

LGB Business Partner Spotlight: Hawaiian Airlines

In the coming months, we'd like to shine the spotlight on our commercial airline partners. We're starting with Hawaiian Airlines and Airport Operations General Manager Chris Walrath. Chris has worked in the airline industry for more than 23 years, in 17 different airports, with four different airlines. He's spent several years managing various North America airport consortiums, including the Los Angeles Airport (LAX) Tom Bradley International Terminal consortium of 40 international airlines, prior to joining Hawaiian Airlines for its launch of LGB operations. Now in its 90th year of continuous service, Hawaiian Airlines is Hawaii's biggest and longest-serving airline.

Q: Can you tell us about Hawaiian Airlines operations at Long Beach Airport?

A: When we launched our daily flight to Honolulu (HNL) in 2018, it was immediately well-received by Long Beach and North Orange County travelers. One thing that sets LGB apart from our other Southern California locations is the similarity of the airport setup and sense of community that is consistent with our Neighbor Island locations. In response to the success of our HNL flight, we launched daily service to Kahului Maui (OGG) in April 2021. Today we operate one daily service to both HNL and OGG, which consistently exceeds yield and load factor expectations.

Q: How has COVID-19 affected your business?

A: COVID-19 hit our airline particularly hard. In April 2020, we temporarily suspended service to most North America and international destinations and only operated a very limited number of flights out of LAX and San Francisco International Airport (SFO). As the State of Hawaii modified their entry requirements, we were able to resume operations to Hawaii in November 2020. Today, most of our traffic to Hawaii has fully recovered but travel beyond to American Samoa, Australia, Korea, Japan, New Zealand and Tahiti has not resumed, which is nearly all our international lift.

Q: What do you like best about being part of the LGB community?

A: I have always admired the diversity and sense of camaraderie with all the stakeholders. There are a lot of similarities to our Hawaiian 'ohana, which is based on family, and family means no one gets left behind. We often encounter guests showing up months ahead of their trip, just to ask questions about their future journey and we don't typically see that in our other locations. At Hawaiian Airlines, we're ready to welcome you aboard. Aloha!

