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***PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN COMMUNICATIONS PROMOTES LEANNE FERRER
TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; EXPANDS DIGITAL INITIATIVE AND
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS***

Honolulu, HI – Pacific Islanders in Communications (PIC) is proud to announce that Leanne Ferrer has been promoted to Executive Director, Cheryl Hirasa has been hired as Director of Program Development & Content Strategy, and Amber McClure has taken on a new role as Digital Engagement Manager to help expand the organization’s digital initiatives.

Leanne Ferrer is an award-winning filmmaker with over 20 years of experience in the film and television industry, including work for Disney Films, PBS Hawaii, and 1013 Integrated, Hawai‘i’s longest running full-service production company. Leanne is a previously funded PIC producer whose film aired nationally on PTV. Since joining PIC in 2008, Ms. Ferrer has managed numerous productions and created the organization’s first series, *Pacific Heartbeat*, which, now in its third season, is distributed by APT and airs on WORLD Channel and APT subscriber stations.

As Executive Director, Ms. Ferrer will ensure that PIC continues to deliver quality content about Pacific Islanders to a national audience by providing the professional opportunities and training Pacific Islanders need to tell their own stories.

Cheryl Hirasa joins Pacific Islanders in Communications from the Independent Television Service (ITVS) where she worked for over eight years on more than 50 films that were broadcast on public television, most recently as Senior Production Manager. In her new role as Director of Program Development & Content Strategy, Ms. Hirasa oversees the Media Fund, PIC’s primary funding initiative for projects that air nationwide on public television. In addition, she manages all PIC-funded projects, creates and oversees talent development, and is the series producer for *Pacific Heartbeat*.

In an effort to expand PIC’s digital initiative, Amber McClure has been promoted to Digital Engagement Manager. In her new role, she will be making more of PIC’s content available online, managing social media and their newly designed website, and working to enhance the organization’s partnerships with filmmakers and stations. Prior to joining PIC in 2010, Ms. McClure worked for over five years as a multimedia project manager with various Hawaii youth and community groups.

“As our team grows, we are looking to explore and create strategic partnerships in order to bring Pacific Islander stories to an even wider audience, especially with stations and strands on NPS,” said Ferrer. “In partnership with CAAM and WETA, we’ve recently provided R&D funding for Jeff Beiber’s latest series, *Asians in America*, and in 2012 we funded a NOVA episode with National Geographic, *The Mystery of Easter Island*, which was very well received. We have also partnered with PBS Newshour Weekend on several segments, including a Hawaii GMO story we helped to fund, which won a first place National Headliner Award for environmental reporting. It is more stories like these that we want to make available to the public media audience – on television and online.”

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About Pacific Islanders In Communications (PIC)

Pacific Islanders in Communications (PIC) was established in 1991 in Honolulu, Hawai‘i as a national not-for-profit media arts organization. The mission of PIC is to support, advance, and develop Pacific Island media content and talent that results in a deeper understanding of Pacific Island history, culture, and contemporary challenges in the national and international arenas. PIC represents peoples who have lived sustainably on islands for thousands of years and found ways to get along – providing a template for how America can address issues of sustainability and tolerance.

In keeping with the mission, PIC helps Pacific Islander stories reach national audiences through funding support for productions, training and education, broadcast services, and community outreach. Since 2002, PIC has produced approximately 65 hours of programming for national broadcast and funded 87 different productions in all stages of development, including R&D as well as completion funding. In the last 10 years, PIC has trained over 350 Pacific Islanders filmmakers, through both direct formal training as well as placing them on actual productions.

PIC is a member of the National Minority Consortia (NMC), which collectively addresses the need for programming that reflects America's growing ethnic and cultural diversity. Other NMC members serve the Asian American, Latino, black, and Native American populations. Over the past years, NMC members have provided hundreds of hours of culturally-diverse programs to public television. Primary funding for PIC and the NMC is provided through an annual grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).

About Pacific Heartbeat

Presented by Pacific Islanders in Communications and PBS Hawaii, *Pacific Heartbeat* is an anthology series that provides viewers a glimpse of the real Pacific—its people, cultures, languages, music, and contemporary issues. From revealing exposés to rousing musical performances, the series features a diverse array of programs that will draw viewers into the heart and soul of Pacific Island culture.

Now in its third season, *Pacific Heartbeat*’s first and second seasons had great carriage across the public television system, reaching 85% of US TV households. PIC received overwhelming support from viewers across the country with a stream of positive feedback.