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GOOGLE FEATURES HAWAII FOREST & TRAIL IN ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT

HAWAII, the BIG ISLAND – July 28, 2014 ~ Google recently reported that it generated over \$80 million in economic activity into businesses, websites and nonprofits throughout Hawaii last year and cited Hawaii Forest & Trail as its example of a local Hawaii business that has benefited directly.

The Economic Impact Report released by Google maintains that even in tough economic times, small businesses and nonprofits are benefiting from continued expansion of the ecommerce industry. Hawaii Forest & Trail was selected by Google to illustrate how a Hawaii business is successfully utilizing the internet to find and connect with customers.

“Our company is a small business on an island in the center of the Pacific Ocean. Developing a strong web presence with compelling content and ecommerce solutions is a core element of our strategic plan. These initiatives give our brand international exposure, expand our market share and grow our sales directly,” said Hawaii Forest & Trail Founder and President Rob Pacheco.

“Our search and advertising programs don’t just connect people to useful information—they help businesses find customers, help publishers earn money from their online content and help nonprofits get donations and volunteers. In fact, millions of businesses benefit from our online tools and solutions each year across the country—making Google an engine for economic growth,” said Jim Lecinski, Google’s Vice President of Customer Solutions.

When naturalist Rob Pacheco and his wife, Cindy, founded Hawaii Forest & Trail on Hawaii Island in 1993, Rob was the only guide. Today, Hawaii Forest & Trail employees over 65+ people, operates and maintains a fleet of customized vehicles, and sells branded merchandise at its retail store. The company’s guided adventures have expanded as well to include interpretive natural history tours of Hawaii’s diverse environments including volcanoes, waterfalls, rainforests and wildlife refuges.

“We want to help our customers forge a personal connection with nature in Hawaii, so they see how much more there is to this place — that this incredible island is worth cherishing, conserving and sustaining,” said Rob Pacheco.

Hawaii Forest & Trail has been online for many years and now has a mobile website too. They started using AdWords, Google's advertising program, to reach potential customers in 2011. The cost of converting a lead into a customer with AdWords is "significantly less than the cost per call for our print advertising," Rob said. "Moving to the Google ecosystem was the right move for us as a tourism company. Staying connected externally and internally impacts our bottom line directly and time saved means that we keep our focus on the customer. For a lot of people, a trip to Hawaii is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It is really up to us to help them make the most of their time here. We take it very seriously."

Hawaii Forest & Trail books over 40,000 customers a year and online sales account for about half of those bookings. Ninety percent of Hawaii Forest & Trails' customer base comes from outside Hawaii. "If we are not talking to people about our products online, then someone else is," said Rob Pacheco.

Hawaii Forest & Trail remains one of only a few tour companies allowed access to private lands and wildlife refuges. From their initial rainforest bird walk, Hawaii Forest & Trail has expanded eco-adventure offerings to include Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Mauna Kea stargazing, a waterfall walk and specialized birding tours. In 2011, Rob and Cindy Pacheco founded Kohala Zipline, the first tree-to-tree zipline on Hawaii Island.

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About Hawaii Forest & Trail

Hawaii Forest & Trail has been exploring Hawaii since 1993. The company's mission is to deliver guests an excellent, safe and fun learning experience, to support island communities and resources through philanthropy, sustainable business practices and a conservation ethic, and to provide a healthy, profitable, and rewarding environment for their company ohana. On each and every one of their adventures, Hawaii Forest & Trail shares the splendor of Hawai'i as part of their vision to inspire a deep connection with our natural world. Visit Hawaii-Forest.com.

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