or to make a reservation, visit www.islandair.com or call (800) 652-6541. Let us know how we are doing on Yelp or TripAdvisor or just stay connected by liking Island Air on Facebook at www.facebook.com/islandairhawaii, or follow @IslandAirHawaii on Twitter and @IslandAir_Hawaii on Instagram.

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