

Four questions with Gary Moore of Timbers Kauai



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COURTESY OF TIMBERS KAUAI

By Christina O'Connor – Reporter, Pacific Business News

Jul 24, 2020, 2:17pm HST

As the managing director at Timbers Kauai at Hokualea, Gary Moore said that his worst day during the pandemic was the day in late March when he realized that he was going to have to furlough 160 employees.

“Coming to that reality was tough,” Moore said. “These people didn’t do anything wrong and this is their livelihood.”

Being able to bring back some of those employees was part of his motivation in wanting to reopen the oceanfront resort, he said.

Timbers Kauai resumed operations July 1. With the mandatory 14-day quarantine still in place for all arriving passengers, Timbers Kauai is open for Hawaii residents, or interisland travelers who have already

undergone quarantine. A night at the resort would typically run between \$1,500 and \$2,000, but in an effort to attract interisland travelers, it's currently offering a kamaaina package starting at \$495.

PBN recently chatted with Moore about the decision to reopen and his strategy in driving business to the resort.

How has it been going since reopening?

It was definitely a leap of faith [to reopen]. But it's been excellent, better than we expected ... The occupancy has actually been double what we expected for July. That meant we had to bring more employees back, which was good.

Why did you decide to reopen at this time?

We have to do our part for Kauai and for Hawaii. Everybody is losing money right now — everybody, whether you're a small restaurant or a big resort. There are massive cash requirements, and bringing employees back increases that.

But we laid it out and we did it conservatively where we brought back about half of our team between golf and the general resort operations. We thought if we can drive 20% occupancy, we'll be alright and we can pay these salaries — and we're doing more, so fortunately, it worked. It was a risk, but it's the right thing to do.

What has your outreach strategy been?

It's been 100% grassroots. We called and emailed every single person we know to spread the message. We had a whiteboard session with our management team where we laid out 60 or 70 people and organizations and we just started calling them. Anybody and everyone that any of us knew, we were just calling and saying, 'hey you've got to come experience this.'

Now that the quarantine for arriving passengers has been extended until Sept. 1, how will that impact you?

We will just continue to drive the interisland [business] ... We are going to keep doing all the outreach that we can ... Now we just have to make sure everyone knows the great opportunity is continuing through August — and we anticipate we will continue to extend this for foreseeable future while Hawaii and the world sort through this crazy time ... It's been very rewarding to see families reconnect to Kauai staying with us ... and even more rewarding is seeing many of our wonderful team members back welcoming their Hawaii ohana.

Link: <https://www.bizjournals.com/pacific/news/2020/07/24/four-questions-with-gary-moore-of-timbers-kauai.html>