

Hawaii Retail Grocer

SPRING 2020

the magazine of the hawaii

food industry association

Inside:

**What Does Bill 40
Mean For You**

**Our Annual
Social Event**

**January's
Legislative
'Talk
Story'**

**Update:
French
Wine
Tariffs**

The Future of Food

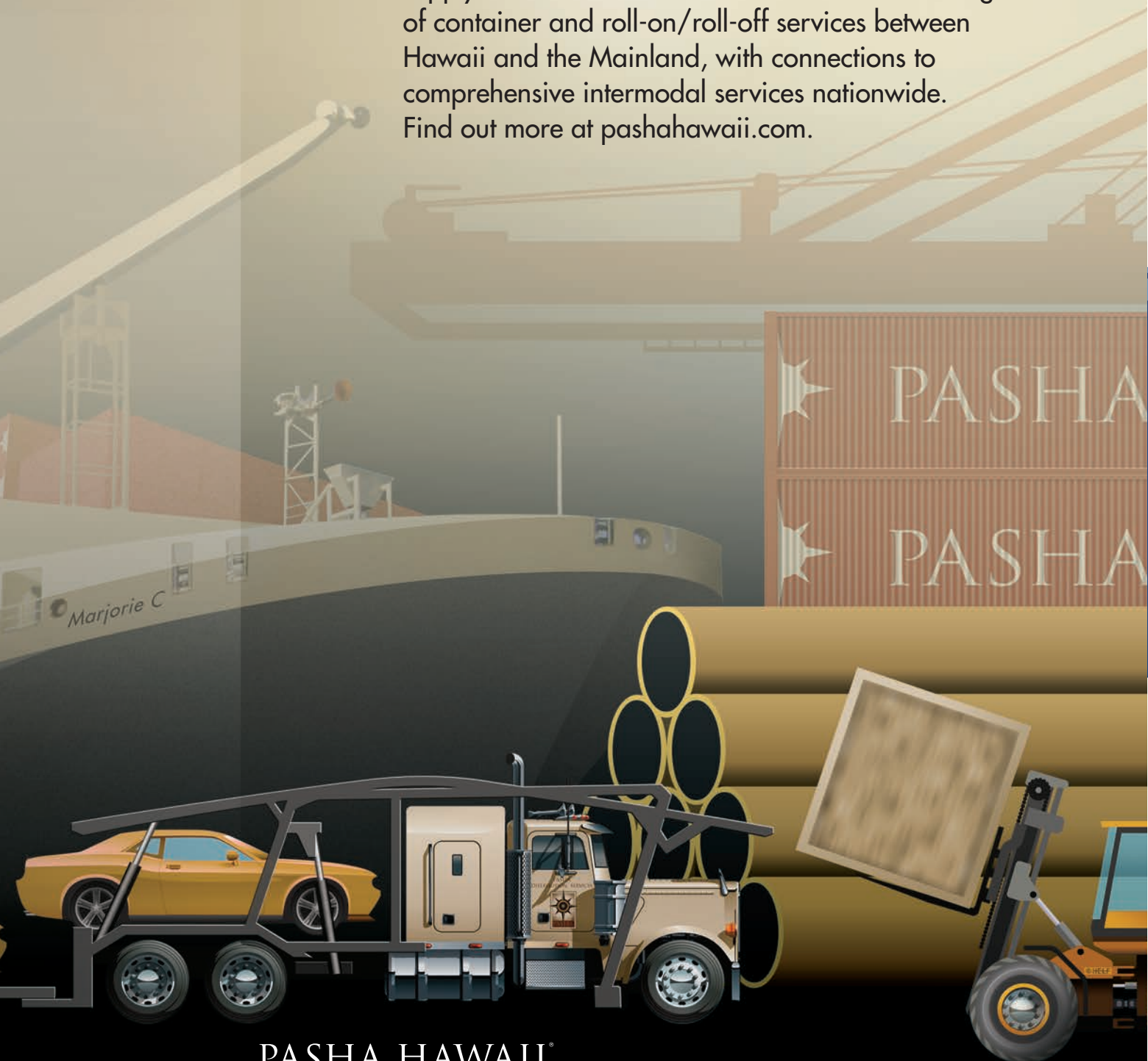
A look at
companies
likely to define
and shape
the future
of the food
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BY LAUREN ZIRBEL

2020 at the State Legislature

HFIA began actively engaged with legislators long before the start of the 2020 legislative session. We've been talking about our priority issues and making sure Hawaii's senators and representatives understand how issues like wage increases and overregulation make it harder for the food industry to serve our communities. We're also very pleased to be supporting a range of favorable legislation this year.

Joint House, Senate, Administration Economic Package

HFIA is supporting several key components of this proposed package to ensure we get the best positive outcomes for HFIA members and avoid potentially damaging mandates.

Working-Class Tax Relief and Reasonable

Minimum Wage Increases

One of our top priorities is to lessen the burden of grocery taxes on all Hawaii customers, especially those with limited income. We're supporting measures to increase the Refundable Food/Excise Tax Credit from \$110 to \$150, as well as other changes to make the credit more accessible and more meaningful to those in need.

We know our members are proud to pay fair wages, in addition to providing their team members with benefits like health care. We are not opposed to a reasonable increase in the minimum wage to \$13 per hour by 2024. We are in strong support of addressing cost of living increases also addressed in this package, including universal pre-k and affordable housing.

This compromise package will help ensure that local businesses have time to prepare and adjust to minimum wage increases. Passage of a balanced package such as this one doesn't unduly punish small businesses, as a more aggressive wage mandate would, and takes into account the cost of living issues that drive poverty. We continue to highlight existing employee benefits and protections paid for by employers, such as health insurance and temporary disability insurance, and to encourage legislators to consider these when drawing up any new legislation.

The Economic Impact Statement Act

HFIA is in strong support of this measure. Economic impact statements would provide an approximation of the costs and benefits attributable to any change in the law before the passage of a given bill, effectively laying out the impact on private organizations and individuals in the state. SB3163 to mandate economic impact statements recently passed its first hearing.

Reducing Taxes on Food and Beverages

Taxing groceries is the most regressive way to tax! Thirty-six states do not tax groceries. Seven states have a lower tax for groceries. It would be a great benefit to all residents of Hawaii, in particular those in the lower income brackets, for the state to exempt food and medical services from the GET. Hawaii residents already struggle with some of the highest costs of living in the country. We believe changes to the Food/Excise Tax Credit have a high chance of success in the immediate future, so we'll be advocating for both approaches to reduce this burden.

Family Leave

The Family Leave study was released late last year, but several legislators have noted that the study is somewhat incomplete. We've also noticed that the research was completed from a perspective of how to create a family leave program, not whether to create a family leave program. It recommends that any program have an implementation timeline of at least two, but preferably three years.

Two bills have already been heard that would provide family leave in-

insurance benefits and extend periods of family leave to sixteen weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications. HFIA has testified in opposition to House Bill 2219, which was deferred. HFIA also opposed Senate Bill 2491; however, this bill passed its first committee.

Workforce Training

Our number one complaint from members is the lack of qualified candidates for hire. We're pleased to be backing a wide range of bills to create employee training programs and improve workforce readiness.

HB1915, HB2092, SB2065, and SB2259 create a workforce readiness programs in the Department of Education. SB2073 would establish a career pipeline initiative. HB2508 and SB3013 incentivize public high schools to encourage students to obtain industry-recognized certifications.

Manufacturing, Buying, and Growing Local Food

Legislation, and in particular tax credits to help local manufacturing and local agriculture will benefit Hawaii. We're supporting manufacturing tax credits that will help grow and diversify our economy, keep more dollars in state, decrease our dependence on imports, and develop and strengthen the Made in Hawaii brand.

HFIA supports HB2080 to create an income tax credit for Hawaii manufacturers, and SB3090 to establish an agricultural production tax credit will both have their first hearings shortly.

We're also supporting a range of measures to provide manufacturing and other grants through the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation.

Bottles

HFIA supports efforts to fix the deposit beverage program, and we oppose measures that would make the program more expensive for customers or businesses without fixing the long-running issues.

We've testified in opposition to HB2025 and SB2726, which would increase the administrative fee for the deposit beverage program in accordance with CPI. These beverage fee increase bills have passed their first committees. We're also opposing SB2720, which would prevent the state from buying beverages in plastic bottles. We oppose SB2727, which would change the exemption distance for a beverage dealer in a high-density area from two miles from a redemption center to one mile. This bill has also passed one committee as of this writing.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

FEATURED SPEAKER

AARON DALY

Whole Foods Market
Former Global Director
of Energy Management



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Flavored Tobacco Products

Flavored cartridge vape products were recently banned at the federal level, and the national tobacco age has been changed to 21. There are concerted efforts this year to ban flavored tobacco products in Hawaii, including menthol.

HFIA has testified on many of these measures, asking for a more reasonable approach.

Additional Sunscreen Bans

There are several bills this year aimed at banning all sunscreen ingredients other

than zinc and titanium dioxide. HFIA is opposing these measures based on the lack of scientific rationale for the bans, and the need for functional skin cancer prevention products. We also believe that these measures encourage consumers to buy sunscreen online, where it will be nearly impossible to enforce this legislation.

CBD

We are in support of legislation to end confusion about these products. We support SB2050 to establish a regulatory framework for products containing CBD and SB2274 to regulate cannabidiol under the Department of Health.

Food Donation

We support HB2234 to allow for the good faith donation of expired food, which has passed one committee thus far. HFIA also supports HB2706, which requires the Department of Health to promote food donation during normal, routine inspections of food establishments and expands liability protection for the donation of food.

Green Incentives

Incentives are a powerful tool for positive change. Our businesses are already leaders in creating more sustainable practices in our industry. We're in support of several measures that can help companies be more environmentally conscientious.

HFIA is supporting SB2548 to create a marine debris recycling pilot program. We're also supporting calls to increase the fine for littering in SB2051.

Plastic Bans

There are several bills and resolutions on banning certain types of plastic statewide. HFIA is actively participating in the still operational Plastic Working Group created by the legislature last year. We're advocating for the legislature to allow the Task Force time to do its work, and not to pass any new legislation this year.

Unfortunately, the County of Maui is not waiting for the completion of the working group and has already



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introduced its own version of Bill 40.

Theft

As most of our businesses know, theft is an increasing problem in our state. HFIA has opposed SB2591 to prohibit courts from requiring a monetary bail as a condition for release when a person is charged with a petty misdemeanor. This measure was deferred after its first hearing.

We encourage all members to check our Weekly Updates for current information on HFIA priority bills. We also invite interested members to sign up for the Government Relations Committee to help determine our association's position as we move through the legislative session.

Most importantly, we ask that all members respond to Action Alerts. We are very proud to be the voice of Hawaii's food and beverage industry, and at times we need that voice amplified by all of you to ensure our legislators hear us loud and clear.



Happy New Year HFIA Team,

I look forward to a successful 2020 ahead as we build on positive momentum with new and long-time members. Our voices are much stronger together.

In February, we've planned our Pau Hana with Legislators, a networking mixer at Hukilau, followed by the HFIA general membership meeting on March 26, 2020. Our 27th Annual Golf Tournament at the Honolulu

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Country Club soon follows on April 3, 2020, with the HFIA Annual Convention slated for June 5 & 6 at the Aulani Disney Resort & Spa. I hope to see all of you at these events.

My thanks to everyone who attended Carter's Triple Crown in January, a sold out event with amazing games and cocktails. A big mahalo to the planning committee for their hard work. Unfortunately my horse didn't win the first leg of the race, but it was FUN. Mahalo to all of our members for making HFIA a success. Cheers to 2020!

Aloha,

Joe Carter

*VP-GM Coca-Cola Bottling
of Hawaii
The Odom Corporation*



2020 NGA UPDATE



BY THE NATIONAL
GROCERS ASSOCIATION

Impeachment and the 2020 presidential election captured headlines this winter, drawing attention away from issues impacting independent retailers and wholesalers. However, NGA continues its work behind the scenes to score wins that will benefit Main Street grocers. Below are an update and outlook on critical legislative issues to the supermarket industry.

SNAP Work Requirements

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently finalized a rule to remove SNAP benefits to roughly 700,000 “able-bodied adults without dependents” (ABAWDS) after three months if they cannot find employment. Before the changes, ABAWDS who lived in high-unemployment areas were frequently given waivers to bypass the three-month time limit. The new rule requires people between the ages of 18 and 49 who are childless and not disabled to work at least 20 hours a week for more than three months over a 36-month period to qualify for food stamps. The rule is set to go into effect on April 1.

Shortly following the finalized rule, Attorneys General in 15 states and the District of Columbia filed a law-

suit against the USDA challenging this rule. In January, the U.S. House of Representatives filed an amicus brief to the lawsuit, arguing that the final rule is contrary to SNAP, constrains historical state discretion, and would cause irreparable harm to the program. The House also argued that a bipartisan Congress rejected similar attempts to restrict work requirements in the 2018 Farm Bill.

Drug Pricing and DIR Fees

Congressional leaders purposefully set a May deadline to extend funding for a list of popular federal health programs to give lawmakers a vehicle to pass major health legislation, like a fix for surprise medical billing and to address drug pricing. Lawmakers came close late last year to passing a package of health provisions that included a ban on balance billing, the practice of sending patients bills for services insurers won’t cover and other provisions aimed at reducing surprise medical bills, until leaders of the House Ways and Means Committee stepped in to ask for more time to debate the bill. NGA is working with a coalition of pharmacy groups to urge Congress to include reforms to DIR fees and pharmacy quality measures in a healthcare package before the November elections.

CBD

CBD products are available in a variety of forms. They are being sold in nearly every retail format, including independent grocery stores, but a lack of clarity regarding CBD regulations is a significant source of concern for our members. The 2018 Farm Bill allowed for the commercial production of hemp and removed CBD from the Controlled Substances Act; however, FDA maintains that ingestible CBD products are illegal under the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. NGA continues to urge FDA to take steps to establish a clear regulatory framework in which CBD is distinguished as a dietary supplement and food additive rather than a human drug under FDA’s Section 505 regulations requiring clinical trials before going to market.

Taxes

Unfortunately, the end of the year spending package failed to resolve a drafting error in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) known as the “retail glitch” that prevents retailers from being eligible for full and immediate expensing for interior remodels to stores. NGA is pushing Congress to find a solution in 2020.

NGA advocated for two items that were included in the end of the year spending deal: The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) that were set to expire at the end of 2019. Both were extended to December 31, 2020.

Transportation

Although last year’s effort failed, Speaker Pelosi is renewing a push for a \$1 trillion infrastructure bill. House Democrats are hopeful that a new, wide-ranging proposal has a better chance of reaching bipartisan support. The bill includes measures that are usually considered separately, such as broadband, pipelines, schools, housing, and parks. The deadline to reauthorize surface transportation programs is September 30, 2020.

Changes to SNAP

Recent changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly called food stamps, will make it harder for many individuals to access SNAP benefits. Here's why.

FDA maintains that ingestible CBD products are illegal under the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

Waiver Restrictions

Since 1996, states have had broad leeway to grant waivers for work requirements, allowing beneficiaries to continue to receive SNAP benefits beyond three months. Overall,

SNAP is considered a very low-cost high benefit government program, so the tendency has been to err on the side of providing the benefit rather than withholding it. Applicants living in areas with few available jobs or without available spaces in training programs were able to continue to

receive needed SNAP benefits.

The new work requirements, as described by the NGA (at left), will set tighter limits on the requirements states need to meet in order to grant such waivers. The number of Hawaii SNAP users who will be impacted are not currently available.

Categorical Eligibility

In July, 2019, the USDA announced a proposal to change the categorical eligibility rule. Under the existing rule, households that receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits are automatically eligible to also receive SNAP benefits, even if they don't meet all the requirements for SNAP.

The new rule would eliminate this automatic categorical eligibility. Comments were open on the rule change through November, 2019. The USDA has not yet confirmed adoption of the new rule. If adopted, it is estimated that up to 3 million people nationwide would lose benefits. It would also have big impacts for school lunch programs.

For more information on these issues and how you can make your voice heard in Washington, DC, visit www.grocerstakeaction.org.

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NEW PRODUCTS



Espresso Bites Big Island Coffee Roasters

Big Island Coffee Roasters has an award-winning and convenient new way of enjoying Hawaiian coffee. The locally loved brand won \$25,000 in Hawaii's HI Plan competition to create a more convenient, scalable and giftable Hawaii-grown coffee product. The result? Espresso Bites.

Although Espresso Bites look and taste like chocolate, they contain no chocolate at all. Instead, these smooth, creamy and delicious bars are made from 100% Hawaiian coffees from the Big Island and Maui and include natural, organic ingre-

dients. Each bar is loaded with three shots of espresso and contains 140 mg of caffeine. Espresso Bites are vegan and gluten-free.

The new, lighter Latte flavor is made with Maui coffee and organic milk from Humboldt creamery. It is low in sugar, gluten-free, and contains two shots of espresso or 94 mg of natural caffeine. You can enjoy them by the bite, melt them in hot water or milk to drink as a delicious alternative to instant coffee, or use them as ice cream toppings. Espresso bites are easy to carry and perfect for gifting. The new Latte flavor is available along with Classic and Sea Salt flavors.

Recently listed in Forbes magazine as the Best Coffee Roasters in the USA, the company's latest offering was selected by AllRecipes.com as their #2 Best Gift for Coffee Lovers

For a list of current retailers, visit shop.bigislandcoffeeroasters.com. Contact hello@bigislandcoffeeroasters.com for wholesale information.

Hawaiian Host

Hawaiian Host unveils its latest confection with a new line of panned chocolates. Taking its cue from the traditional style of chocolate-making known as panning, the sumptuous selection of macadamia nuts are coated using an artisanal method. Layer by delicious layer, mac nuts are enveloped in chocolate and other premium ingredients in a tumbling coating pan in order to create a multi-textured indulgence.

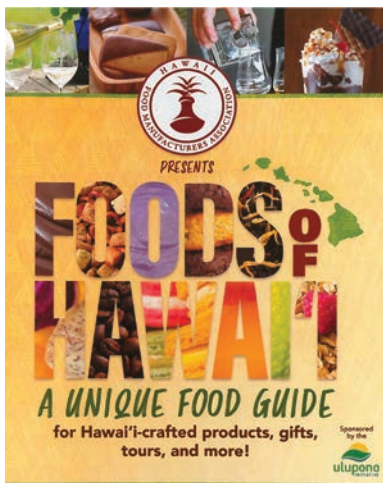


Think buttery macadamias coated and covered in creamy milk chocolate, rich dark chocolate, sea

salt, Kona coffee, toasted coconut and the ever-popular matcha — this is just a sampling of what to expect from Hawaiian Host's panned line. Twenty-ounce matcha bags are now available at club stores, while the rest of the line is slated to launch at other retail outlets in April.

Visit hawaiianhost.com for more information.





NEW GUIDEBOOK FEATURES HAWAII-MADE PRODUCTS

BY KEITH DEMELLO OF
ULUPONO INITIATIVE

Tempting local palates and thwarting many well-intentioned New Year resolution diets is the newly published Foods of Hawaii, a Unique Food Guide for Hawaii crafted products, gifts, tours, and more! Published by the Hawaii Food Manufacturers Association (HFMA), the guidebook provides an official list

(of sorts) of locally-made products to enjoy 2020. Through initiatives like the HFMA's annual Made in Hawaii Festival and this guidebook, we hope to entice readers to choose local when they shop.

HFMA represents approximately 150 local members and has been promoting Hawaii-grown or -manufactured products since 1977. Many HFMA members are featured in the guidebook, designed to increase appreciation and understanding of the unique flavors, quality, and care that go into the production of Hawaii's fine foods and beverages.

HFMA member Diamond Bakery Co., Ltd. is home to its Original Soda Crackers, Original Royal Cream Crackers, and Hawaiian Shortbread Cookies. The guidebook provides recommendations for how best to enjoy these favorites, such as with peanut butter and guava jelly as part of a local-style breakfast, or ingredients for a fancy feast like a Roasted Kabocha Squash soup.

Other featured products include Hawaiian Pie Company's fruit pies and full-size 9-inch deep-dish pies, available in Foodland, Safeway, and Waianae Store. Or try Tamura's Super Market to find Taro Brand's Poi, Bean Sprouts, and Just Enough Grab and Go Fruits and Vegetables.

La Tour Bakehouse's Organic 100% Sprouted Multigrain Bread, Japanese Style Bread, and Organic

Hawaiian Honey Furikake Puffs, as well as Aloha Tofu Factory's Firm Tofu, Soft Tofu, and Deep-Fried Tofu are all available at Foodland Supermarkets, Safeway, and Times Supermarket.

Koloa Rum Company's Koloa Pineapple Passion Cocktail, Koloa Kauai Dark Rum, and Koloa Kauai Coconut Rum can each be found at ABC Stores, Safeway, and Foodland Supermarkets.

"Buying local is really about the essence of Hawaii and sharing the Aloha Spirit," the guidebook states. "Made in Hawaii means a product is authentic in terms of origin, about the people who helped make it, and the intrinsic value knowing a product is true to its location."

The guidebooks are available for purchase from the following factory retail operations:

Choco Lea
chocolea.com

Lion Coffee
lioncoffee.com

Hawaii Candy
hawaiicandy.com

Manoa Chocolate
manoachocolate.com

Hawaiian Chip Company
hawaiianchipcompany.com

Menehune Mac
Factory Store
menehunemac.com

Hawaiian Pie Company
hawaiianpieco.com

Maui Gold Pineapple
pineapplemaui.com

Kauai Kookie
kauaikookie.com

Or order online at
alohafunwear.com

Kona Chips
konachips.net



LEGISLATIVE TALK STORY

On January 8, 2020, HFIA members and legislative leaders gathered at the Capitol for HFIA's annual Legislative Talk Story, presented in partnership with the Hawaii Restaurant Association. The panel was moderated again this year by Derek Kurisu of KTA Superstores.

Our panelists included:

Representative Aaron Ling Johanson,
*Chair of the House Committee
on Labor and Public Employment*

Vice Speaker Mark Nakashima

Joe Carter, *VP & General Manager,
Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii*

Victor Lim,
McDonald's of Hawaii franchisee

Gary Yoshioka, President, *Diamond Bakery*

The panel this year focused on some of the unique challenges that Hawaii businesses face and how the business community and legislative leaders hope to work together to find solutions.

Chair Johanson opened the discussion with the impacts of labor issues in Hawaii. Local and national pressure to increase the minimum wage to as much as \$17 per hour has been on the minds of members as we enter the 2020 Legislative Ses-

sion. Johanson understands the negative impacts that extreme jumps in the minimum wage can trigger and the need to ensure that any increase is incremental and reasonable.

Johanson also recognized Hawaii employers' sizable responsibility for providing health insurance to workers, making that an essential part of any discussion about wages, leave, and other labor issues.

Vice Speaker Nakashima brought the issue of homelessness in Hawaii, speaking frankly to the point that many people feel the homeless crisis appears to be improving. Nakashima stressed the need to seek and experiment with new solutions.

Local food independence through locally-sourced agriculture was another topic of discussion, as was the expansion of our local skilled labor pool. Gary Yoshioka of Diamond Bakery has made excellent use of some of the manufacturing assistance programs created by the legislature. He encouraged others to take advantage of these, explaining the success of these programs might provide a framework to successfully train workers in technology to make them workforce ready.

Victor Lim of McDonald's stressed the importance of collaboration as a means of finding functional solutions to shared challenges. He cited last year's Act 254, which established the Plastic Source Reduction Working Group, as a type of legislation that gives him hope that we can find solutions and reasonable compromises to other issues facing Hawaii.

Joe Carter of Coca-Cola spoke to his company's long history in Hawaii, noting that beyond providing food, local businesses provide jobs, sponsor sports teams, volunteer, stock the foodbank, drive the economy, and play a vital role in disaster relief. Carter closed the panel by stressing the importance of creating statutes that help us work as a team.

High cost of living, high labor costs, natural disasters, the homeless crisis, and lack of trained workers are just some of the challenges facing Hawaii businesses. Working collaboratively is the way forward for our business community and state government.





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Proposed French Wine Tariffs Threaten Industry

BY MEGHAN THIBAUT

In 2018, Champagne and sparkling wine from France accounted for 12.14 percent of total U.S. wine imports and 2.76 percent of the entire U.S. wine market. Evenly distributed across the country, a recently proposed 100 percent tariff on French wines would lead to an overall price increase of 2.5 percent on wine, or about \$1.87 a gallon at the consumer level.

Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA) represents importers, producers, exporters, distributors, and retailers across the country, including many of our own HFIA member companies.

In January, WSWA joined a coalition of beverage alcohol industry leaders opposing both existing and newly proposed U.S. tariffs on European alcohol products, and the inclusion of champagne and sparkling wine from France on a list of proposed retaliatory tariffs being considered by the Office of United States Trade Representative (USTR), in response to the recent French Digital Services Tax (DST).

In a letter to the USTR, the coalition detailed the disproportionate negative economic impact any increased duties on French champagne and sparkling wine, in particular, would cause to U.S. jobs, consumers and small to medium businesses, including nearly all WSWA members.

Barkley Stuart, executive vice president of Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits, testified at a public hearing held by USTR on behalf of WSWA. He urged the administration not to adopt tariffs on French champagne and sparkling wine and avoid the numerous unintended consequences these duties would have on U.S. businesses,

consumers and jobs.

"In 2018, the United States imported \$743 million worth of sparkling wine from French producers. This would be equal to a product value of \$718 million after deducting freight and insurance charges," said Stuart. "Champagne and sparkling wine imported from France account for about 12.14% of total wine imports and 2.76% of the entire wine market in the United States...A 100% tariff on French sparkling wines would be equal to a price increase of approximately \$718 million. Adding back the transportation margin, the increased cost to distributors rises to over \$743 million."

"This would be passed through from importers to distributors and ultimately to the final consumer...this price increase will result in 1.15 million gallons of lost sales...a reduction of about 1.84% in wine sales. Lower volumes will result in lost jobs as wholesalers need fewer truck drivers, clerks and warehouse staff," said Stuart.

Stuart was referring to demand models developed by WSWA that also estimate that such a drop in wine sales will ultimately lead to a total of 17,000 lost jobs and more than \$750 million in lost wages. Additionally, the model predicts a total cost to the American economy of more than \$2 billion.

"We don't expect Hawaii to be disproportionately affected compared to other U.S. states," said Cindy Haas, vice president of external communications and corporate social responsibility at Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits, based in Miami. "The effect would be far-reaching and the same in all States."

"We strongly urge the U.S. and France to reach a negotiated set-

tlement in this dispute and avoid the implementation of new tariffs," said Stuart, who is also WSWA's immediate past chairman in testimony before the Section 301 Committee. "At a minimum, in order to avoid the negative economic impact and allow wine and spirits wholesalers to continue to respond to consumer demand, USTR should remove champagne and French sparkling wines from the final list of French-origin products that may be subject to additional tariffs in this dispute."

BUBBLING OVER

RETALIATORY TARIFFS AGAINST CHAMPAGNE AND SPARKLING WINES FROM FRANCE BRING UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES FOR U.S. ECONOMY, CONSUMERS, BUSINESS AND WORKERS



"AT MINIMUM, TO AVOID NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACT...USTR SHOULD REMOVE FRENCH SPARKLING WINE AND CHAMPAGNE FROM THE FINAL LIST OF FRENCH-ORIGIN PRODUCTS THAT MAY BE SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL TARIFFS IN THIS DISPUTE."

-BARKLEY STUART, SOUTHERN GLAZER'S WINE & SPIRITS





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////// *The* Future *of* Food //



Mahi Pono Diversifies Crops on Maui Sugarcane Land

A look at companies likely to define and shape the future of the food industry

BY MEGHAN THIBAUT

Mahi Pono acquired 41,000 acres of former sugarcane land from Alexander & Baldwin over a year ago. Since then, the company has been preparing and planting the land in East Maui, replacing the long-term sugarcane monoculture with a diverse array of non-GMO crops. Mahi Pono is a joint venture between Pomona Farming LLC, a California-based farming company, the Public Sector Pension Investment Board (PSP Investments), one of Canada's largest pension investment

management firms.

Mahi Pono's signature crop of potatoes has so far adapted well to Maui's soil and climate. Red, white and yellow potatoes are successfully being grown and harvested in Puunene. The company kicked off 2020 with a donation of 30,000 pounds of potatoes to the Hawai'i Foodbank.

According to reporting by Maui News Now, the company's recent harvest passed a standardized Food and Drug Administration panel test. All studies came back clear, meaning that more than 400 chemicals,



ALL IMAGES COURTESY MAHI PONO

including diquat and paraquat, were undetected in Mahi Pono's potato crop.

The company's commercial harvest begins in earnest in mid-February, and Mahi Pono is estimating that their crop will yield 50,000 pounds of potatoes per week, a quantity that will significantly reduce the need for imported potatoes from the mainland. The company has partnered with the Hawaii Foodservice Alliance to distribute crops as they come to harvest.

"Residents will soon start seeing locally grown potatoes in retail

stores and restaurants on Maui and eventually, across the state, wrote Mahi Pono Senior VP Shan Tsutsui, in a recent Maui Now op-ed. "Our long-term goal is to bring sustainable agriculture to Maui with strong, integrated farming practices that are economically viable, environmentally sound and good for our community.

Mahi Pono is planting about 400,000 citrus trees, including lemon, lime, and orange trees. Other crops slated for planting include coffee and breadfruit trees. More than 2,000 acres of pastureland

have been earmarked for the company's expanding grass-fed beef production.

Other crops being tested include varietal onions, along with papaya, mac nuts, avocado, and melons. According to Jayson Watts, Project Manager at Mahi Pono, they've been working closely with supermarket chains and other large and small retailers and entrepreneurs to determine which crops are most needed in Hawaii's grocery stores. An initiative called "Chef's Corner" hopes to supply needed ingredients for Hawaii's vibrant dining scene.



“We are open to working with consumers. If restaurants and grocery stores want something specific, we are willing to work with them,” said Watts, who explained that the company holds local food security as one of its values. The company

is still young enough and nimble enough that they are able and willing to work with the community to fulfill existing needs.

With that in mind, Mahi Pono has made significant land investments, as well as capital expenditures on

equipment and infrastructure. Investments in job creation have resulted in 130 full-time employees and 20 part-time jobs for Maui residents, all working to grow food on Maui, for Maui.

Mahi Pono is leasing 2-, 5-, and



ALL IMAGES COURTESY MAHI PONO



10-acre parcels of land as a part of its 200-acre community farm initiative designed to provide land to Maui residents looking to engage in farming on Maui. The cost is \$150 per acre per year.

Applicants for the community farming initiative are required to submit a farm plan which is reviewed by a Community Farm Advisory Board. While these plans are evaluated, Mahi Pono is not dictating what successful applicants can grow. They're looking to support stable, sustainable farm plans.

Armstrong Produce Partners with PlantLab

HFIA member Armstrong Produce has partnered with a Netherlands-based company called PlantLab. Using their cutting-edge technology, PlantLab has developed an indoor, controlled growing environment that maximizes resources like water and light to grow and harvest crops year-round in an indoor lab. PlantLab's plant production unit (or PPU) is known as a Plant Paradise®.

The partnership is developing a 60,000 square-foot, multi-layered

PPU near the airport. Armstrong Produce will serve as PlantLab's distribution partner, capitalizing on their already established infrastructure and relationships with buyers.

"When we talk about the products that are going to be grown, we want to target the kinds of crops that are 100% imported. Sustainability means that you have to diminish what you're importing," said Armstrong's Director of Marketing Tisha Uyehara.

The partnership will be growing different varieties of lettuce. While grown here, Uyehara noted lettuce isn't grown with enough volume to produce economies of scale to supply supermarkets and restaurants.

"It'll produce fresher produce, grown in Hawaii. It's cost-effective from an energy use point of view, and solar power may help to offset some of the costs of electricity." Depending on the commodity being grown, the growing cycle is generally between two and three weeks, Uyehara told us.

Plants respond well to red and blue LED lights so that the PPUs can be operational even in the dark of night. PlantLab's Plant Paradise® can operate 24/7, resulting in a year-round growing, no matter where their plant production units are located.

The prototype of PlantLab's first plant production unit was completed in 2006. The goal was to develop an ideal, closed growing envi-

ronment using their knowledge of plant physiology and technology to optimize all growing conditions.

PlantLab doesn't modify the plants themselves. Instead, they've created an ideal growing environment by controlling variables like humidity, airflow, light, root temperature and irrigation. They do so using state-of-the-art technology, a multi-layered growing system, mathematical modeling, and top-notch insights into plant physiology.

PlantLab's "precision agriculture" uses resources in a highly targeted way, so that foods can be grown closer to consumers using less than 10 percent of traditional water usage. PlantLabs need less than half the quantity of fertilizers used in conventional farming and operate without the use of herbicides or pesticides.

The result is a reduction in marketing and transportation waste. Given Hawaii's distance from the mainland, where much of our food is grown, transportation not only adds to our food costs but also impacts our environment.

"The fact that it's going to be produced here, it's a local product, and can be at the customer the day after it's harvested is a huge benefit," said Uyehara. "For us, it's all about having consistent supplier products because our customers depend on it. It has to be of good quality and done consistently."



PHOTO COURTESY PLANT LAB



“TRIPLE CROWN” ANNUAL SOCIAL A SOLD-OUT SUCCESS

PHOTOS BY
ANTHONY CONSILIO

This year's HFIA annual social at the Honolulu Country Club was a huge success thanks to our dedicated planning committee and sponsors. Mahalo to the many members who turned out for the Triple Crown-themed evening of horseplay, heavy pupus, games, prizes and cocktails at the Honolulu Country Club. MAHALO to our generous event sponsors for making this evening of fun possible!



1. Joe Carter with the Carter's Triple Crown winners, Tracy Ide, and Paul Kosasa

2. Chris Clark, Mike Minogue, Darin Shigeta, Kyle Shelly, and Nick Domingo

3. Stanton Saiki, Guy Tanioka, Jamie Reich, Naomi Azama, Kennedy Smythe, Kathy Lapenia, Samantha Haas, Shaun Strand, and Mike Nita

4. Alexis Chapman, Toby Taniguchi, and Lauren Zirbel

5. Mike Minogue, Randi Tsushima, Mike Nakamura, Ed Chun and Teresa Lieu. Back: Nick Domingo, Chris Clark, Darin Shigeta, Jen Moku, Nelson Moku III, Cyd Miyashiro and Randy Lu



8. Denise Sasaki, Mike Kaya and Kellie Sasaki-Rapoza

9. Bonnie Tam-Hoy and Laura Schulman

10. Elore Amian and Julie Macalma

11. Len Isotoff, Chad Dias, and Paul McCully

12. Gary and Sheryl Villanueva, Liz and Brian Christensen, Carl Oshiro

13. Jill Chiang, Chad Cohen, Caren Yamauchi and Miyuki Hirano-Hollingworth

14. June Namba, Patti Day and Maggie Li

15. Jana Focht and Jill Chiang Mike Ohashi, Shellie Hayashi, Bryson Kihara, and Jason Arakaki

16. George and Lucy Branco, Guy Tanioka, Jamie Reich and Stanton Saiki

17. Mike Ohashi, Shellie Hayashi, Bryson Kihara and Jason Arakaki



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1. Bonnie Amemiya, Joy Oda, and Peggy Abella

2. Kevin Wong, Brendan Yamada, Sherilyn Oliver, Rob Kline, and Eric Nonaka

3. Larry Ishii, Wendy Fujio, Joe Carter and Laren Zirbel Elore Amian, Julie Macalma, and Jacky Uesato

4. Carl Oshiro

5. Mike Ohashi, Shellie Hayashi, Bryson Kihara, and Jason Arakaki

6. Jeff Cagaoan with his raffle prize

7. Reid Morihara, SeKwon Kim, and Don Hirota

8. Chris Loretero and Matt Case with their raffle prizes

9. Carriann Ho, Kim Young, Tiana Quiocho, and Katy Okuyama

10. Joni Marcello, Alan Nakamura, Elaine Miyagi and Denise Sasaki



11



12



13



14



15

11. Teri Luna, Dwayne Fujitani, and Kacie Cohen;
12. Yan and Patti-Jo Day heading down the home stretch

13. Heather and Dan Pence
14. Sunny Tran and Glenn Muranaka
15. Ron Nagasawa and Anne Lee

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PHOTO: MARTIN BELAM/FLICKR

BILL 40 HAS PASSED

What Does the Plastic Ban Mean for Your Business?

BY ALEXIS CHAPMAN

In December, Honolulu Council passed Bill 40, one of the most aggressive plastic foodware bans in the country, a version that was released one day before the final hearing. While this was not the most favorable outcome for our members, HFIA efforts and those of our coalition partners ensured that some of the most damaging aspects were omitted from the final bill and that the bill's implementation would span two years. Bill 40 goes into effect on January 1, 2021, though some aspects of its implementation take effect on January 1, 2022.

For the items impacted by this mea-

sure, plastic is defined as "any material made of fossil fuel-derived or petrochemical polymeric compounds and additives that can be shaped by flow." This definition does not include 100% plant-based or bioplastics, such as PLA containers or utensils made of any non-petroleum material.

These latter items will still be allowable once the bill takes effect. The bill does not mandate that plastic alternatives be ASTM certified compostable; it only requires that they not be made from petroleum-based plastic. Compostable plastic bags are banned explicitly as of January 1, 2020, by a separate existing statute.

What This Means For Businesses

As of January 1, 2021, no plastic straws and utensils; only non-plastic straws and utensils on request; only handle-less plastic bags can be used.

Plastic utensils and straws will no longer be allowed for sale or distribution by food vendors to customers for prepared food. The list includes plastic straws, forks, knives, spoons, sporks, chopsticks, stirrers, and baran. Plastic straws may be provided upon request to customers who need them for a medical or physical reason. Customers do not need to explain or demonstrate any medical or physical reason for requesting a plastic straw. Hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care facilities are exempt from the prohibition on plastic straws.

Non-plastic utensils and straws can only be given to customers on request or made available in self-service areas or dispensers. Staff can no longer automatically include or provide them. Plastic straws and utensils that come pre-attached to prod-

ucts like juice boxes or prepackaged salads are exempt.

There are also changes to the types of plastic bags allowed after January 1, 2021. Plastic bags will no longer be allowed to transport prepared food or beverages. Plastic bags used by customers in-store to package loose items can no longer have handles. Only bags without handles will be allowed for loose items like bakery goods, fruits, vegetables, nuts, ground coffee, grains, candies, or small hardware items.

Plastic bags used to contain or wrap frozen foods, meat or fish, flowers or potted plants, or other items to contain dampness must also be handle-free after the implementation date. Additionally, pharmacists will not be allowed to provide plastic bags for medications. The ban includes door hanger bags. Hotels will no longer be permitted to offer plastic bags to guests for wet or dirty clothes..

As of January 1, 2022, no more plastic or polystyrene plates, clamshells, and cups for prepared food. Plastic foodware, including all types of polystyrene foodware, will no longer be allowed for prepared food.

“Prepared food” refers to any food or beverages that are prepared for consumption on or off a food vendor’s premises. Preparation includes cooking, chopping, peeling, slicing, mixing, brewing, freezing, squeezing, or otherwise processing at premises owned, leased, or otherwise controlled by the food vendor.

However, the term does not include raw meat, raw poultry, raw seafood, unprepared produce and uncooked eggs. Prepared food includes restaurant-style food and beverages that are packaged after being ordered and ready to be consumed without further preparation. It is our understanding that poke will not be exempted. Any poke that contains any added ingredients or that is cooked is considered prepared food.

Foodware refers to hot and cold beverage cups, cup lids, plates, bowls, bowl lids, clamshells, trays, or other hinged or lidded containers that contain plastic. The term does

not include disposable plastic condiment packets; food-related bags or wrappers, including, but not limited to, musubi wraps, plastic film, poi bags, chip bags, cracker and cookie wrappers, bread bags, meal kits, or ice bags; beverage-related bottles or cartons; non-plastic cups that contain a polyethylene or plastic coating; packaging for unprepared food; and packaging for wholesale distribution of prepared food, baked goods or dairy products.

This ban does not apply to packaging of prepackaged food or shelf-stable food. The bill defines prepackaged food as prepared food that is sealed, contained, or wrapped in a manner to protect and prevent the prepared food from having any direct human contact, prior to being provided for sale by a food vendor to a customer, including, but not limited to, bentos, kimchi, seaweed salad, takuan, tofu, pre-made sandwiches, desserts, pies, noodles, salads, parfaits, and drinks. It defines shelf-stable as prepared food that can be safely stored at room temperature and does not require refrigeration, freezing, or heating for food safety purposes, prior to purchase by a customer.

Businesses may no longer sell disposable plastic straws, plastic utensils, or plastic or polystyrene foodware to customers. Companies that sell packaging wholesale to food vendors may continue to sell packaging for raw meat, raw poultry, raw seafood, unprepared produce and uncooked eggs; packaging for prepackaged food, or shelf-stable food; and packaging for food vendors who have been granted an exemption.

Packaging for catered food. Catered food means food provided in bulk quantity amounts or multiple servings with the intent for later consumption, or the service of prepared food at a site or event venue.

The Department of Environmental Services (ENV) will be enforcing the mandate and may also grant exemptions. Food vendors seeking an exemption will have to apply to the ENV. They must provide sufficient evidence that there are no reasonable alternatives available to the food vendor to comply, or that compliance with the restriction would

Plastic Ban Exemptions

Some important exemptions are listed in the definitions of the bill. Including:

Packaging for raw meat, raw poultry, raw seafood, unprepared produce and uncooked eggs.

Packaging for prepackaged food. Prepackaged food means prepared food that is sealed, contained, or wrapped in a manner to protect and prevent the prepared food from having any direct human contact, prior to being provided for sale by a food vendor to a customer, including, but not limited to, bentos, kimchi, seaweed salad, takuan, tofu, pre-made sandwiches, desserts, pies, noodles, salads, parfaits, and drinks.

Disposable plastic condiment packets; food-related bags or wrappers, including, but not limited to, musubi wraps, plastic film, poi bags, chip bags, cracker and cookie wrappers, bread bags, meal kits, or ice bags; beverage-related bottles or cartons.

Non-plastic cups that contain a polyethylene or plastic coating.

Packaging for unprepared food.

Packaging for wholesale distribution of prepared food, baked goods or dairy products.

cause significant hardship to hardship to their business. Exemptions will last for two years and can be renewed for two years, while the exemption is in effect, efforts must be made to come into compliance. The department may grant an “industry exemption” from compliance with certain restrictions upon application and the provision of sufficient evidence that compliance would cause hardship to the foodservice industry.

HFIA will be working to obtain information from ENV about the rules as soon as possible. We also encourage members to reach out to the ENV with specific questions by calling (808) 768-3486 and through their website hawaiienv.gov.

New Flavored Vaping Laws

BY ALEXIS CHAPMAN

Over the past few months, there have been some significant changes to tobacco regulation at the federal level. On January 2, 2020, the FDA issued an “enforcement policy on unauthorized flavored cartridge-based e-cigarettes.”

The FDA does not authorize flavored cartridge-based electronic nicotine delivery systems. The new enforcement policy is effectively a ban on the manufacture, distribution, and sale of these products. The new policy, which took effect on February 6, 2020, does not apply to menthol or tobacco products. Companies not in compliance after that date may face FDA enforcement actions.

Per the FDA, the new policy intends to address the youth vaping epidemic sweeping the country. The



PHOTO: ANDREW S/FLICKR

2019 National Youth Tobacco Survey results showed that young people are attracted to flavored products.

Health and Human Services Director Alex Azar said, “By prioritizing enforcement against the products that are most widely used by children, our action today seeks to strike the right public health balance by maintaining e-cigarettes as a potential off-ramp for adults us-

ing combustible tobacco while ensuring these products don’t provide an on-ramp to nicotine addiction for our youth.”

The Federal government is also attempting to address youth vaping by raising the tobacco purchase age nationwide. New federal legislation signed in December 2019, changed the minimum age to

purchase tobacco products from 18 to 21, aligning with Hawaii’s tobacco purchase age, which has been 21 since 2017.

Several bills at the Hawaii State Legislature this year would further restrict the sale of various tobacco products and electronic smoking products. HFIA will continue to provide updated information on these measures in our Weekly Update.

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Pukalani Superette

Affectionately known locally as “Puk Sup,” this upcountry Maui shop is supporting art in public spaces.

As the Pukalani Superette in Makawao, Maui, celebrates its 65th year in business, they have joined the ‘art in public spaces’ movement sweeping across communities in Hawaii.

“We provided space on our storefront for a local artist to paint a mural,” said Megan Nakashima, the store’s brand manager and director of community outreach. The mural reflects Pukalani’s upcountry, *paniolo* roots.

“Our employees affectionately named them “Puk” and “Sup,” she explained. The mural was created around the time of the Makawao Rodeo, a Maui event the North Shore store sponsored for the first time this year.

The artist produced the work on plywood. The shop plans to make this an annual project, refreshing the artwork each year and donating the older paintings to a charity auction of the artist’s choice.

In homage to an underused and recently removed Hawaiian Telcom payphone outside their store, another local artist recreated the phone in perfect detail, bringing up a swell of memories on social from the local community about the painting’s original subject.

“There is a large thirst for art in public spaces here, and these two projects have helped us participate in that movement, as well as support up-and-coming artists in a way that we feel is unique to our store,” said Nakashima, referencing the SMALL TOWN * BIG ART project taking place across Wailuku.

Puk Sup recently provided their staffers with at least six months of service with exclusive, branded hydro flasks not available for sale to the public. The gift honors each employee’s service and acts on the company’s commitment to producing less waste.

Big Island Coffee Roasters

The Sundance Film Festival, the largest independent film festival in the United States, serves up Hawaii Island coffee.

Held every winter in Utah, the Sundance Film Festival is the ultimate gathering of original storytellers and audiences seeking new voices and fresh perspectives. From January 24-26, 2020, Big Island Coffee Roasters served their Hawaiian coffee at The Retreat, the Eco-Luxury themed VIP lounge set up for celebrity, filmmakers, VIP guests and media.

“It is our pleasure to serve our 100% Hawaiian specialty coffees at the Sundance Film Festival. We shared Hawaiian coffees from all four corners of the Big Island, both modern and traditional: Kona Geisha, Natural Process Ka’u, Barrel Aged Puna, Hamakua, and Kona Peaberry, along with Espresso Bites. We are very honored to be a part of such an exciting event filled with creative energy whilst supporting a great cause to raise money for children”, said Kelleigh Stewart, Co-Founder of Big Island Coffee Roasters.

The lounge also served as a fundraiser for Project Green, a non-profit organization that supports underserved children and teenagers, helping those in foster care to attend summer camp.



PHOTO: TRAVIS WISE/FICKR

THE LAST WORD

BY LAUREN ZIRBEL

2020 has already been a big year for HFIA. We've continued to grow our membership, we had an excellent turnout and thoughtful discussion at the Legislative Talk Story session in January, the Annual Social was a sold-out success (thank you social committee!), and we're engaged on a wide range of legislation at our State Capitol. We see even more to be excited about as we look to the future of our association and our industry.

On February 27, 2020, we will host our annual Pau Hana with Legislators. This event creates an opportunity for members of our HFIA 'ohana to connect with legislative leaders and discuss issues that impact the fragile business environment in our state.

On April 3, 2020, HFIA will celebrate our 27th Annual Golf Tournament. We want to extend a huge MAHALO to Mike Kaya, our amaz-

ing Director of Golf (DOG), for putting this fantastic event together year after year! The golf tournament is one of HFIA's signature fundraising events for the Hawaii Foodbank. Members always have a fun time talking story and enjoying a day on the beautiful Honolulu Country Club golf course.

We're already gearing up for the 2020 Convention on June 5-6, 2020. This year's theme, Keeping It Classic, is all about the things we love that are always in good taste and that never go out of style.

This year's convention will be a great chance to get to know some of our new members, learn and share knowledge, take part in networking activities, and strengthen the bonds that keep our association strong.

Our industry is facing a lot of changes and challenges. It seems like everything is evolving. From what meat, milk, and our food packaging are made from, to the ways our customers shop and how



we communicate with them.

As we navigate the changes, HFIA will have choices to make and solutions to find. As the members in this issue have shown us, the best solutions and most exciting innovations in our industry often come from creating change rather than just reacting to it.

HFIA members are leaders in our industry, and I believe that as we move into the future together, we are the ideal group to steer Hawaii's food future on the right path. I look forward to working with all of you to make that happen.

WHY JOIN?

Because, HFIA is....



Your Liaison Between Government and Industry.

Many of the 2-3K bills proposed by the Hawaii State Legislature each year could significantly affect our industry. Members receive timely legislative updates each week, and we make sure your voice is heard. HFIA has a long track record of successful advocacy on priority policy issues. This is why our members find HFIA so valuable to their company.



Your Professional Networking Hub

HFIA hosts several low-cost membership events throughout the year. Our quarterly & annual events provide valuable education & resources, while facilitating strong industry connections that help members grow their business. As an added bonus, our events are downright fun. That's why HFIA members share a unique connection and camaraderie that makes this association unlike any other in the state!



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