

George Applegate joined the Hawai'i Visitors Bureau, Big Island Chapter, in 1989 as Director of Sales and Marketing, and was named Big Island Visitors Bureau Executive Director in 2000. He is responsible for overseeing the Big Island Visitors Bureau's marketing, membership, and associated programs impacting the visitor industry.



George Applegate began his career in Hawai'i's hospitality industry more than 30 years ago as a bellman with the Naniloa Hotel in Hilo. George's sales and marketing background grew from various positions he held during his employment in the hotel industry, including management positions in public relations and sales. In 1990, George Applegate was Vice President of Big Island Tours of Hawai'i, offering tours of lush Waipio Valley, and also stargazing adventures to the summit of Mauna Kea. Big Island Tours also donated the first telescope presented to the Onizuka Center for International Astronomy Visitor Information Station.

George has held key positions on boards and committees, including founding committee member of Big Island Ocean Recreation & Tourism; founding member and board of directors for the Hilo Hawai'i Visitors Industry Association (known today as Destination Hilo) and he is a former board member of Destination Kona. George currently serves on the board of directors for the Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, Hawaii Island Chamber of Commerce and on the committees for the University's College of Business and Economics, and the 50th Anniversary Statehood Celebration Commission.

He has traveled extensively on behalf of Hawai'i's Big Island, including trips to North America, Europe, and Asia to promote the destination. Throughout his tenure in promoting Hawai'i's Big Island, George always stays true to what works for the island and its people.

"During all my years in the hospitality industry, I have come to realize that the best way to promote Hawai'i Island is to keep the good things good. This means attracting the right kind of visitor, one has a sense of adventure, who appreciates the Big Island's authentic spirit of aloha, and of course, all our natural wonders," George says.