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World Eye Reports Hawaii

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Hawaii is first port of call for Japanese investment in the U.S.

This year marks 65 years since the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty (Treaty of Peace with Japan) which re-established diplomatic relations between Japan and the U.S. after World War II. Today, the U.S.-Japan relationship is based on mutual respect, democratic principles and trade.

America's 50th state, Hawaii, is located in the Pacific Ocean between Japan and the U.S. — a symbolic link between both countries. The state has enjoyed strong links with Japan since the late 1800's, when it was known as the Kingdom of Hawaii.

In 1885, the first official immigrants from Japan (the "Issei") arrived in Hawaii to work as contract plantation laborers. Descended from these first generation immigrants, today's fourth and fifth-generation ethnic Japanese are proud Hawaiians as well. Many hold leading positions in Hawaii's public and private sectors.

"Ethnic Japanese make up 14 percent of the population, and they continue to play an important role in Hawaiian society," said Yasushi Misawa, Consul General of Japan in Hawaii.

Notable Japanese-Americans include the current governor of the Hawaii, David Ige, as well as the late U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye. Inouye served with the 442nd Infantry Regiment in WWII, and was the highest-ranking Asian-American politician in U.S. history.

Integration and partnership have enabled trade to flourish between Hawaii and Japan, and the state today is a desirable location for Japanese investors.

Hawaii's capital, Honolulu, is ranked 10th among the 102 largest U.S. met-

ropolitan areas in national economic rankings, and is the fourth-busiest international port of entry into the U.S. Meanwhile, Hawaii ranks as one of the 10 most entrepreneurial states in the country, with a per capita income 2.5 percent higher than the national average.



Yasushi Misawa, Consul General of Japan in Hawaii

"In addition to Japanese real estate and property investments, in recent years we have also seen Japanese food-related organizations — from retail to restaurants — using Hawaii as a base for research before foraying into the U.S. mainland," said Wayne T. Ishihara, president of the Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce. "Hawaii is in the middle of the sea between the U.S. mainland and Japan, so this scenario makes perfect sense."

In 2015, exports to Japan from Ha-

waii accounted for 4.2 percent of total U.S. exports, while imports from Japan accounted for 5.8 percent of total U.S. imports. In addition, Japan remains one of Hawaii's major export partners, with Japanese investments and affiliates accounting for fully 48 percent of the 26,200 jobs created by foreign-owned affiliates.

"Japan is the fourth-largest market for the U.S. as far as exports are concerned, but it is ranked number one for Hawaii," said John Holman, director for the Pacific at the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The Japan-American Society of Hawaii (JASH), which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year and has over 1,200 members, promotes understanding and friendship between the people of Japan and the U.S.

"Our mission is to ensure a future friendly relationship between the U.S. and Japan by educating children from kindergarten through to Ph.D. studies when they are adults," said Sal Miwa, chairman of JASH.

With 50 programs a year, including student exchanges and leadership programs, the Washington-based U.S.-Japan Council is dedicated to strengthening ties between the two countries. Hawaii is the largest region for the council, denoting the importance of Hawaii in the context of U.S.-Japan discussions. Its chairman is Hawaii-based Dennis Teranishi, an "Order of Culture" (bunkausho) awardee and the president and CEO of the Pacific International Center for High Technology Research.

While Japanese businesspeople continue to invest in Hawaiian real estate and establish small businesses, Japan

has also become Hawaii's most important international tourist demographic. It is important to recognize how strong the two countries' relationship is today, especially as 2016 marks the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor.



Wayne T. Ishihara, President of the Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce

"I would like to reiterate the importance of understanding our countries' pasts so we can create a better tomorrow," said Misawa. "Today we are innovating and working together in renewable energy, high-tech and solar projects, and I hope our partnership remains strong. The people of Hawaii have an affinity with Japan. Through our sister city initiatives and student exchange programs, we will bequeath this strong relationship to future generations." ◆

Sharing life's energy: Hawaii continues to attract Japanese visitors

There are countless holiday destinations around the world offering sun, sea and sand. While Hawaii has an abundance of all three spread over 2,400 km, the islands offer so much more to the 1.5 million Japanese tourists who visit the chain of Pacific islands every year.

"The main reason Japanese visitors are so in love with Hawaii is that both cultures have so many similarities," said Eric Takahata, managing director of Hawaii Tourism Japan. "Hawaiian culture is very similar to Japan's and has been woven into our common DNA over the last century."

Japanese visitors love Hawaii for more than just its iconic offerings of sunshine, shopping, Waikiki Beach, wildlife excursions, volcanoes on the Big Island, surfing, shrimp trucks and Maui. Many visitors cite the islands' "Aloha" spirit (the joyful "oha" sharing "alo" of life energy "ha" in the present "alo") as the one factor that keeps them coming back to feel the welcoming vibes in the United States' 50th state.

"In Hawaii we promote our uniqueness," said Takahata. "The 'Aloha' spirit of the Hawaiian people separates us from other similarly branded vacation destinations. Beaches can be found around the world; our draw is our people. Japanese tourists are our largest international market and 60 percent are repeat visitors who have traveled here three or more times."

Recognized as sophisticated tour-

The main reason Japanese visitors are so in love with Hawaii is that both cultures have so many similarities."

— ERIC TAKAHATA
Managing Director
Hawaii Tourism Japan



ists, Japanese visitors contributed over \$2 billion to the state last year. "When they visit, they experience Hawaii with each of their five senses," Takahata explained. "Whether it's a luau show that offers a full dining and entertainment experience, a road trip to the North Shore or snorkeling in Hanuama Bay, Hawaii is well-placed to cater to Japanese guests."

Hawaii Tourism Japan is a sponsor of The Honolulu Biennial — a multi-site visual arts festival and citywide celebration to be held next year from March 8 to May 8. Engaging with the rich cultural diversity of Hawaii, local and international talents will be exhibited with 30-35 different participating

artists working across all mediums. "Our message is that Hawaii truly loves Japan and the 'Aloha' spirit is always open to Japanese visitors," Takahata concluded. ◆



www.gohawaii.jp



Jon F. Yamaguchi, President and CEO of Yamaguchi & Yamaguchi

Hawaiian luxury real estate developments attract investor interest

Established in 1967, the Honolulu-based firm Yamaguchi & Yamaguchi provides professional real estate advice to investors from Asian and Pacific Rim countries. Its President, Jon Yamaguchi, is a member of the Counselors of Real Estate — headquartered in Chicago. He was recently appointed as Pacific Rim Ambassador and Chief Delegate to the Pan-Pacific Congress of Appraisers, Valuers and Counselors Conference, which will be held in Kyoto from Sept. 26 to 29. Yamaguchi met with WER:

Why invest in Hawaii?

Historical data indicates that real estate in Hawaii is still a good investment. Its location in the middle of the Pacific Ocean on a separate tectonic plate minimizes the risk of earthquakes, and northeasterly trade winds ensure a consistent year-round temperature of between 24 and 29 degrees Celsius.

Known as the "Melting Pot of the Pacific," Hawaii is ethnically diverse. It attracts leisure visitors, as well as new businesses that appreciate its time zone, which is conducive to business communication between North America and Asia.

What commercial developments are currently taking place in Honolulu?

Numerous luxury condominium projects have been developed in Honolulu. However, in order to create value, sustainability and growth, luxury projects also need to provide exclusivity, superior location, safety, exceptional design and quality, good views, concierge service, recreational facilities, nearby shopping, restaurants and support services.

Which notable projects are gaining attention in Honolulu?

The Howard Hughes Ward Villages mixed-use project is currently in development on 25 hectares of prime land and the Kobayashi Group's Park Lane Project near the Ala Moana Shopping Center are attracting substantial interest. These luxury projects are conveniently situated between Waikiki Beach and downtown Honolulu and will strengthen both companies' reputations as long-term real estate developers. ◆ www.yamaguchinc.com

Helping Japanese investors feel at home in Hawaii

Hawaii's culture, climate and centuries-old Japanese influences have created a truly aspirational destination for Japanese property investors.

Real estate investments — especially second homes — call for full-service agents and property managers who understand the importance of establishing a trust-based relationship with Japanese investors. In Hawaii, Myland Hawaii Realty understands this better than most.

Owned by Aska Group, Myland Hawaii Realty has been providing Japanese investors with superior real estate and property management services for almost a decade. As a Japanese firm, the company understands its clients from Japan, and is able to offer exceptional knowledge of the local real estate market.

"We are proud that the majority of our customers are Japanese investors," said Sal Miwa, co-CEO and president of Aska Estate Hawaii Inc./Myland Hawaii Realty.

"Japanese investors are continuing to look at opportunities in Hawaii, and we are firmly committed to providing our Japanese clients with the best real estate solutions," he said.

The company provides 24-hour services to owners and tenants through highly trained managers



Sal Miwa, Co-CEO and President of Aska Estate Hawaii Inc./Myland Hawaii Realty

who have extensive experience in property management and maintenance. "We take care of our clients' cars and boats, as well as home-related issues such as utilities, plumbing and electric," said Miwa.

Myland's partnerships with major Japanese financial and real estate companies have enabled the company to position itself as the first point of contact in Hawaii for investors from Japan as they begin their property searches.

"We are one of the largest realtors specialized in dealing with Japanese clients in Hawaii and are

dedicated to serving our Japanese investors," said Miwa. "Our local connections in Hawaii and our corporate network in Japan have allowed us to become a leader in the industry."

Miwa, who is also the chairman of the Japan-America Society of Hawaii, concluded: "Honolulu is one of the most stable property markets in the world. It will continue to attract Japanese investors who want to experience 'paradise' on one of the most beautiful islands in the world." ◆ www.mylandhawaii.com

Natural Hawaiian artesian water — straight from the source

Surrounded by 26 million sq. kilometers of ocean, Hawaii is the most isolated landmass on earth. And yet, the islands' topography — and unique ecosystem, resulting in an abundance of rainfall — create the perfect environment for natural artesian water.

"Hawaiian Springs" water is drawn from deep earth aquifers, filtered through 4,000 meters of ancient lava rock, laden with minerals and electrolytes. Producing water as soft and sweet as the "Ohia lehua" blossom — the legendary source of Hawaiian rainfall on volcanic mountains, and depicted on every Hawaiian Springs bottle.

"Hawaiian Springs water is the only natural artesian water in the State of Hawaii," said Al Kam, president of Hawaiian Springs. "At the International Water Expo held in Guangzhou in China, earlier this year, Hawaiian Springs was awarded the Gold Award from the Fine Water Society for 'Best Tasting Water.'"

It has a natural alkaline level of pH 7.7 — the ideal balance for the human body. Sourced from underground, and untouched by any surface contamination, the water is free of heavy metals, chemicals and excessive mineral content.

These days, Hawaiian Springs likes to highlight its premium position in the Japanese market by sharing its unique and natural source of water with Japa-



Ka Wai Ola (The water of life) is drawn from deep earth aquifers, filtered through 4,000 meters of ancient lava rock, laden with minerals and electrolytes producing water as soft and sweet as the "Ohia lehua" blossom.

nese consumers.

"We sell only two things: the authenticity of our product and the opportunity to enjoy an affinity with Hawaii," said Kam. "The people of Japan have a passion for Hawaii and Hawaiian Springs hopes to earn a place in their hearts."

The company has its own local subsidiary in Japan, and a partnership with the leading logistics provider, UPS Yamato Express and a 5,200 sq. meter warehouse in Tokyo. Hawaiian Springs is the official water of the Hawaiian Tourism Au-

thority in Japan and Major League Baseball's Los Angeles Dodgers. Its current water reserves are enough to supply the entire demand of the global bottled water industry two times over.

Looking ahead, Kam concluded, "Beyond the Japanese market, Hawaiian Springs aims to revitalize Hawaiian manufacturing and export a uniquely Hawaiian product to markets around the world." ◆ www.hawaiianspringswater.com

www.hawaiianspringswater.jp

The place to be in Hawaii epitomizes Hawaiian dream

Located between downtown Honolulu and Ala Moana — near Waikiki Beach and the Pacific Ocean — Ward Village, a development of The Howard Hughes Corporation, is today's preeminent destination in Hawaii. Offering an unrivaled location, first-class amenities and a variety of world-renowned and local retailers (including Nobu, the world's most-famous Japanese restaurant group), Ward Village is the place to be in Hawaii.

"Ward Village is an opportunity for us to create a unique place that isn't being duplicated anywhere else in Hawaii," said Bill Pisetsky, The Howard Hughes Corporation's senior vice president for residential sales and marketing in Hawaii. "Our iconic 60-acre community overlooking the Pacific Ocean is designed to enrich the lives of those who will live and work in Ward Village."

Designed by award-winning architects, the five towers — Ke Kiloana, Gateway, Waiea, Aeo and Anaha — in various stages of development each have a distinct design symbolizing the beauty of Hawaii.

"Waiea" (meaning "water of life" in Hawaiian) has a unique glass facade and will be the first to be completed.



Waiea — with its sweeping, unparalleled glass facade and spacious view-oriented interiors, this 36-floor tower represents a level of architectural sophistication never before available in Hawaii.

"The design of this distinctive building represents the curvature of a wave, and each panel is designed to be unique," said Pisetsky. "Waiea residents will be moving in this November, and this will mark a huge milestone for us and for

Hawaii." The second quarter of 2017 will see new homeowners move in to "Anaha" ("reflection of light"). The building's design evokes the light reflecting off the Pacific Ocean waves.

"We have already sold over 1,100 homes, and our record-setting sales numbers are testament to the quality, lifestyle and value of Ward Village," said Pisetsky.

A significant number of homes have been sold to Japanese buyers, who continue their love affair with Hawaii. "Japan is our largest foreign market," said Pisetsky. "We are so appreciative of the interest Japanese buyers have shown to Ward Village. We have worked hard to provide superior quality and highly desired amenities in our homes. We will continue to provide the excellent service and experience that is expected by those who choose to make Ward Village a part of their lives."

Ward Village's office in Tokyo is committed to working closely with potential homebuyers and sharing the Hawaiian dream.

"Whether for a vacation home or a full-time residence, we understand the importance of fulfilling our homebuyer's dreams," said Pisetsky. "We deliver the highest level of quality service: from our first conversation to moving-in day and beyond, we take care of our homebuyers and provide a truly great experience." ◆ www.wardvillage.com

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