

Hawaii Retail Grocer

FALL 2018

the voice of the hawaii food industry association



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John Veneri, Sam Choy
and Derek Kurisu

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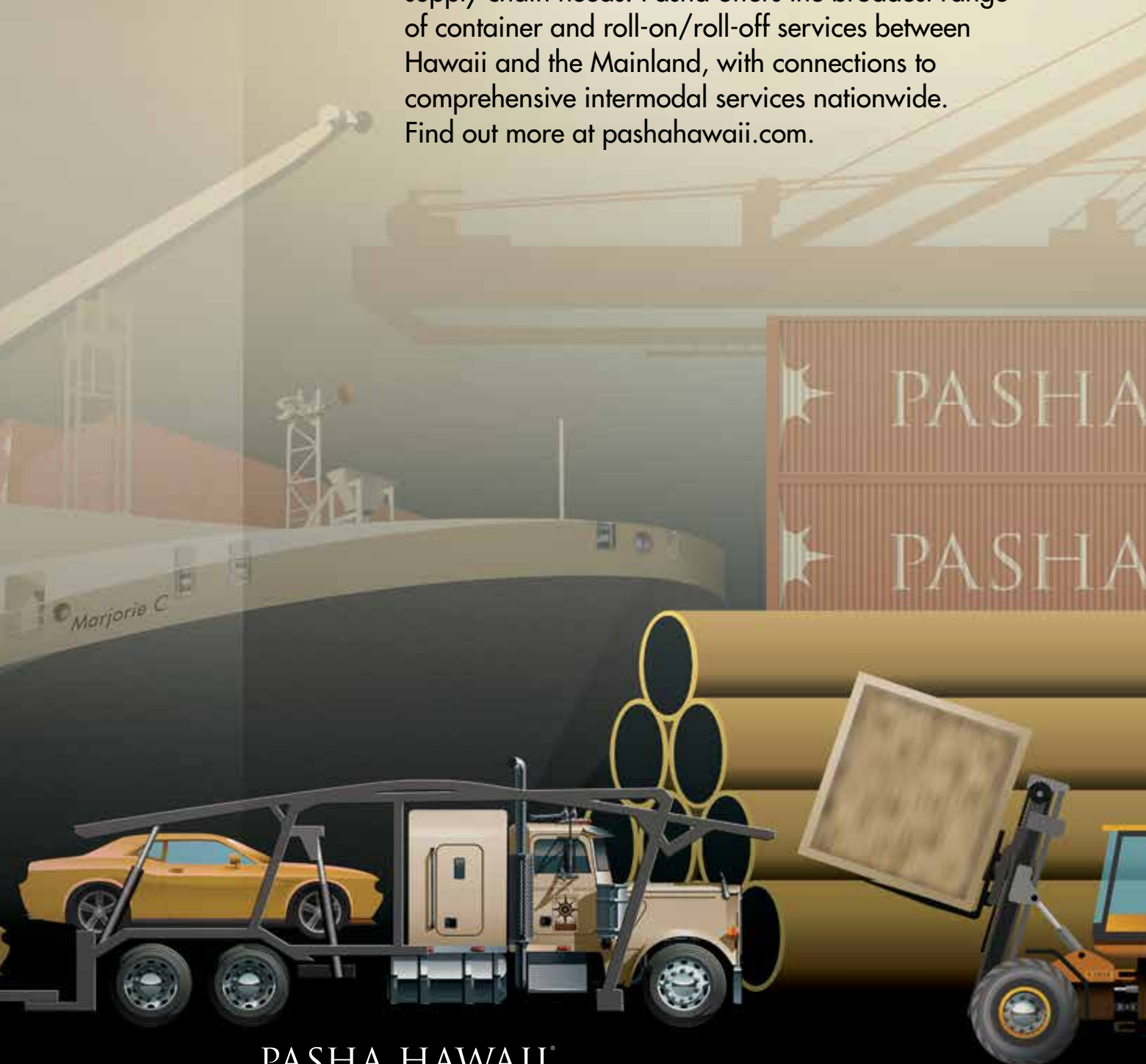
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Hawaii Retail Grocer

The Magazine of the Hawaii Food Industry Association

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A new state law will fine people for knowingly misrepresenting a pet as a service animal.

HFIA continues to address new legislative challenges impacting our members

BY LAUREN ZIRBEL

Penalties for Misrepresenting Service Animals

Starting Jan. 1, 2019, violators will be fined \$100 to \$500 for pretending to have a service animal thanks to a new state law establishing a penalty for knowingly misrepresenting a pet as a service animal. We want to extend a huge MAHALO to Sen. Ruderman for introducing this wonderful legislation. We agree with the legislature that there is a growing problem with people fraudulently representing untrained animals as service dogs. This has resulted in legitimate service dogs being needlessly distracted or even attacked by untrained dogs or other animals, as well as violations of the food and sanitation code. Before this law, there was no legal conse-

quence for misrepresenting a pet dog or other animal as a service animal. This measure was one of HFIA's top priorities this legislative session. We genuinely hope that this new penalty will discourage people from fraudulently representing their pets as service animals in order to bring them into restaurants, supermarkets, and other inappropriate locations.

Affordable Hawaii Coalition

HFIA's government relations committee moved to join the Affordable Hawaii Coalition, which is working to educate individuals about a Constitutional Amendment placed on the November 6th ballot. The Amendment asks voters, "Shall the legislature be authorized to establish, as provided by law, a surcharge on investment real property to be

used to support education?" We agree with the coalition that this bill doesn't do anything to ensure that more money will actually be used to improve public education, as it is possible that general fund contributions to education may be reduced. We support laws that have already been passed to help teachers with housing and increase funding for public schools. Unfortunately, these have not been implemented. The new tax will raise Hawaii's cost of living by increasing the cost of home and apartment rentals and increasing the tax burden for businesses leasing office space. In order to reach the goal set forward by proponents of the measure, to raise \$500 million, legislators will need to raise taxes by 50 percent on all investment properties. If this passes, rent for businesses and homes will increase and all goods and services will cost more.



GET Increase on Hawaii Island

For months, HFIA has been opposing a Hawaii County Council bill to increase the GET by .5 percent. As a result of opposition from businesses and local community members, the bill was amended to a .25 percent GET increase. The .25 percent increase passed with an expiration date of 2020. HFIA will continue to work towards preventing any new taxes that will increase the cost of food for Hawaii residents.

Honolulu Bill Proposed to Revoke Bag Reduction Fee

At the Honolulu City Council, Council Member Trevor Ozawa introduced Bill 59, to exempt paper bags from the mandatory 15-cent bag fee currently in place in Honolulu. The current bag bill and 15 cent fee was the result of years of hard work by HFIA and a diverse group of partners. In the short time it has been in effect, the mandatory bag fee has dramatically reduced the use of unnecessary and costly single use bags. Environmental groups agreed with HFIA's position that paper bags are not environmentally friendly and that we should not send customers the message that they don't need to bring their own bag.

HFIA continues to advocate for the food industry in many ways. We are grateful to you for helping us provide a voice to our community. We look forward to continuing the important work of ensuring there will always be safe and affordable food for all!

Critical Legislation for our Supermarket Industry

BY THE NATIONAL GROCERS ASSOCIATION

Members of Congress from both chambers returned to session after Labor Day with just 11 legislative days to pass or extend many critical pieces of legislation before the expiration date of Sept. 30. While the news cycle this summer was full of loud storylines, NGA continued pushing the priorities of independent grocers on numerous fronts. Here is an update and outlook on critical legislative issues to the supermarket industry.

Farm Bill: At the time of this writing, the conference committee responsible for reconciling the differences between the Senate and House farm bills met on September 5, but since that meeting Farm Bill negotiators appear to be at an impasse. It is expected that reconciling this Farm Bill will be a difficult task because of the significant differences between the House and Senate Farm Bill, particularly as it relates to new eligibility and work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). As Congress continues the hard work of reauthorizing nutrition programs in the Farm Bill, NGA will continue to meet with lawmakers to ensure the voice of the independent supermarket industry is represented throughout this process. NGA will support Farm Bill legislation that maintains a strong pub-

lic-private partnership between the federal government and the private retail sector in SNAP, reauthorizes and expands the FINI program and other healthy food incentive programs, rejects any new fees or excessive reporting mandates, and protects private SNAP retailer sales data.

Taxes: Late last year, Congress passed a once-in-a-generation tax reform legislation, which included many positive provisions that will help independent supermarkets hire additional staff, expand offerings and upgrade their stores, as well as provide long-awaited tax relief.

However, due to a drafting error in the bill, the language excludes some categories of business investment, most notably qualified improvement property, from being eligible for 100 percent bonus depreciation. This drafting error now defaults the write off period for qualified improvement property to periods as long as 39 years as opposed to the 15-year period that existed under the old tax code.

The drafting error is considered a true technical correction and there will be no cost associated with fixing it because the cost for the intended provision was already taken into account when the bill was drafted. NGA is a member of a strong coalition of retail, restaurant, and business organizations lobbying Congress to include a fix for the drafting error in upcoming legislation.

Midterm Elections:

The U.S. Senate has 51 Republicans and 49 Democrats (which includes the two independents who caucus with the Democrats). There are 35 Senate seats up for re-election this year, with 26 of those seats held by Democrats. Every member of the House is up for re-election, with Republicans holding 237 seats and Democrats with 193 seats (and five vacancies at the time of this writing). While many Democrats feel as if a “blue wave” is coming given the enthusiasm among their base and high turnout in special elections, taking control of the Senate will be an uphill battle due to an unfavorable map. Democrats will need to win 2 seats to take control, but of those 26 seats they’ll need to defend, 10 are in states that Trump won in the 2016 presidential race. The prospect of taking control of the House is much brighter for Democrats as they need a net of 23 seats. Most election analysts give Democrats anywhere from a 60 to 75 percent chance of taking over the House. However, there is still much fluidity in these predictions and we will see what kind of political atmosphere awaits us leading up to the elections this fall.

NGA Appreciation

The independent grocery industry has a huge impact on America’s economy with \$131 billion in sales, nearly one million jobs, and \$30 billion in wages. With such a large economic footprint, it is increasingly important that grocers engage in the political process. NGA appreciates the strong relationship that we have had with the Hawaii Food Industry Association and its members over the years, but as we all know, all politics is local. Your voice and grassroots efforts help to make a difference in Washington, D.C. for the entire industry.



Aloha!

Attending the Made in Hawaii Festival as Chair of HFIA was an opportunity to appreciate this blockbuster event in a unique way. It was great to see long time HFIA members like Diamond Bakery, Aunty Lilikoi, and Meadow Gold Dairies along side new HFIA members like DE.HI Foods, Hawaii Pantry, and Candylicious. I also loved seeing many vendors representing Hawaii Island at this year's show.

The variety of vendors and the large crowds it attracts shows what an important event the Made In Hawaii Festival is for Hawaii businesses. It also shows what a valuable organization HFIA is for supporting and promoting Hawaii food businesses, big and small, old and new.

Buying local and growing a diverse Hawaii economy is a big priority for us at KTA Super Stores. It's great to be part of an organization like HFIA that shares that commitment.

The Made in Hawaii Festival is a chance for businesses to get unique products to consumers and connect with retail buyers during the buyers' hours. As this year's Chair, I've come to appreciate the festival's importance to our local businesses and how vital it is to create a space for these companies to make new connections.

The Made In Hawaii Festival is of course only part of what HFIA does. In order for businesses to succeed in our

state, we must have effective legislative representation. As the saying goes, "You are either at the table or you are on the menu."

The food industry is unique and doing business in Hawaii isn't like doing business anywhere else. Making sure that our industry's interests are effectively promoted and protected here in Hawaii is what HFIA is all about.

We face new economic and regulatory challenges every year, and it's essential that we continue to have a clear and strong voice.

By working together we can prepare for natural disasters, promote local farmers/producers and improve Hawaii's food security.

I'm very proud to be HFIA's Chair and I'm grateful for each and every one of the member companies that makes this organization such an important part of our community and our state.

Mahalo for your support!

Toby Taniguchi
HFIA Chairman



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THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF CON AM

FCH Enterprises CEO Jason Higa gives overview on investment real estate tax bill

BY HRG STAFF

FCH Enterprises dba Zippy's Restaurants CEO and HFIA member Jason Higa outlined the potential consequences of SB2922, a constitutional amendment to give voters the opportunity to decide if the state should establish a surcharge on investment property in support of public education.

Mr. Higa provided the following overview of the amendment and explained why it could threaten Hawaii's economy in far-reaching ways for years to come and urged the membership to vote NO on November 6.

Background on the Constitutional Amendment (SB2922)

In this year's General Election on Nov. 6, Hawaii voters will be asked to decide on a proposed amendment to our state constitution that would give the legislature the authority to create a new tax on "investment real property" that will raise the cost of living for all Hawaii residents.

The ballot question reads:

"Shall the legislature be authorized to establish, as provided by law, a surcharge on investment real property to be used to support education?"

While the proposed intent is to help our public schools, this tax will pull \$500 million out of our local economy every year and raise the cost of living for everyone in our state.

The proposed amendment will result in a tax on rental properties, which will make housing costs in

Proposed Constitutional Amendment

Shall the legislature be authorized to establish, as provided by law, a surcharge on investment real property to be used to support public education?

T	F	True or False
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Only applies to \$1 million+ properties
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Only taxes foreign and mainland investors
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Guaranteed to increase funding for classrooms and teacher wages

☒ **VOTE NO**

TRUE: If passed, this new tax will increase the cost of living and the cost of doing business for all residents with no guarantee additional funds will go towards public education.

Hawaii even more expensive and increase the overall cost of living.

This tax will affect all investment properties in Hawaii – residential, commercial and agricultural – regardless of their value. The impact will be felt not just by local property owners, but by the people and businesses who rent from them.

This new tax will increase the cost of rent for residential and business spaces, leading to increased prices for housing, products and services. This would increase everyone's cost of living by taxing the places where we live, the places where we shop, and the places where we go for various services.

- Families and individuals who rent walk-up apartments, condos and single-family homes will pay more for housing.
- Businesses, including retailers,

grocery stores, restaurants, farmers, care homes, medical clinics, dentists, veterinarians, accountants, hotels, movie theaters and more, will pay higher lease rents. The increased tax burden will lower profits, and the additional costs will be passed on to customers in the form of higher prices for essential products and services, including more expensive groceries and clothing, higher rates for services, as well as increased costs to eat out or to go to a movie.

Hawaii currently has the second highest overall tax burden in the country and one of the highest costs of living in the nation. We cannot afford another tax that will make living and doing business in Hawaii even more unaffordable.

Hawaii's high cost of living is an issue that affects every worker in the



state and it's leading to an exodus of workers in many job sectors.

Any proposed new tax that further solidifies Hawaii's reputation as one of the most expensive places to live and one of the worst states in the nation to do business should be thoroughly vetted before being considered.

The proposed amendment does not guarantee more money for public schools or that any additional funds will reach students and classrooms.

The proposed amendment does not require the new revenue to go to K through 12 schools or teacher pay raises. The money could be used to pay for more DOE bureaucracy or administrator salaries.

If the legislature authorizes a tax to create a new \$500 million funding source for education, there is a legitimate concern that the legislature could use the new funds to replace a portion of the close to \$3 billion in general funds that currently goes to education and divert it to other priorities.

There are no guarantees that the revenue generated by a tax on investment properties will not be diverted

to the general fund. Since 2011, the legislature has diverted more than \$500 million from special and revolving fund accounts to the general fund.

When asked if there is a guarantee that this new tax will go to schools or increase teachers' pay, Corey Rosenlee, president of HSTA, said, "We can't." (HSAC Conference, June 22, 2018)

The proposed amendment is overly broad and does not establish a system of checks and balances to ensure the DOE uses the money generated by the new tax to improve education and benefit students.

No one knows where the money goes at the DOE or how the education funds are spent.

DOE fiscal reporting lacks transparency and credibility.

An independent auditor found that DOE expenditures of \$2.9 billion is not supported with sufficient details for accountability.

The DOE has not undergone an independent audit since 1973.

The public needs to be assured that the current DOE funding is being used effectively and efficiently before deciding to create a new tax and increase the high cost of living.

The new tax will negatively impact the counties' ability to provide basic services by infringing on their singular source of income.

Currently, the counties have the exclusive authority to tax real property and it is the sole source of funding for core services. The new tax would dip into the county funding and make it even more difficult to balance their budgets.

The proposed amendment establishes a new tax on real properties that would take money from the counties' funding for critical services (like police, fire, park maintenance, road repairs, garbage pickup, etc.). Some of these agencies are already struggling due to a lack of resources.

The four counties oppose this measure.

- "A surcharge on residential investment properties would obviously limit county options and make it even more difficult to balance our budgets." – Mayor Harry Kim, Hawaii County
- "This measure encroaches into the City's only permanent taxing authority and will adversely affect the stability of our major revenue

source and bond funding.” – Steven Takara, Administrator, Real Property Assessment Division, City and County of Honolulu

• “Raising property taxes is our only reasonable option to balance our budget. In addition, adding the capability of the state to tax real estate can damage Maui County’s bond rating.” – Mayor Alan Arakawa, Maui County

• “By amending the State Constitution for a state surcharge, this bill seeks to weaken counties’ authority on the main source of revenue to the counties’, and thereby undermines the counties’ ability to fund essential services. – Ken Shimoni-shi, Director of Finance, County of Kauai

We support our public schools, teachers and students, but creating a new tax that will increase the cost of living for everyone is a bad idea.

Better alternative approaches include fully implementing laws passed in recent years to bring our schools into the 21st century, including proposals on how to pay for it.

Act 155, named the 21st Century Schools Act that was passed in 2013, created a pilot program to allow underutilized DOE land to be developed for affordable workforce housing (including teacher housing), or leased or sold to generate additional revenues for public education.

The latest component of the 21st Century Schools Act was passed this year. It requires the City and County of Honolulu to transfer county land under public schools to the state. This will give the DOE the power to hold title to the properties and use them for public educational purposes. This also will make it easier for the state to make much-needed repairs and renovations to these schools.

Act 245, passed in 2007, established a process for the DOE to impose impact on new residential developments determined to have an impact on the public schools in the area.

Q Who *really* pays for the proposed property tax increase?



A Everyone.

The proposed constitutional amendment (ConAm) allows the Legislature to **tax all real property**, regardless of value or ownership.



Residential



Commercial



Retail



Agricultural

Higher property taxes will:



Push up rental and lease rates



Decrease the supply of affordable housing



Increase the Counties' cost to provide services

Local families will be harmed as Hawaii's already high cost of living increases...



Our children will be forced to **leave Hawaii** because they can't afford to live here.



Businesses will pay more to lease space, which will lead to **higher prices** for goods and services.



Kupuna on fixed incomes will be **unable to afford** basic essentials.

WE SIMPLY CANNOT AFFORD ANOTHER TAX.



VOTE "NO"
#ConAmBad

Call to Action – Support Affordable Hawai'i Coalition Grassroots Campaign

Stopping this new tax on rental properties requires a coordinated, strategic grassroots campaign.

The Affordable Hawai'i Coalition – a coalition of concerned citizens and community organizations representing diverse interests from across the state – has been formed to inform the public on the negative effects of this proposed constitutional amendment and to stop this new tax.

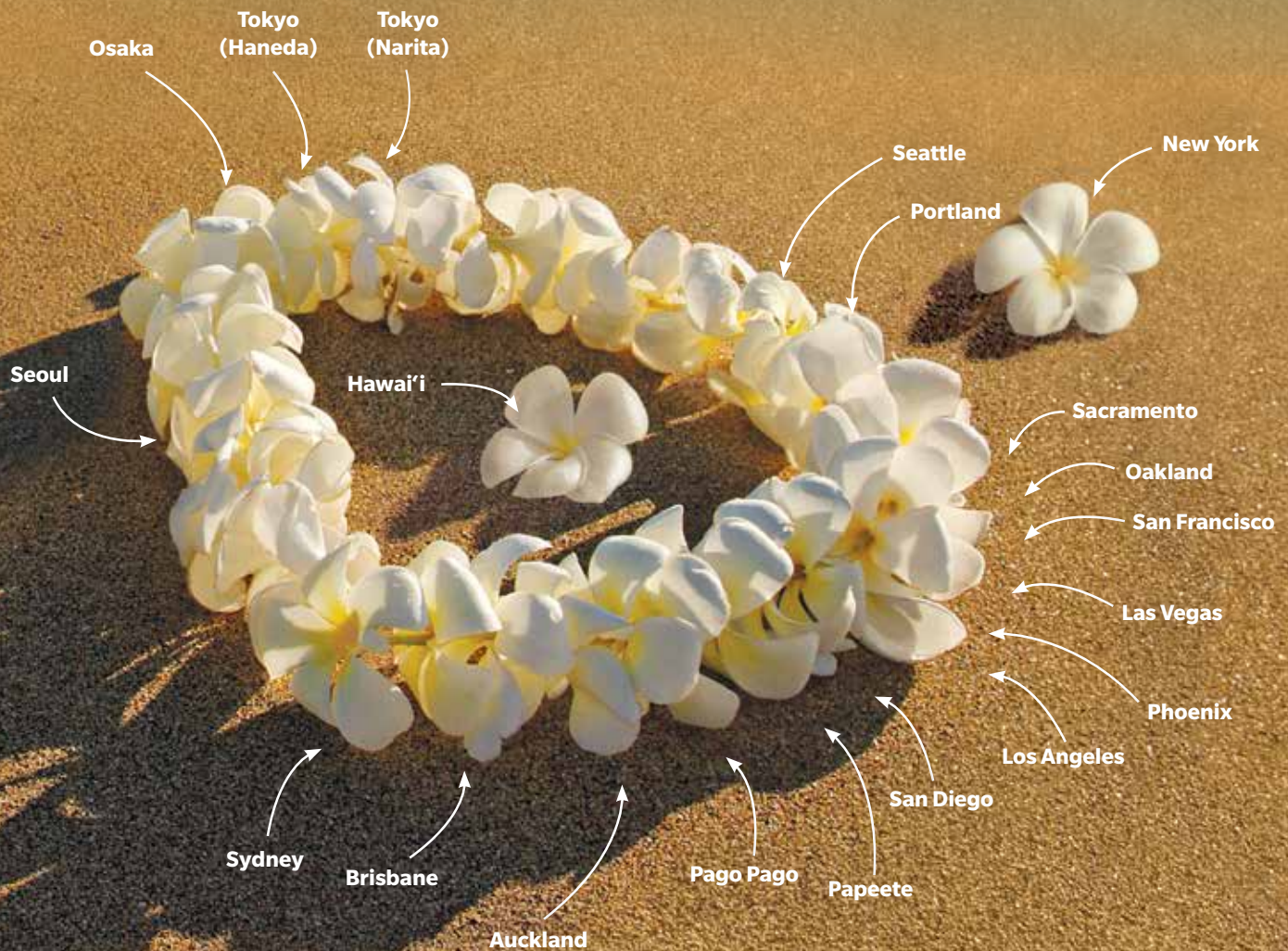
The coalition includes small businesses, renters, unions, education advocates, the four counties and oth-

er citizens who are concerned about increasing the cost of living.

Here's how you can help:

- Contribute to the Affordable Hawai'i Coalition PAC to support the campaign to stop this new tax
- Speak to businesses and community organizations
- Provide information to employees/members
- Write letters to the editor of your local newspaper
- Post information on social media
- Inform friends, family and neighbors
- **Vote NO on November 6!**

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HFIA Celebrates Good Times at Summer Convention

PHOTOS BY ANTHONY CONSILLIO

“Celebrate Good Times” was the theme of the 2018 annual convention at Aulani A Disney Resort & Spa.

Members enjoyed a variety of activities and a great chance to network with colleagues.



Toby Taniguchi, Lauren Zirbel, Randy and Gwen Botti, Barry Taniguchi and Beau Oshiro

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Kim, Travis, Tyson and Tanner Kameoka, Jasmine and Haziel Mitchell



Riki and Karen Morimoto, Russell and Joanne Jeremiah, Darlene and Brandon Tashima, Miles and Jill Oda



Darin Omori, Stacy Waiau-Omori, Maxine and Tim Parker



Richard Rutz, Elliot Peters, Jill and Robson Piiohia

Locally Grown Products Sprout Value-Added Success

BY JESSE COOKE
VICE PRESIDENT OF INVESTMENTS, ULUPONO INITIATIVE

As smart as Hilo's Jimmy Chan is, it doesn't seem that he realizes that his company, Hawaiian Chip Co., just might be the largest consumer of locally produced sweet potato in Hawaii. That's quite a statement, given how big the sweet potato industry has grown in the state.

Hawaii's Lesser-Known Crop

In 2011, local production of sweet potato was measured at almost 17 million pounds. That's more than 10 pounds of sweet potato for every man, woman and child living in Hawaii. At that production volume, sweet potato is up there with the more well-known staple crops of Hawaii's agriculture industry – macadamia nuts (49 million pounds), coffee (36 million pounds), bananas (10 to 20 million pounds) and papaya (20 to 30 million pounds).

Local production of sweet potato hasn't slowed down. In Hilo alone, 12 million pounds of Okinawan sweet potato were treated for export in 2013, which is a massive volume for a relatively unknown industry. But most surprising (and a little sad) is that more than 90 percent of Hawaii's sweet potato production is shipped off island, destined for continental U.S. markets.

A Mind for Adding Value

The question is, why don't we eat more sweet potatoes here in Hawaii? Could the problem be the word "sweet," which implies a lot of sugar and unwanted calories?

In fact, the opposite is true. The Center for Science in the Public Interest ranks sweet potato in 9th place among the top most nutrient-packed of all vegetables, just below kale ranked in 8th place.





Hawaiian Chip Co. president Jimmy Chan grew his company from a one-man operation to a successful business featuring an underappreciated locally grown crop.

The sweet potato scored higher than the likes of carrots, Brussels sprouts, asparagus and peas. Even broccoli, the stalwart green ultra-nutritious veggie also known as the dread of toddlers around the world, isn't even close coming in at 17th place. I am fairly confident that most people (and certainly most toddlers) find sweet potatoes far more enjoyable to eat than kale or broccoli. (Source: <https://cspinet.org/eating-healthy/veggies-who-knew>)

Again, this begs the question – with all the trendiness of eating local and the buzz around adding superfoods to your diet, why aren't sweet potatoes receiving the same attention?

We at Ulupono Initiative believe that locally produced foods, like sweet potatoes, could play a major role in helping Hawaii meet its goal of doubling local food production by 2030. With the help of local entrepreneurs who can think outside the box, future generations can be inspired to utilize local products to help move Hawaii toward a more sustainable future.

A perfect example of one such entrepreneur is Jimmy Chan. In 2017, Hawaiian Chip Co. purchased nearly 200,000 pounds of locally grown sweet potato. While most sweet potato is shipped off island, Jimmy Chan, with that entrepreneurial mind for adding value, says "I'll take those sweet potatoes."

A Career Built on Value-Added Innovation

After watching Chef Emeril Lagasse make homemade chips on his TV cooking show, Jimmy decided to do the same with some Okinawan sweet potato he had on his counter. From humble beginnings in 1999 working out of an apartment kitchen, Hawaiian Chip Co. was born. In 2000, operations moved to a certified commercial kitchen and \$20,000 of equipment was bought. While sales continued to expand, so did the company's need for cash to fund growth, and so debt grew just as fast.

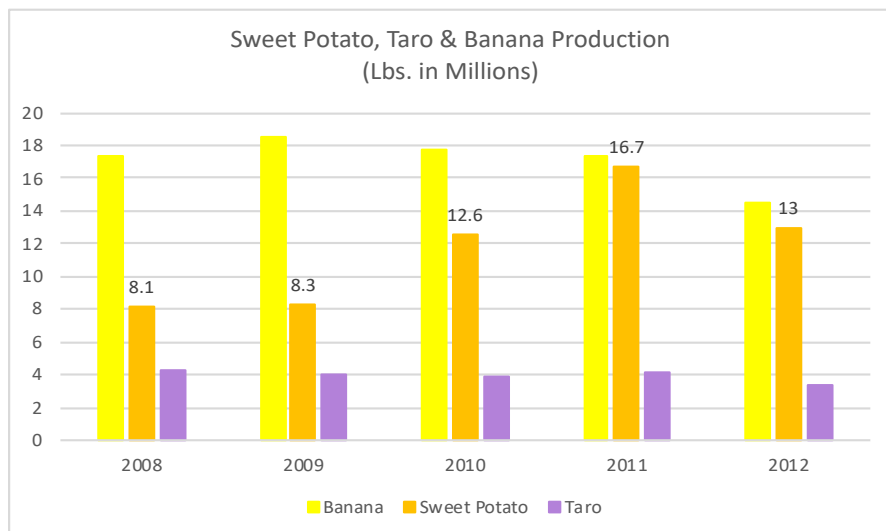
"Inexperience had me trying to price my chips to be competitive with

the national brands," Jimmy said. "The cost of Okinawan potatoes was higher because they're a premium product. Not understanding that my product was a premium one with a consumer base that was willing to pay more for it had me running in the red."

After this realization Jimmy made the strategic changes necessary to get Hawaiian Chip Co. back in the black. By 2007, the company was able to pay off all its past debt and had secured some big accounts along the way, most notably Hawaiian Airlines and Costco. Then in 2008, Jimmy plunked down almost \$2 million to purchase the property and equipment that is the Hawaiian Chip Co. manufacturing plant on Republican Street in Kalihi. Now, Jimmy jokes about how he finally became debt free, only to then make the decision to take on more debt than he ever dreamed of. While the decision was nothing to laugh about, the investment paid off.

Jimmy's mind for adding value hasn't slowed down, and neither has the innovation and growth at Hawaiian Chip Co.

In 2009, Jimmy expanded beyond chips to barbecue sauce, with a recipe based on a popular sweet potato chip flavor: Kilauea Fire, a mix of garlic, barbecue and habanero and cayenne peppers. The company's line of sauces has continued to expand and so have sales both locally and internationally. Hawaiian Chip Co.'s success abroad was recognized in 2017 by the state Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism for being selected as Exporter of the Year



for the City and County of Honolulu by the U.S. Small Business Administration District Office.

In 2013, Jimmy decided to take a chance on customers wanting fresh chips, so he invested in the development of a retail storefront for his factory. This year, Hawaiian Chip Co. storefront sales could reach close to half a million dollars. At around 500 square feet, Hawaiian Chip Co. storefront sales per square foot would rank among the top five casual dining restaurant chains and would be double the average sales per square foot of national grocers.

Adding value has resulted in an unlikely success story, and along the way Hawaiian Chip Co. has become a shining example of the value creation possible from using locally grown products. Jimmy has transformed a one-man show working out of an apartment kitchen to Hawaiian Chip Co., a successful local business that provides 20 people with employment. Sales in the first quarter of this year alone were more than the total combined sales generated during

Hawaiian Chip Co's first five years of operation. All from the simple idea of adding value to an underappreciated, locally grown crop.

A Chip Off the Old Block

Jimmy has built a career on being able to see and add value to products most people don't think twice about. Now, he wants to add some value to the street block Hawaiian Chip Co. calls home. Hawaiian Chip Co. wants to transform a block in Kalihi into a hub for local foods. Over the years, Jimmy has invested in Republican Street, purchasing and renting three adjacent buildings including the chip factory, an inventory warehouse, and soon-to-be finished food hub featuring two commercial kitchens.

One of the kitchens will be used for Kilauea Fire production (Hawaiian Chip Co.'s sauce line) and R & D for new products. The other kitchen will be run by Chef Ron Simon, who will be featuring Kilauea Fire's sauces on

his menu of sliders, sandwiches and salads. Chef Ron will also be making purple Okinawan sweet potato empanadas with Kalua pork, which he used to consistently sell out of when set up at the Kapiolani Community College Farmer's Market.

Jimmy is building on the strong foot traffic generated from the Hawaiian Chip Co. retail store. He believes that the food hub, which will feature locally made products, will attract even more locals and tourists to Republican Street. In the long-term, his goal is to develop a tourist destination. Not many in the visitor industry may think of downtown Kalihi as the next big visitor attraction, but then again not many people think like Jimmy Chan.

Jesse Cooke is Vice President of Investments with Ulu pono Initiative, which is partnering with Hawaii-focused organizations to increase local food production, among other things, for a more sustainable and resilient community. To learn more about the projects we invest in, visit ulu.pono.com.



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New Bill Seeks to Reverse Hard Won Progress

Bill would mean customers are no longer encouraged to bring their own bag

BY STACY YUEN

It's been just over three months since the mandatory bag fee requiring businesses to charge customers a minimum 15 cents a bag went into effect in Honolulu. Now the Hawaii Food Industry Association is taking a stand against a new bill seeking to revise the law.

Honolulu City Councilman Trevor Ozawa introduced Bill 59 (2018) seeking an exemption for paper bags. Ozawa says he believes the current law encourages people to shop less making it less likely for people to spend money, thus affecting small businesses.

"We have serious concerns with this new measure," says Lauren Zirbel, HFIA executive director. "The current law was passed after years of negotiation with almost all stakeholders, including environmentalists and businesses supporting it. It also unanimously passed the city council."

Zirbel also believes three months is not enough time to make any type of

policy decision about whether or not the policy is successful.

"We have heard from grocery stores that there has been a dramatic reduction in the use of single use bags and an increase in the use of reusable bags and that was the goal," she says. "In the short time it has been in effect, the mandatory bag fee has dramatically reduced the use of unnecessary and costly single use bags."

"In the short time it has been in effect, the mandatory bag fee has dramatically reduced the use of unnecessary and costly single use bags."

Down to Earth Organic and Natural confirms that assessment, and reports that prior to July 2018, when businesses in Honolulu were required to start charging 15 cents for all types of bags, the company was purchasing over 42,000 paper bags per month for their stores.

"For August, since the implementation of the bag fee, the number of bags needed was reduced to just

5,700 for the month, allowing us to cut costs – which helps us to keep prices low for customers – and reduce the environmental impacts of producing, shipping, and disposing of the bags," says Alison Riggs, Down to Earth's public policy & government relations manager. "The current bill is effective in reducing the number of single use bags used by customers."

Riggs says Down to Earth is not in

favor of Bill 59 (2018) as it is a step backwards for Oahu in reducing the amount of waste and environmental harm caused by single use bags.

"Consumers are adjusting to bringing their own bags when shopping, which is the best option. Bill 59 would again encourage the use of single use bags by allowing retailers to distribute them without a fee, which will get customers out of the habit of bringing their own bags," says Riggs. "Going back to no bag fee will lead to more waste, destruction of trees, and the pollution that occurs in the production of paper bags and use of fossil fuels to transport bulky paper bags across the ocean to Hawaii."

Additionally, Zirbel says if businesses don't charge a fee for paper, they must pass on the cost to other items in the store, such as food.

"HFIA believes it's preferable to place the cost on the bag, to encourage consumers to bring their own bag," she says.



New GMO Labels Are Coming

BY ALEXIS CHAPMAN

Labeling of food that contains genetically modified organisms (GMOs) has been a contentious and confusing issue at the national and state level for several years now.

In 2016 the National Food Disclosure Standard Law was enacted in order to establish a system that would be consistent for consumers and businesses across the country.

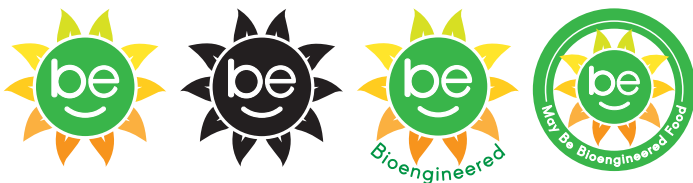


Proposed Symbol 1

The law directed the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service to establish a “national mandatory system for disclosing the presence of bioengineered material” in food. It defines “bioengineered food” as “food (A) that contains genetic material that has been modified through in vitro recombinant deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) techniques; and (B) for which the modification could not otherwise be obtained through conventional breeding or found in nature.”

The compliance date is currently set for January 1, 2020, with a delayed compliance date of January 1, 2021 for small businesses. Open comment period for the rule ended this past July and the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service is now moving forward to finalize the rule.

Here are few important things to know about the new labels before they go into effect.



Proposed Symbol 2

The labels won't say GMO

The USDA has decided to use the term “bioengineered” and the acronym “BE” on the new labels. Genetically modified organism (GMO) has become a common way to refer to food derived from organisms that have had genes modified in a lab, so some people may not know what bioengineered or BE means at first. However, the new term has some advantages. BE doesn't carry the stigma that GMO has for some consumers. Furthermore, saying bioengineered can help make it clear that this technology is a process, rather than something that is added to food, a misconception that some consumers hold about the term GMO.

The final version of the label hasn't been decided

There are three potential versions of the label, each with variations. They can be viewed at the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service website. All feature the acronym BE, and each could also carry text that says “Bioengineered” or “May Be Bioengineered Food.” The final version of the label may also include a QR code that consumers can scan to get additional information.

Some bioengineered foods may not carry the label

There are two probable exceptions to the new labeling rule. The definition of bioengineered specifies that it applies to food made with modifications that couldn't be found in nature or achieved through conventional breeding. So foods that have had their DNA modified in a lab in a way that could have been done through selective breeding or a natural mutation will not carry the label. For



Proposed Symbol 3

instance if a cross breed of two different types of oranges is created in a lab for speed and convenience sake, but it could have been done using cross pollination, then the new orange would probably not have to be labeled. Also, foods that have been processed to the point that there is no genetic material in the finished product, such as some sugar and oil, may not end up being labeled as BE. These and any other exemptions should be finalized as the compliance date approaches.

The new labels preempt state laws

One of the motivating factors of passing the National Food Disclosure Standard Law in 2016 was to avoid a situation where manufacturers had to make different labels for different states, and where consumers were getting different information in different states. The law expressly prohibits states from enacting or enforcing any state specific labeling laws about BE food.

As the implementation date for the new labels gets closer more information will become available from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service. HFIA will continue to provide updates in the Weekly Update as the rule is finalized, and, as always any members with questions can reach out to us at info@HawaiiFood.com.

Hawaii's Seasonal Flavors

BY ALEXIS CHAPMAN

It's fall and that means the most popular flavors of the season, pumpkin, pumpkin pie, and pumpkin spice, are everywhere!

Just like our friends and family on the mainland, Hawaii residents enjoy seasonal flavors all our own.

Fall brings guava, starfruit, 'ulu and unusual citrus

One of the best fall treats in Hawaii is fresh guava. Luckily POG is available year round, but those who love the super sweet pink fruit all on its own look forward to fall when they can be found ripe, not just in the grocery store, but in forests around the islands. Autumn is also the start of star fruit harvest. Their unique shape gives the star fruit its name, but it has just as much substance as style. It's high in

antioxidants and low in sugar and salt, and when it's ripe, the flavor is a perfect balance of tart and sweet.

Later in the fall we can look forward to ripe 'ulu, or breadfruit. One of the original canoe plants brought to Hawaii by the first Polynesian settlers, breadfruit has been a staple food for centuries. Though it's not as universally popular as some other local foods, it has been enjoying a revival and is becoming known as a super food because of its versatility and nutritional value. Autumn and winter are also time for an abundance of Hawaii citrus fruits. So many different varieties of locally grown limes, oranges (the crucial second POG ingredient), and lemons will pop up in our stores and markets this time of year. We also get to enjoy some of the more unusual citrus, like kumquats and ugli – a hybrid of grapefruit, orange and tangerine.

Spring time is time for veggies mangoes and more

Island grown melons,



corn, herbs, leafy greens, and more come into season in the early spring. In Hawaii, March means the arrival of mangoes! Every year HFIA celebrates mango season with Mango Jam Honolulu, a chance to enjoy all that this awesome fruit has to offer. Mango is great all on its own but the abundance of the fruit during the season has led to some amazing local recipes that you won't find anywhere else. Pickled mango, dried mango, li hing mango, mango jams and chutneys, mango cakes and pies, mango bar-b-q sauces, mango ice creams, and mango smoothies are Hawaii's spring and summer flavors.

Lychee and passionfruit abound in the summer

Summer also brings the peak har-





vest of bananas, as well as mountain apple season. Apples and bananas are common fruits around the world but Hawaii's unique varieties really stand out. In fact mountain apples aren't apples at all. The shiny red fruit is sweet and juicy, but with a unique and subtle floral flavor. Because they're so delicate, fresh mountain apples are best enjoyed close to where they grow soon after picking, making them a truly seasonal local treat. Another local favorite are apple bananas. These sweet and tangy bananas aren't commonly available

on the mainland. Neither are the even less common varieties we find in Hawaii like ice cream bananas, red bananas, and lady finger bananas, which each have their own appeal. Other flavors that we savor in the Hawaiian summer are fresh ginger, lychee, and the first ingredient in POG, passion fruit! Passion fruit, or lilikoi vines heavy with hundreds of fruits is a sure sign that a Hawaiian summer is well underway. Then comes fall and the pumpkin onslaught again, and for those on Oahu the best way to enjoy this flavor of the season is with a fresh

local pumpkin from Aloun Farms' famous pumpkin patch.

There are so many things that make Hawaii special. Our weather is great year-round, and so many of our signature flavors like coconut, pineapple, and papaya are in season all year, too. But we're also lucky to have amazing local seasonal flavors to celebrate and look forward to throughout the year.

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Mango Jam Celebration

BY HFIA STAFF

Hawaii's luscious fruit – mango – was the star in June as HFIA with the Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts presented Mango Jam Honolulu.

The event, billed as “a taste of island culture,” celebrated one of our favorite fruits, while serving as a community gathering offering something for everyone.

Mango Jam Honolulu has become known for its great entertainment and the 2018 lineup was no exception as the mango stage featured one great local act after another. One of the highlights this year was the performance of Honolulu favorites Kapena Kids, who reunited exclusively for the event.

Of course, the big star of the show is the mango. Food and drink vendors once again did an outstanding job showcasing everything that this sweet island fruit has to offer.

The Mango Café and Mango Market featured dozens of local companies offering a delicious array of sweet and savory treats. Heated competition could be found at the Mango BBQ Cook Off and Mango Recipe Contest, with so many delicious entries we don't know how the judges could pick winners!

For those looking for adult refreshment, Tiki's Mango Lounge presented unique specialty mango cocktails and even mango craft beer. It was a great chance for event-goers to check out local crafts, clothes, jewelry, and more from the vendors at Mango Row.

Mango Jam Honolulu 2018 was a huge success and HFIA would like to

extend our Mahalo to our vendors, entertainers, and everyone who came out to enjoy it.

HFIA is pleased to be able to present this free event for our community. Special thanks to our co-presenter the Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts, as well as event sponsors the Hawaii Tourism Authority, Honolulu Magazine, Bank of Hawaii, Hawaiian Springs, Hawaii Gas, and radio stations Hawaiian 105 Kine, FM 100, Crater 96, and Power 104.3.

We look forward to seeing you all at Mango Jam Honolulu 2019!



Membership Campaign Announces Winner

Samantha Haas of Wealth Strategies Partners wins trip for two to Las Vegas

BY DESIREE ROSE

Membership is the life-blood of any trade association, and as the members of HFIA will testify, membership with HFIA is a valuable investment.

Recognizing the best messengers for promoting the value of HFIA and the benefits of membership are its own members, HFIA launched its first ever Member-Get-A-Member Campaign in June 2017. During the year-long campaign, members were invited to recruit members and would receive one entry into a drawing for every new member successfully recruited. The prize was a trip for two

to Las Vegas, courtesy of Vacations Hawaii.

The campaign resulted in 17 new members recruited during the campaign period.

At our annual conventions this past June, Samantha Haas, Sr. Business Development Executive of Wealth Strategy Partners won the drawing for the Vacations Hawaii Grand Prize!

As an HFIA member since 2014, Samantha has actively promoted awareness of the HFIA.

“When you meet someone and know that simply inviting that person to an HFIA event may change

their business, it's impossible not to,” she says.

Samantha frequently hosts seminars that bring together Business Valuation Experts, CPA's, Business Attorneys, Certified Financial Planners, and Certified Business Exit Planners. She also produces the radio show Hawaii Money Resource on KGU.

HFIA extends a big mahalo to everyone who participated in the campaign and helped our membership grow and to Vacations Hawaii for their generous donation of the grand prize!



Samantha Haas

Skip Shapiro Enterprises, LLC



Joined: October 1, 2018

Contact Information:

Skip Shapiro, Principal
318 Hawthorn Street, New Bedford, MA 02740
617.594.1429 | skip@shapiroe.com

About: Founded in 2007, Skip Shapiro Enterprises, LLC is America's leading organic waste solutions company. Providing superior solutions for unsaleable finished products, liquid waste, supermarket waste, agricultural streams, byproduct and ingredient waste, the company is dedicated to 100 percent landfill diversion/recycling and beneficial reuse.

Skip Shapiro Enterprises is your one-stop shop for your organic byproduct needs, managing the logistics and transportation of your byproducts, and offering upstanding customer service — invoicing with attached Certificates of Destruction or Repurposing, witness destruction or photographs if necessary, and customized reporting.

Reason for Joining HFIA: We are excited to introduce and market Advetec XO to the Hawaiian Islands, which is a successful Bio-Thermic Digester technology, an in-vessel solution engineered to rapidly digest organic waste. These small footprint units, developed and created by Advetec, Inc., can deliver between 60 percent and 90 percent reduction in mass from mixed organic

waste streams. This process is ideal for restaurants, hotels, industrial food and drink manufactures. We look forward to hearing from HFIA members to learn more about your company's specific needs, and help you seek and develop cost-effective, sustainable solutions for you and your company.

The Islander Group



THE ISLANDER GROUP

Joined: July 16, 2018

Contact Information: www.theislandergroup.com

About: The Islander Group was founded in 1975 as "Pacific Trade Group" to address the supply chain challenges of operating a business in one of the most geographically isolated places on earth – Hawaii. Since its founding, The Islander Group has grown from a specialty distributor to one of the largest, independent distributors of general merchandise in the state of Hawaii. The Islander Group is proud to service over 1,000 retail accounts and distribute more than 6,000 products statewide.

Reason for Joining HFIA: With the recent acquisition of inventory in a new category (Over-the-Counter, Grocery, Health & Beauty) for the Islander Group, we will be more involved with the food industry. We felt it necessary to join HFIA to facilitate new connections with food industry businesses. We are looking forward to sharing information about our products and our company with the food industry community.

Exciting Summer for HFIA Members

In May, Pasha Hawaii partnered with Hawaii Stevedores to host two food drives to collect food and other essentials for those impacted by the volcanic eruption on Hawaii Island this year.

American Savings Bank opened their brand new flagship branch in Kahului, Maui this May, in addition to opening a new location in Kapolei.

In June Hawaii-grown tea company Shaka Tea launched in the continental United States. The national expansion was supported by adding a Director of Content

& Digital Communications and Hawaii Sales Manager to their team.

June was also the groundbreaking for Safeway's new 63,000-square-foot store in Kailua-Kona.

On Oahu, Villa Rose Egg Farm broke ground on its brand new modern layer egg farm in July. The North Shore facility is entirely cage free and powered by solar panels, with the first eggs scheduled for the 2nd quarter of 2019.

This August, HFIA members Minit Stop (MS), Maui Soda and Ice, and Monster, along with Alaska Airlines, teamed up for the exciting MS Sum-

mer Blast Giveaway. Lucky Wailuku resident Scott Lewis was the winner of roundtrip airfare for two to Las Vegas via Alaska Airlines, a two-night stay at the MGM Grand Hotel, and two tickets to the 25th Annual Professional Bull Riders Championship Rodeo, as well as other prizes.

Two of our beverage members made international headlines with big purchases recently. PepsiCo acquired the home carbonated drink maker SodaStream in August. Coca Cola bought Costa Coffee and MOJO kombucha over the summer.

In September, Matson an-

nounced its new service from Honolulu to Christmas Island, with the first voyage departing Sept. 25.

This summer, Hawaiian Airlines announced three new nonstop routes. They are Honolulu–Long Beach, Maui–Sacramento, and Honolulu–Boston.

HFIA is proud to support its members in their growth, changes, or challenges and whatever the future may bring. We encourage members to share their news with us so we can pass it along to the entire HFIA community in *Hawaii Retail Grocer* and in our Weekly Updates.

MEMBER UPDATES





Thousands flock to 24th Annual **MADE IN HAWAII FESTIVAL**

BY STACY YUEN

*Much-anticipated event continues
to draw crowds from across the state*

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MADE IN HAWAII FESTIVAL



It was another record-breaking year for the Made in Hawaii Festival, Aug. 17-19, with more than 50,000 attendees passing through the doors of the Neal S. Blaisdell Exhibition Hall and Arena for the three-day event.

“After 24 years, we are thrilled that we continue to enjoy record breaking attendance with so much support from the community and recognition as Hawaii’s premiere ‘Buy Hawaii, For Hawaii’ event, celebrating the participation of more than 400 local vendors showcasing food products, gifts, books, apparel, jewelry, crafts and art and more,” said Amy Hammond, the Festival’s executive direc-

tor. “We had more than 50 exhibitors that were new to the festival this year, or returning after an absence.”

“We had more than 50 exhibitors that were new to the festival this year, or returning after an absence.”

– Amy Hammond, MIHF Executive Director

Among the newcomers was Erin Byrne, owner of Da Big Island Burn Hot Sauce, who featured four of her all-natural hot sauces made on the Big Island.

Byrne said she wanted to “expand

her fan base.” She did just that and sold a lot of her Pineapple Lilikoi, Kona Coffee Kick, Mango Habanero

and ‘Burn da Mouth’ hot sauces at the festival.”

“We have numerous accounts on the Big Island and Maui, but we want to expand to Oahu, as well,” said Byrne. “I have always heard great things



about this festival and we felt we were ready for it this year.”

Meanwhile, James Chan, general manager of the Hawaiian Chip Co., who has been a faithful festival exhibitor for almost 15 years, says the event has helped his business thrive through the years.

“The event served as a vital source of cash flow to survive the first few years in business,” he explained. “It has since allowed us to grow through exposure from sampling and purchases by the thousands of people attending.” Chan says the Kalihi-based company is now 10 times bigger than when it first took part in the festival, which he feels is becoming a destina-



Frank Delima



Derek Kurisu



tion event for tourists.

Greg Colden, soapmaker and partner of Kona Natural Soap and Kokoleka Lani Farms, made the trip to Oahu to participate in his 13th Made in Hawaii festival, featuring his aromatherapy vegan soaps.

“Coming from the neighbor island, it logistically gets harder and harder to attend each year,” he explained. “But we enjoy seeing old friends and meeting new ones. We feel that brand loyalty is essential to the continued success of our business, and over the years we’ve learned that the festival proved to be more of an exposure to potential and customer loyalty.”

Colden adds, “Amy (Hammond) has done a remarkable job keeping the event ‘fresh’ by bringing new artisans

variety, the Blaisdell was buzzing with activity as ten local chefs whipped up their specialties in food demonstra-

“With the growth of the festival we plan to add a shuttle from an alternative parking lot”

– Amy Hammond, MIHF Executive Director

and vendors. She is ever vigilant to make certain that it isn’t just a flea market, but a great place to see innovative products made in the islands.”

Along with the substantial product

tions throughout the weekend.

Hawaii’s culinary talents included Executive Chef James Aptakin, of Layers of Flavors; executive chef Ronnie Nasuti, of Tiki’s Grill and Bar, Chef





JJ Reinhart, of the Hilton Hawaiian Village, and Chef Sam Choy, of Sam Choy's in the Kitchen. HFIA's very own Derek Kurisu, of KTA Super Stores, always a crowd favorite at the festival, once again gave his time to serve as emcee keeping event-goers engaged and entertained.

HFIA members and invited guests were able to take advantage of special "Buyer's Only" hours on Friday morning before the doors opened to the

public and the massive crowds arrived.

The festival's growing popularity meant traffic around the Blaisdell was heavy throughout the festival week-end and parking was a challenge for many. But plans are being made to help alleviate that next year.

"With the growth of the festival we plan to add a shuttle from an alternative parking lot," said Hammond. "In addition to working with other transportation companies to facilitate

easier access next year."

The Made in Hawaii Festival is produced by the Hawaii Food Industry Association. First Hawaiian Bank has served as the title sponsor of the festival since its inception 24 years ago.

"We are thrilled to see the continued success of the Made in Hawaii Festival," said Lauren Zirbel, executive director of the Hawaii Food Industry Association. "The community really values this event, as does our membership."



KHON's John Veneri and Chef Sam Choy



HFIA Made in Hawaii Show/After Hours Networking Mixer

PHOTOS BY ALEXIS CHAPMAN AND DESIREE ROSE

Members enjoyed an informal pau hana at the Japanese Cultural Center's Manoa Grand Ballroom, Sept. 21.

Locally-made food and beverage products were available for tasting along with a chance to reconnect with fellow members.





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Made in Hawaii Festival: A True Community Event

BY LAUREN ZIRBEL

It was another amazing year at the Made in Hawaii Festival. One memorable moment from the 2018 festival was seeing the crowd's enthusiasm waiting for the doors to open to the public on Friday. The festival generates this kind of excitement because it's so many things; a unique shopping experience, a sample buffet, a small business incubator, and a showcase of products that are created here in Hawaii by our friends, family and neighbors. The Made in Hawaii Festival really is a community event, for HFIA and for all of Hawaii.

We're incredibly grateful to all the wonderful MIHF staff that makes the Festival so memorable and such a success. We'd like to give a special thanks to Derek Kurisu who once again stole the show as the emcee of our cooking demonstrations. Along with Derek, this year's demos featured some wonderful Hawaii Chefs like JJ Reinhardt, Lawrence Nakamoto, and Sam Choy who highlighted Hawaii superfood: breadfruit! Another big "thank you" to everyone who came out to our buyers' hours on Friday morning. HFIA is happy to be able to provide this great opportunity for retailers to connect with Hawaii manufacturers and we're glad so many came and took advantage of it.

The Made in Hawaii Festival is a big way that HFIA contributes to our Hawaii business community. We're also continuing to find new ways to support our food industry community in particular. This August, we hosted a valuable two part educational event for members. HFIA member, Jason Higa, CEO of FHC Enterprises, provided an update on the proposed state property tax that will be on the November ballot. If passed, the bill will have some far reaching economic consequences that could be unpredictable. We're grateful to Jason for helping shed some light on this issue.



Diamond Bakery booth at Made in Hawaii Festival.

We also featured a panel of tax experts from N&K CPAs who provided details on the new federal tax law. Their presentation highlighted some of the most important changes to the law that are likely to affect our business and personal taxes. Getting this kind of information well before tax season is essential in order to take advantage of the positive changes and avoid the negative changes as much as possible. We're pleased to be able to offer these types of resources to our members.

HFIA is also about celebrating our food industry community. Once again this fall we put on the Made in Hawaii Show and After Hours Networking Event. We had an amazing lineup of exhibitors this year including several who have been making the show great for years, and some exciting new presenters. The pre-show seminar from ProService Hawaii on Employee Engagement & Management was a

fun chance to learn about creating a motivational work environment and how that can impact your business.

The After Hours Event is a great chance for HFIA members to take part in an educational event, sample some Hawaii products, and enjoy connecting with other HFIA members. This event raises money for HFIA member and community partner: Hawaii Foodbank! I am also proud to announce that I was named a new board member for Hawaii Foodbank in early September! I can't wait to continue the good work of feeding Hawaii's hungry!

Thank you so much to everyone who came out to our August and September events! Events like these highlight that even though our food industry is wonderfully diverse, we all have common goals; most importantly, feeding our state. HFIA is very proud to help bring our community together to meet our shared goals.



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