

WSSPC -- Award for Excellence Program
Pacific Tsunami Museum
“Walking & Driving Tours of Historical Tsunami Sites”

1. One Page Summary:

The “Walking & Driving Tours of Historical Tsunami Sites” is an innovative approach to tsunami education and awareness. The tours have expanded the reach of the Pacific Tsunami Museum into the community and the environment by showcasing sites that were once devastated by past tsunamis. The mission of the museum – that no one in Hawaii should ever again die in a tsunami – is conveyed to a wider audience of local residents and visitors by the tours’ use of tsunami signage and awareness publications.

The Pacific Tsunami Museum designed the “Walking & Driving Tours of Historical Tsunami Sites” in a way that creatively meets the needs of patrons with special needs. The tours are also suitable for all ages and all levels of physical ability.

It has been 47 years since a disastrous tsunami hit Hawaiian shores and many island residents have developed a sense of complacency. The recent earthquake activity of October 2006 emphasized the need for heightened awareness and more thorough education for Pacific-wide and locally generated tsunamis. The sites featured on the walking and driving tours are permanent reminders of the devastation tsunamis are capable of causing. The tsunami signage acts as an educational tool and also symbolizes the need for communities to remain vigilant.

The “Walking & Driving Tours of Historical Tsunamis Sites” features two tours. The walking tour visits five sites and circles a peninsula that was devastated by the 1960 tsunami. The driving tour includes in-depth information about earthquakes and locally generated tsunamis and visits sites affected by the tsunami of 1946. The tours also include a full-color, 12-page booklet (free of charge) that provides information, stories, and quotations about the sites. During summer months, children on the tours are also given 2-page activity pamphlets that feature tsunami-related word puzzles and tour-relevant games.

The Pacific Tsunami Museum has received extremely positive feedback from visitors and local residents who have experienced the walking and driving tours. Patrons often comment that the tours have a powerful, emotional impact on their lives; more so than some of the other features offered by the museum. The ability to interact with the natural environment and historical sites increases the tourists’ experience and allows them to be more receptive to tsunami awareness information and education. The Pacific Tsunami Museum is extremely proud to offer the “Walking & Driving Tours of Historical Tsunami Sites” as a unique and educational way to preserve history and continue tsunami awareness and preparedness in Hawaii.

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2. The program has been operational since March 2005.
3. The ultimate purpose of the program is to provide education about tsunamis and to create awareness so that no one in Hawaii will die in a future tsunami disaster. The program is dedicated to providing tourists (local and visiting) of all ages and abilities with an educational, accurate, and interactive experience of Hawaii's tsunami history.
4. The specific activities and operations of the “Walking & Driving Tours of Historical Tsunami Sites” program include:
 - a. Walking Tour, designed for those individuals who are interested in strolling
 - b. Driving Tour, designed for those who have a vehicle and want to travel farther than the walking tour
 - c. 2-page activity pamphlets for children that feature tsunami-related word puzzles and tour-relevant games available during the summer months
 - d. Activities require no guides, allowing tourists to be self-sufficient and complete the activities at their own pace.
5. The program was built around oral histories of tsunami survivors that have been collected since the museum opened. The stories recount survivors' personal experiences at each of the sites featured of the walking and driving tours. Photographs contributed from survivors' personal collections also provide accurate portrayals of the pre- and post-disaster differences of each location. Combining the stories, photographs, and the aspect of physically being at the sites where devastating tsunamis once washed upon Hawaiian shores creates a historical, educational, and interactive experience for tourists.
6. The program was proposed to the Hawaii Tourism Authority by the Pacific Tsunami Museum and accepted in 2005.

The original budget was \$12,000.00.

The Hawaii Tourist Authority awarded \$6000.00 to be matched by funds provided by the Pacific Tsunami Museum.

A grant was awarded by the Hawaii Tourist Authority to redesign and replace all tsunami signage. \$6000.00 was awarded for the design and fabrication of new signage. The new signs are presently being installed; the new tsunami signage should be in situ by June, 2007. The funding is derived from this grant and Pacific Tsunami Museum funds. Total funding, including HTA funding, is \$18,000.00

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7. The program was designed and implemented by museum staff consisting of full-time volunteer Genevieve Cain, volunteer Executive Director, Donna Saiki, and volunteer Scientific Advisor, Walter Dudley, PhD.
8. The program originated in Hilo, Hawaii, at the Pacific Tsunami Museum. At this time, the museum is unaware of similar programs existing in other states or countries.
9. The “Walking & Driving Tours of Historic Tsunami Sites” is one of the Pacific Tsunami Museum’s signature programs. The program was fully implemented in March 2005 and has grown increasingly popular since its inception. Routine maintenance occurs to accommodate the growth of the program. New, graphically upgraded tsunami signage is currently being installed to replace outdated signage.
10. Evidence of the success of the “Walking & Driving Tours of Historic Tsunami Sites” comes by way of positive verbal feedback from both local residents and visitors who express that the tours are educational, fun, and that the information provided is applicable to coastlines all over the world. Based on these comments, the Pacific Tsunami Museum feels that the tours have been successful in meeting all objectives.

The museum has not received any criticism or critical reviews about the program.

11. Since its inception, the tours have experienced only minor changes, such as the inclusion of booklets for distribution, and signage maintenance. The new signs that are currently being installed are composed of a more durable material that will add to signs’ longevity.
12. This unique program could be used as a model for other areas with a history of tsunami destruction.