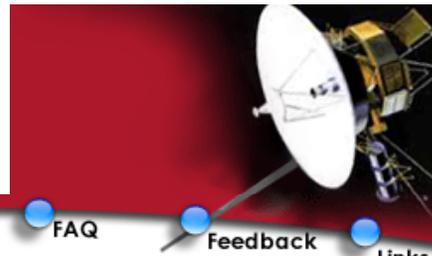




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Press Releases

HAWAII WINS BATTLE FOR 'BAYWATCH'

Monday 05/04/1999

HONOLULU, April 5 /PRNewswire-AsiaNet/ -- Ending weeks of roller coaster speculation, Hawaii has beaten Australia in the quest to secure a film deal to relocate the world's number one action adventure syndicated television series.

In an eleventh hour meeting, as time was running out, Hawaii's Governor Benjamin Cayetano and Al Burns of the IATSE Union, along with the IATSE members themselves, demonstrating unprecedented leadership, courage and spirit of cooperation for "a common good," struck a deal that finally made it financially possible to produce "BAYWATCH" in Hawaii.

Governor Cayetano promised to exhaust every possibility to obtain the opportunity to relocate "BAYWATCH" to Hawaii's shores. Cayetano's personal "hands on" approach with everything including the unions proved that this is a man who means what he says. "This is an investment worth going the extra mile," Governor Cayetano said earlier in the month.

"For Hawaii, landing 'BAYWATCH' is a real coup," added Cayetano. "Baywatch will mean not only employment for more than 150 people locally but also expenditures in the state of over 20 million annually plus the program will in one year display Hawaii's beauty, people and diversity of activities to 5.7 billion viewers world wide -- a definite stimulus for tourism."

"BAYWATCH HAWAII" will begin production of the first 22 episodes of the series this June. The announcement was made today by Governor Ben Cayetano, Tony Vericella, President and CEO of the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB), and Syd Vinnedge, Pearson Television Senior Executive Vice President, at a news conference at the Hilton Hawaiian Village on the island of Oahu.

The tug of war in the Pacific started when a last minute pitch by AL MASINI PRODUCTIONS (AMP) representing HVCB let the owners and producers of "BAYWATCH" in on a little secret ... Hawaii has adopted a new, proactive approach when competing for high profile exposure that will increase tourism while simultaneously building the entertainment industry.

"BAYWATCH" was set to move production to Australia when AMP President April Masini relentlessly urged "BAYWATCH" Creator and Executive Producer Gregg Bonann to consider Hawaii, literally just hours before boarding a plane to sign a deal with Queensland, Australia. When Producer Craig Kwasizur told April, "It's too late. The train has already left the station," she replied, "Well, your train has just been diverted down a new set of tracks."

Minutes later in Honolulu, Tony Vericella (HVCB) and Al Masini of AMP were on the phone with April in Los Angeles scrambling to assemble an incentive package that would ultimately capitalize on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Hawaii.

Never mind that in Australia, scripts had been written, actors cast and newspapers were already reporting that Queensland had clinched a multimillion-dollar deal with the show's executives.

In Honolulu, the same team of players that brought the 1998 MISS UNIVERSE PAGEANT to Hawaii including Governor Cayetano's Executive Assistant Joe Blanco, Vericella and the Masinis, quickly arranged meetings between the producers of "BAYWATCH" and Cayetano

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as well as with Honolulu Mayor Jeremy Harris.

Separate meetings were held with State Senate President Norman Mizuguchi and House Speaker Calvin Say, who enthusiastically pledged their support for the production coming to Hawaii.

Letters of support followed from Hawaii County Mayor Stephen Yamashiro, Kauai County Mayor Maryanne Kusaka and Maui County Mayor James Apana along with their commitments to fast-track permit applications for shooting on the neighbor islands.

The Directors Guild of America and the Screen Actors Guild were next to step up to the plate, agreeing to do their part in the effort to secure "BAYWATCH" for Hawaii.

"Hawaii is a great location for television and movie productions because of the diversity we have to offer. We've got everything from sun and surf to mountains, snow and forests. We plan to aggressively compete for business in an array of markets. Our economic growth depends on diversifying our markets to ultimately bring more visitors to our islands," Cayetano said.

Tony Vericella, President of HVCB, who will provide significant funding and other marketing support for "BAYWATCH HAWAII" and who was the key negotiator for this multiple-year deal, said, "52-week advertising exposure from 'BAYWATCH HAWAII' in the US alone is estimated conservatively at \$29 million. This figure does not even include the millions of dollars of exposure in 148 countries as well as reruns to be seen in the US and around the world in future years.

This form of advertising is even more effective because it is integrated into the title and program itself and not in a commercial cluster when viewers go channel surfing.

"The 'BAYWATCH' show targets consumers in the 18-49 age category that are into healthy active lifestyles and this fits perfectly into HVCB's marketing plan for Hawaii.

"'BAYWATCH HAWAII' will also create a new tourist attraction for Hawaii.

"We also made sure that Hawaii's neighbor island counties will be featured in multiple episodes during the season.

"Cooperation from the private sector to get rooms, airlines seats and ground transportation has been outstanding," Vericella added.

"Creatively speaking I could not think of a more perfect marriage than that of 'BAYWATCH' with Hawaii," Executive Producer Gregg Bonann agreed. "I know this next season will be the best I've ever produced. Most of all, I'd like to extend my sincerest thanks to everyone in Hawaii for giving me this opportunity.

"Hawaii's ability to overcome insurmountable odds in such a short period of time leaves me in absolute awe and completely speechless. If someone had told me I'd be filming my next season in Hawaii I would have told them they were crazy, but that was before I really got to know the WILL of the people of Hawaii."

"After the historical success of 'BAYWATCH' over the past nine years we, as new owners, we're looking for something that would give the show renewed impetus," said Syd Vinnedge of Pearson.

"There is no question that an exciting and exotic new location like Hawaii, combined with a new title, a new writer and some new cast members will give this very popular American tradition all the excitement of a new show. We made this move to Hawaii, not for one year, but hopefully to prove that history repeats itself and that 'BAYWATCH HAWAII' will achieve even more success in the future than 'BAYWATCH' has seen in the past."

Hawaii had the "Hawaii Five-0" series for 12 years, "Magnum PI" for 8 years and "Jake and the Fatman" for 4 years but there hasn't been an on-going series in Hawaii since 1992.

In the past few years, audience fractionalization has reduced ratings and advertising income, making it more difficult to cover production costs.

Recently, there has been a major exodus from Hollywood to foreign locations -- most notably Canada and Australia. Both locations offer less expensive production opportunities and a very favorable conversion rate for the U.S. dollar. Canada is especially well known for its extremely attractive and aggressive production, labor and tax incentive packages.

"Hawaii successfully securing 'BAYWATCH' is a major breakthrough in reversing the trend of productions departing the U.S. for Australia and Canada," said TV veteran Al Masini. "Perhaps even more remarkable is the fact that Hawaii, perceived by most throughout the entertainment industry as being the most notoriously expensive location, accomplished this is nothing short of a miracle."

Hawaii's unprecedented move took a totally coordinated effort and sets the foundation for a new level of growth and expansion for future TV and productions in the state. We've only just begun," said Masini.

SOURCE Office of Governor Benjamin J. Cayetano

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