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For Immediate Release - June 23, 2009

FIRST-EVER WHITE HOUSE LUAU HIGHLIGHTS THE TASTES AND TALENTS OF HAWAII
-- President Obama Celebrates the Aloha Spirit by Hosting a South Lawn Luau for Members of Congress and Their Families --

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The tastes and talents of Hawaii will take center stage in the national spotlight on Thursday as President Barack Obama, the first president from the Aloha State, hosts the first-ever White House luau.

The South Lawn luau is a twist on the annual Congressional picnic for members of Congress and their families and will feature the best in contemporary Hawaiian cuisine with a menu created by award-winning chef Alan Wong, whose Honolulu restaurant has been recognized as one of the best in America and the Pacific Rim.

Along with Hawaii's finest delicacies, the evening will feature Hawaii's largest entertainment company, Tihati Productions. The program will include 20 dancers and musicians from Hawaii showcasing the historical and cultural stories of the islands through traditional song and dance, known as hula.

"President Obama is bringing the Hawaii family spirit of "ohana" to the White House and to all Americans through the first White House luau," stated John Monahan, president and CEO of the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau.

"We hope our mainland compatriots take this opportunity to learn about the culture and cuisine of our islands, and we welcome all Americans to come share in the Aloha spirit that makes Hawaii such a wonderful place for both vacation and business," Monahan stated. "Hawaii offers vacationers and business travelers the chance to experience one-of-a-kind cultural, culinary and recreational offers in a very convenient, affordable and beautiful setting."

Thursday's luau will spotlight Hawaii's contemporary cuisine, which is based upon the freshest ingredients from the land and sea and which combines all of the ethnic influences that have contributed so much to Hawaii.

"This event gives us a chance to showcase to all Americans the Hawaiian contemporary cuisine that is based on fresh local ingredients and which blends all of the island's many ethnic influences," stated Alan Wong, whose Honolulu restaurant was rated No. 8 in the United States by Gourmet magazine.

For more information on Hawaii, the Islands of Aloha, please visit www.GoHawaii.com.

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