

Thrifty Car Rental back in isles

By Russ Lynch
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Thrifty Car Rental, absent from Hawaii since April 1993, is returning and expects to have six Hawaii outlets before year-end.

Honolulu car rental operator Brad Skinner has acquired the Thrifty franchise for the islands, said Meloyde Blancett-Scott, a spokeswoman at Thrifty Rent-A-Car System Inc. headquarters in Tulsa, Okla., said today.

Some outlets are already in place and will quickly become Thrifty operations by adopting new signs, new employee uniforms and Thrifty operating practices, she said.

Skinner, owner of Aloha Funway Rentals and Courtesy Car & Truck Rental, was traveling and could not be reached for comment.

Thrifty, which is owned by **Chrysler Corp.**, said Skinner will have a Thrifty location at Honolulu Airport, another in Waikiki and one near Ala Moana Center.

On the Neighbor Islands, there will be a rental operation at Kahului Airport and later in the year Skinner plans to open Thrifty outlets in Kona and Lihue, said Blancett-Scott.

The Ala Moana location will display a new Dodge Viper in its showroom as part of a national promotion, she said.

"His plans are to have up to 1,000 cars and he looks like starting with around 400," she said.

Skinner has been an independent rental operator in Hawaii for 22 years, she said.

Use of the Thrifty name connects the Hawaii operation with an international network of more than 1,100 locations in 50 countries and an Internet reservations system.

Thrifty operated in Hawaii for more than 20 years and was a franchise held by Brenard Ebbers of Mississippi when changes in the industry led to its closing three years ago.

The Chrysler parent had quit the buy-back program in which it repurchased cars after they had been used for a few months. The rental business was also hit by other manufacturers trimming their buy-back programs, as well as by freight charges and other costs.

Thrifty's re-entry to the Hawaii market is part of an expansion program that has it opening in seven new U.S. cities, the company said.

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