

Ross Mitsuo Higashi

Objective

To continue serving as Deputy Director for the Department of Transportation, Airports Division to provide managerial continuity and ensure the Airports Division offers the highest level of service and most importantly, a safe and secure operating environment. To leverage the Airport Division's financial strength to improve and develop Airports System facilities for the benefit of travelers, tenants, and other stakeholders. To manage the Airports System as an economic engine for the State in a sustainable approach and contribute to the State's image as a premier travel destination.

Executive Summary

- Proven leader as Deputy Director of the Airports Division
- Focused and self-motivated professional with 28 years of experience in airport transportation management
- Strong relationships with State departments, Federal government agencies, airline and airport community, congressional leaders, legislators, and other stakeholders
- Able to focus team on key priorities, communicate a vision for success and manage implementation of key strategies
- Strong organizational and management skills; excellent problem-solving skills
- Proven ability to make solid personnel choices, mentor staff and develop a cohesive team
- Extensive knowledge of the Airports Division's capital plan, financial methodology, property management, operations and personnel management
- In-depth understanding and experience in relation to administrative and operational functions of the Airports Division, along with the State's governmental procedures with respect to legislative budgetary requests and procurement procedures

Professional Experience

Deputy Director

May 2014 - Current

State of Hawaii, Department of Transportation - Airports Division

Managed an operating budget of more than \$400 million with a staff of 1,300; responsible for operations of all airports and ancillary facilities for the State of Hawaii

Specific accomplishments:

- Managed the re-opening of the Ellison Onizuka Kona International Airport Federal Inspection Station working collaboratively with U.S. Customs Border Protection. Currently, 10 flights per week have been re-established from Japan, amounting to a forecasted \$200 million per year in economic revenue.
- Oversight of noticeable major capital improvement modernization projects statewide
- Maintained solid financial position outlook leading to achieving bond rating upgrades
- Worked closely with concessionaires on \$80 million of improvements to common use areas and stores thru a public private partnership at no cost to the State
- Built and maintained strong rapport with the Airlines Committee of Hawaii and signatory airlines relating to prioritizing capital projects and setting airlines rates and charges
- Continued implementation of the largest energy savings contract (\$200M) in the United States as the leader for the State of Hawaii relating to sustainability. Working on other sustainable projects relating to water and energy resources to meet 2045 goals
- Implemented Advertising and Wi-Fi contract agreements adding more than \$2 million in revenues.

- Built a solid relationship and respect with managerial staff, whom support my leadership continuity
- Continued the management and advancement of the \$2.7 billion Airport Modernization Plan
- Completed rental car agreements, which ensures the timely initiation of the State's \$900 million rental car facility program
- Increased the duty free minimum annual rent guarantee from \$32 million to an average of \$40 million for years 2017 to 2027, protecting the Airports Division from potential declines in duty free revenues
- Expedited the rental of dormant vacated property, increasing rental revenues by \$1 million annually
- Imposed overdue property appraisals, increasing rental revenues by \$2 million annually
- Managed FAA Revenue Compliance Audit
- Coordinated internal program procedures with operational staff to manage homeless issues

Fiscal Management Officer**2007 - 2014*****State of Hawaii, Department of Transportation - Airports Division***

Managed the financial operations of 15 state airports with an annual operating budget of more than \$400 million; managed capital funding for the Airports System's multi-billion dollar capital improvement program, which is funded by airport revenues, bonds, federal grants, passenger facility charges, and rental car customer facility charges

Specific accomplishments:

- Department of Transportation Manager of the Year in 2012
- Sold \$300 million in revenue bonds in September 2011 that provided approximately \$27 million in initial savings and reduced annual debt service payments by up to \$19 million each year through 2020. The sale included restructured debt due to low interest rates which provides debt capacity for future capital needs and more importantly, to stabilize airline rates and charges.
- Completed sale of \$645 million in revenue bonds in March 2010, providing critical funding to implement the Airports System's multi-billion dollar capital plan
- Negotiated financial and contractual agreements for the largest Energy Savings Performance Contract in the United States (\$150 million) which guarantees an average annual savings of \$18 million in utility charges
- Timely completed annual audited financial statements, federal single audits, quarterly revenue reports, multi-year forecasted financial plans, annual signatory rates and charges, and FAA financial report
- Presented the Airports System to investors and credit rating agencies
- Developed staff expertise through training and empowering employees

Internal Audit/Supervisor**1990-2007*****State of Hawaii, Department of Transportation***

Audited/supervised the internal auditors on concession revenues and contractor overhead ratios; reviewed the Airports Division's internal business processes and risk management practice; ensured compliance with applicable regulations; supported the Fiscal Management Officer in operating a \$200M+ operation

Education

Bachelor's Degree in Accounting; University of Hawaii at Manoa

References

Excellent references available upon request