

# HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY MAGAZINE

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CONVENTION 2024

HFIA'S  
NEW  
CHAIR

MAILE  
MIYASHIRO

2024 HFIA SPRING  
GOLF PHOTOS

Q&A WITH PACIFIC  
AIR CARGO'S  
PAUL SKELLON

HFIA HALL OF  
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# HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY MAGAZINE

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Candice Marrs and her daughter  
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## Featured Sustainable Crops:



### Chinese Cabbage

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## CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Aloha Hawai'i Food Industry Readers,

It's been a pleasure to have the opportunity to lead the Hawai'i Food Industry Association (HFIA) as Chair this past year, and to be a part of the many different facets of the association. This will be my final issue as Chair and I want to thank all of our Members for making HFIA the vibrant and valuable community organization that it is. We have so much happening right now, wrapping up a challenging and productive 2024 legislative session, getting ready for the 2024 Convention, and of course this year is the 30th Annual Made in Hawai'i Festival presented by Hawaiian Airlines!

I'm so excited for the Convention this year! The Vegas theme is a real winner and once again the amazing HFIA Social Committee has gone above and beyond to make this weekend a success. I've greatly enjoyed my time as Chair, and I'm happy to be passing this honor to Maile Miyashiro of C&S Wholesale Grocers. Maile is already such a positive force in our industry and our Association and I know she will excel as Chair of HFIA. During the Convention we'll also be

welcoming in some new Board members. HFIA has made great progress in many areas over the last few years and it's exciting to see new people being brought in to help guide the Association and build on that momentum. This year's panel discussion will be on "How to make local food more competitive?" I think this topic is especially timely given the big anniversary of the Made in Hawai'i Festival that we have coming up. I'm looking forward to hearing our panelists insights and getting some actionable information out of the event.

Safeway will once again be sponsoring the Made in Hawaii Festival this year and I'll be there with our team. I've attended the Festival for many years as a customer, and in recent years I've had the pleasure of going during the Buyers Hours. Last year I had the opportunity to help man Safeway's sponsor booth and hand out some great locally made brands that we carry to Festival attendees. This was such a unique experience and it really highlighted the amazing connections that HFIA creates in our industry. As a retailer the Festival is a special opportunity for us to showcase a few of the Hawaii made prod-



ucts we sell, and let people know that they can "Buy Hawai'i For Hawai'i" all year round at Safeway and many retailers that stock Made in Hawai'i Festival brands.

It's great to be part of the 30 years of this unique event, and I look forward to seeing you all there, as well as celebrating with you all at our annual Convention in June, and welcoming Maile as our new Chair!

Mahalo!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Okimoto".

Gary Okimoto  
HFIA Chairman  
COS, Safeway



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# SNAP HOICE PRESERVED AS DELIBERATIONS CONTINUE ON NUTRITION POLICIES ACROSS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

BY GREG FERRARA, PRESIDENT AND CEO, NATIONAL GROCERS ASSOCIATION

**A** year ago, independent grocers were looking toward a reauthorization of the Farm Bill, the nation's nutrition policy roadmap that's supposed to be updated every five years.

Work toward a new Farm Bill has continued since last November, when Congress passed a one-year extension to the 2018 legislation, and a divided House continues to hammer out a new bill as they hear from key stakeholders on what aspects of the policy to retain, eliminate, enhance or diminish.

To date, independent grocers have chalked up a few wins on nutrition policy as NGA plays an active role in demonstrating to policymakers the importance of Main Street supermarkets in enhancing consumer choice and access to fresh foods and other daily staples.

In early March, Congress chose to protect grocers and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants by eliminating a proposed provision in the House Agriculture Appropriations that could have caused widespread disruptions and undercut SNAP's effectiveness – a proposal that looked simple on paper but would have created confusion for program participants and resulted in a costly bureaucratic nightmare for small businesses around the country.

This provision would have sharply limited the types of foods covered under SNAP, and forced grocers to examine hundreds of thou-

sands of food items to decide which qualify and which don't. The proposed pilot program would have asked the government to pick winners and losers in the grocery sector and harmed the 42 million SNAP participants who have diverse nutritional needs.

SNAP restriction proposals usually fall under Agriculture Committee jurisdiction and are fought in Farm Bill negotiations. But the most recent Congressional push to restrict SNAP purchases is led by the chairman of the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, who is using his position on the dais to force this policy through as an appropriations policy rider.

Independent grocers also had a victory last fall when Congress, in bipartisan agreement, extended the prohibition on electronic benefits transfer (EBT) processing fees for SNAP as part of the one-year extension of the 2018 Farm Bill.

If EBT processing fees were allowed, stores of all sizes would have been forced to pay new fees on EBT transactions, which would likely reduce the number of participating retailers in the program. While NGA continues to fight for the permanent abolition of these fees, credit for the short-term victory goes largely to the hundreds of NGA members who appealed to their representatives in Congress about the negative impact these added costs would have on their communities.

These grassroots efforts are crucial to the ongoing fight for policies that help independent grocers better serve their communities. Other priorities for the new Farm Bill include maintaining the current program structure and expanding and streamlining the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) to drive consumption of fresh produce. In Hawaii GusNIP grants fund DA BUX program, which gives SNAP users double purchasing power when buying locally grown produce.

While not in the Farm Bill, WIC has kept policy makers busy over the past few months as well. NGA supported the \$7.03 billion in funding for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), which is an essential nutrition safety net for families facing hardship. Independent community grocers across America have long been valuable collaborators with federal and state government agencies in the implementation of WIC.

More recently, NGA was encouraged by the final rule issued in April by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to revise the food package within WIC, the first such revision since 2009. NGA submitted comments on the rule, supporting many of the food package expansions finalized by the USDA including expanded product offerings, pack size flexibility, product substitutions and "up to" amounts. Changes like this will improve consumers' shopping experience and enable retailers to better meet their needs.

For example, the final rule allows states to authorize a greater variety of package sizes to increase variety and choice, while still providing participants with package sizes that ensure their purchases add up to the full benefit amount. Expanding package sizes will allow for more flexibility for WIC participants and retailers. This will make the program easier for retailers to administer while building flexibility for participants.

For more details, read NGA's complete summary of the rule changes.

In an election year, with control of Congress as well as the White House on the line, lawmakers will be paying particular attention to the needs of their home districts – all the more reason for independent grocers to make their voices heard as work toward a new Farm Bill and funding the government proceeds while the election season unfolds. ❖

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**W**e are excited to report a series of landmark successes in this year's legislative session, especially in our key focus areas: food security and affordability, workforce and economic development, and emergency preparedness and response.

## FOOD SECURITY AND AFFORDABILITY

This year, we celebrated a significant achievement in food security and affordability by securing continuous funding for the DA BUX program, which substantially enhances the purchasing power of Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) users for local produce. Essential for grocery and convenience stores enrolled in SNAP Double Up Food Bucks, we successfully secured \$1.5 million in recurring funding in the final state budget. This funding is matched by an additional \$1.5 million from GusNIP federal grants, totaling \$3 million, which is then matched dollar-for-dollar at checkout, resulting in \$6 million in direct EBT benefits annually. Given the economic multiplier of 1:2 for EBT, this program is poised to generate an additional \$12 million in economic activity for the local food industry each year, significantly enhancing economic impact and strengthening our food supply chain.

A monumental victory came with the successful passage of HB2430, securing the future of the Summer EBT program. This initiative is crucial, as approximately 1 in 4 children in Hawaii face food insecurity. By obtaining a \$2 million investment from the state, HFIA helped to unlock up to an additional \$20 million in federal funds to support

SNAP. Each eligible child receives \$177 for summer food purchases, significantly reducing hunger during the school break. This influx of federal funds is expected to inject over \$40 million annually into the local food economy, benefiting local farms and food retailers, and providing a robust economic boost alongside vital nutritional support.

## WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HFIA companies have benefited from various programs funded through the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation, such as the Hawaii Small Business Innovation Research Program and others. We supported and celebrated the inclusion of these programs in the final budget. Additionally, SB2497, which increases research activity tax credits and extends their availability, was passed with our endorsement.

We also supported SB2974, which established a Business Revitalization Task Force aimed at enhancing Hawaii's economic competitiveness. This task force, which includes a food industry representative, will explore ways to mitigate regulatory and tax burdens. Another supported measure, SB2943, addressed the shortage of qualified commercial drivers by creating a working group to tackle this issue, and it successfully passed.

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

In response to the lessons learned from the Maui fires, HB1902 was enacted to refine the state's emergency management frame-

work, ensuring alignment with the state constitution, and enhancing the efficacy of emergency responses. This measure also reduced the duration of price controls from ninety-six to seventy-two hours.

## COFFEE LABELING

HFIA testified regarding the initial timeline proposed in HB 2298, which was considered unrealistic for the industry. Subsequent amendments to the bill have adjusted the implementation dates for new coffee labeling standards. The existing statutory minimum of ten percent of coffee by weight from a Hawaii geographic origin will continue through June 30, 2027. Starting July 1, 2027, this requirement will increase to fifty-one percent. These changes provide a more feasible timeline for local coffee producers and retailers to adjust their sourcing and labeling practices, ensuring a smoother transition and continued support for Hawaii's coffee industry.

## MACADAMIA NUT LABELING

HB 2278 underwent substantial revisions, thanks in part to input from HFIA, which helped ensure that the bill no longer includes language establishing a private right of action. The effective date for these changes has also been moved to January 1, 2026. The amendments now require a disclosure statement only if a product contains macadamia nuts grown outside of Hawaii, simplifying compliance while maintaining transparency for consumers. This adjustment aims to protect the integrity of local macadamia products and support informed consumer choices without imposing undue burdens on producers.

## COLLABORATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are proud to have supported the nominations of Dexter Kishida as Deputy Chair and Jesse Cooke to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation. We anticipate fruitful collaborations with these leaders to advance Hawaii's agricultural sector.

As we reflect on this year's legislative milestones, HFIA thanks all members who participated in advocacy efforts. Your active engagement has been crucial to our successes, and we look forward to continued collaboration to foster further legislative achievements in the coming year. We would also like to thank the many legislators who advocated for food security and resilience measures and for their dedication to a strong local food supply chain. ❖





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# THE HAWAIIAN AIRLINES 2024 HFIA SPRING GOLF TOURNAMENT

PHOTOS BY ANTHONY CONSILLIO

As always the Spring Golf Tournament was a great day on the course. The tournament is such a fun way to connect with other members, enjoy some new and favorite products from our food and beverage tent sponsors, and support a great cause. In addition to supporting HFIA this year the tournament raised funds for the Hawaii Foodbank and the Moanalua High School Athletics Program!

A very special Mahalo to our title sponsor Hawaiian Airlines! Their support and commitment to our Association has been a vital part in making all our events this year a success, thank you! We'd also like to thank all our sponsors, tent sponsors, donors, our hosts for 2024 Ewa Beach Country Club, and the Moanalua High School Golf Team for helping our players out with their first tee shots.

Of course this event would certainly not be possible without the work of our volunteer Director of Golf, Shellie Hayashi of Pasha Hawaii, and our Director of Golf Emeritus, Mike Kaya, as well as the amazing efforts of the golf cohort of HFIA's wonderful Social Committee. Thank you all!

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# TALKING STORY WITH HFIA'S NEW CHAIR MAILE MIYASHIRO

BY  
ALEXIS  
CHAPMAN

**H** FIA's newest Chair Maile Miyashiro will be a familiar face to anyone who has attended HFIA events in the last few years. In addition to being an industry leader as Senior Director Customer Experience for C&S Wholesale Grocers, Maile and the C&S Wholesale Grocer and Hansen team have been crucial members of HFIA's Social Committee. Maile brings a positive attitude and upbeat spirit to everything she does and we're excited to see how she applies her bright leadership style as Chair of HFIA. We recently had a chance to chat with Maile about her interesting background in Hawai'i's food industry, her insights about the industry, and her ideas for the future of HFIA.



**Alexis: How did you get your start in the food industry?**

**Maile:** My first experience in the food industry started in 1995. I was employed at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Monterey, California. I worked in various front line guest service positions. Within two years I was promoted to a Catering and Convention Service Manager. I had zero foodservice knowledge. The director that hired me said that he can teach me what I need to know about food service and what he can't teach someone is personality. I was supported 100% by our senior leadership team from the director, executive chef and banquet staff. I enjoy planning family events, but being a catering and convention services event coordinator was a whole new adventure. I worked in catering and convention services for about 18 months and was promoted to a Sales Manager. I was responsible for selling rooms, convention space and food and beverage. When I eventually transitioned wholesale grocery it was a different kind of business, but I was fortunate to still have great leadership and I knew I could learn and grow in this industry. A former HFIA Chair Beau Oshiro of C&S taught me a lot.

**What do you love about being part of Hawaii's Food Industry?**

I really care about our customers and our community. I know that what we supply, food, essential items, and technology, is vital to our customers and Hawai'i. It means a lot to me to be able to support our clients and our state in this way.

**How did you get involved with HFIA?**

Beau Oshiro was our VP, Divisional Manager for Hawaii. He really understood the value of HFIA and invited our sales team to participate in HFIA events. I started to participate in committees around 2017 and found that it was really fun and a great way to be connected with the industry. While he was Chair Charlie Gustafson of Tamura Super Market encouraged me to take a more active role in HFIA's leadership. I was really honored to join HFIA's Executive Committee serving as Secretary and Treasurer Starting in 2022 and then moving up to Vice Chair and now I'm excited to follow in the footsteps of Beau, Toby, Joe, Charlie, Eddie, Gary, and all our great HFIA Chairs!

**You're very active on HFIA's Social Committee, what are the benefits of being a part of HFIA's Committees?**

The biggest reward being a part of the Social Committee is the end result, to see an event come together and everyone have such a great time is so rewarding and really puts a smile on my face. There is a ton of collaboration between each business member. There are committee members that work for competing businesses, but everyone works as a team to execute great events. While planning

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 18**



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# HAWAIIAN CHIP COMPANY CELEBRATES NEARLY TWO DECADES AT THE MADE IN HAWAI'I FESTIVAL

BY JESSE COOKE

**T**he Hawaiian Chip Company has been setting up a booth and greeting loyal and new customers at the Made in Hawai'i Festival for nearly twenty years. It's an event the company looks forward to every year to gain customer feedback and as a place to launch new products. The Made in Hawai'i Festival is Hawai'i Food Industry Association's signature event which it has been producing since 1995. It has helped countless businesses, including the Hawaiian Chip Company, jumpstart direct sales and become financially sustainable year-round.

We sat down with Jimmy Chan, general manager and owner of Hawaiian Chip Company, ahead of the Made in Hawai'i Festival to talk about how his business has grown since participating in the Festival.

**Jesse: Why is the Made in Hawai'i Festival important for your business?**

**Jimmy:** What was really helpful when we first started doing the Festival was the sales to direct customers. They're paying just cash or check. That meant we got paid immediately. They didn't have too many mobile payment apps at that time. It was a time when the Hawaiian Chip Company was really struggling to survive and establish itself as a viable company. So at that time, we were heavily dependent upon holiday sales. Come summertime, things start to get pretty lean, and once we found the Made in Hawai'i Festival, the sales from that really helped carry us, served as a little bit of a stepping stone into the holidays. It provided us cash to buy supplies for the holidays, and then even just pay rent at that point in time.

**What types of opportunities have resulted from your participation in the Made in Hawai'i Festival?**

As our company grew, we definitely made contacts with a number of stores, a lot of gift basket type stores. They would come through and buy and reinforce those holiday sales. But one of the most significant things was Costco. A buyer from Costco Hawai'i came by, and this was maybe in 2006 or so, and he wanted our chips. We were able to work with them, figure out how to get distribution to them, figure out how to ramp up volume and all that. And once we got into the Costco store, that really validated our company with all the other big stores. That became a launching pad for the Hawaiian Chip Company. It allowed us to eventually buy the current warehouse that we're operating out of and continued growth from there. To this day, I still see Costco buyers at the Made in Hawai'i Festival and they're really taking their time looking at the local companies, trying to see what other companies could use the same boost that we benefited from. We're able to use the Made in Hawai'i Festival now to maintain those relationships with the buyers from Foodland, Longs, Times, Don Quijote, etc.

**Do you have any new products that you'll introduce at the Made in Hawai'i Festival?**

One of the neat things about the Festival, aside from just selling direct to customers, is that it's an opportunity to get direct feedback from customers. They'll tell you right then and there if the sample is good or not, and then of course the sales will dictate whether or not they actually mean what they say. This year, we're doing something a little different instead of just rolling out a

brand-new product. We're reintroducing a product that we had to pull off the shelves last year due to labor shortages. We've reintroduced the Kilauea Fire Hot Sauce slowly into markets this year, and we're going to use the Made in Hawai'i Festival as the launching pad to really say, "Hey, it's back and it's back for good." We're also introducing our Kilauea Fire seasoning, so it's a spicy blend of habanero, garlic, cayenne, and just a bunch of savory seasonings. But it's really, really spicy. And it was one of our first flavors when we first started doing the Made Hawai'i Festival.

**Are there any other products you're excited about bringing to the Made in Hawai'i Festival?**

Not exactly a product. We're going to use this as an opportunity to promote our holiday snack and gift center at our facility. We've built out a facility in the Kalihi area and acquired a couple of different properties. We're leasing space to Ulu Mana. They make ulu and cassava chips and ulu hummus, and they'll be at the Made in Hawai'i Festival, too. Hopefully, we'll be able to draw people down to visit us. Again, hopefully in time for the holidays, they'll keep us in mind when they start doing their holiday shopping.

**Are your sales mostly generated by visitors to the state or locals?**

I'd say our tourism sales are probably less than 10% right now. But it is growing and I think that's where a lot of our growth is coming from. Especially now, because our volumes with restaurants, hotels, all that stuff... that's becoming one of our biggest growth sectors. Of course, Hawaiian Airlines has been a tremendous partner for us, too, where we provide products for their in-flight sales.



They're selling our products off the carts for snack time, even for last minute omiyage. It has been great because that's also drawing a lot of people towards our brand. Incoming tourists will try it on the flight and then next thing we know, they're coming down to our factory and checking it out and we're able to give them the full immersive experience with the fresh made chips. And then from there, hopefully our brand will grow so that we are seen at some point as a destination on a list of top 20 to things to do in Hawai'i.

**Tell me about some of the challenges in trying to use local ingredients. I know you've had to change your volumes over the years depending on where you could get it and select it. But tell me what the challenges are. I'm sure a lot of folks are dealing with the same challenges that you are.**

The hardest thing is just being able to source enough product. Farming is tough and Hawai'i is so small. If you have a major storm system come through here, it affects all the farms. Farming is having a tough time with labor, too. The stuff that you get grown here, the quality is just fresher. It's not spending a week on a boat or anything like that. It's really tough to beat the quality of locally grown ingredients. However, it does come to a point where you start to see limits on what kind of production volume you're going to be able to generate on a consistent basis.

**When you can source local are you working directly with farmers or do you work with distributors?**

We do a combination. So, there are some farmers that we have relationships with, and we buy pretty much directly from them. And then of course, if they are in short supply, then we do have to go to other sources and we check with the local distributors and see what else they might have. But one of the other challenges with working with local agriculture is that some of our national customers require third party audits and all this stuff, we have to really make sure that these farms are in compliance with food safety regulation and all that stuff. So, there are some cases where if we're not able to verify, then we're not able to buy.

**Have you fully recovered from the pandemic as far as sales, and what do you feel like business has been like?**

Towards the end of 2023, I took a breath and after a review of the business I realized we were struggling a lot more than I thought in 2021 and 2022. Some of the struggle was self-imposed from adding infrastructure from opportunities that arose in the pandemic and we're finally settling into the new



Hawaiian Chip Company at the 2023 Made in Hawaii Festival

PHOTO BY ANTHONY CONSILIO

spaces. Unfortunately, the labor market is worse. Our sales have grown, but our workforce has shrunk, and there's just too many people retiring early and too many people working gig economy jobs. And really, that seems to be the ongoing struggle.

I think in a few years we are going to come into a pretty good pool of workers because what we have now is we have a bunch of good young workers who have

started taking up part-time jobs, and obviously a lot of them are going to go on for further schooling or go on to other careers, but the attitude towards work does seem like a little more committed than what we were seeing during the pandemic.



**What changes in your business have resulted from the COVID pandemic?**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

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#### HAWAIIAN CHIP COMPANY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

We did see a boost in internet sales, but now that we're in recovery, that has actually kind of dropped off a little more than I would've expected. I think paying just as much for shipping as you do for the big bag of chips has impacted our internet sales. Our prices also have had to go up like everyone else's.

The pandemic did actually open up an opportunity for us to acquire more property because another business in our immediate proximity decided to close, which resulted in a vacant lot being available. And that became our parking lot with almost 30 stalls -- unheard of in this area. Having the parking lot has really propelled our retail business. As soon as we added the parking, our retail business doubled to a point where it actually accounts for over 25% of our total revenue.

#### What recommendations do you have to make the Made in Hawai'i festival more helpful for retailers such as yourself?

I think increasing access to tourists would be my recommendation. Now that it's at the convention center, I think that does make it a lot easier because it's just walking distance from Waikiki. That's huge. I do think that's a tremendous opportunity because a lot of companies of my size or smaller just don't have the budget to advertise to tourists a whole lot. By having them stop by our booth where we can actually interact with them and have them taste the product, it would be significant help towards the branding.

I'm always looking forward to the Festival. It's always a nice sales boost before the holidays. I use it as a little bit of a litmus test for what the holidays are going to look like. Generally, it seems like when we have really robust sales at the Festival, it just launches right into the holiday craziness of trying to keep up with sales. ❀

#### TALKING STORY WITH HFIA'S NEW CHAIR MAILE MIYASHIRO CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

and working on HFIA events I've built great relationships with fellow HFIA members.

#### What are the biggest challenges or opportunities you think our industry is facing in the next few years? And do you think there are solutions?

One of the biggest challenges of being part of Hawai'i's food industry is to have adequate inventory for our customers given the distance we are from the mainland. During the supply chain issues of the last few years our sales, operations, logistics and procurement teams really had to decide to see this as an opportunity. We developed process improvements to help support a positive outcome on increased service levels. For some departments we found that really getting back to the basics was the key to positive outcomes, while other departments had weekly meetings to develop new processes.

#### Do you have any specific goals for your time as Chair of HFIA?

I'm excited about HFIA's Vision for "A strong, sustainable and resilient food industry in Hawai'i." I know we've had a great momentum on building our membership within the past few years, I want to build on that. I also want to support initiatives to increase member participation on committees and with events. I was encouraged to really get involved with the Association and it's been great, I want to pass that along and help others get everything they can out of HFIA. ❀

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# PASHA HAWAII RAISES THE BAR IN ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP



IMAGES COURTESY OF PASHA HAWAII

Above: MV George II; Bottom, right: Kupu Day of Service at Ulupo Heiau

In July 2022, Pasha Hawaii marked three generations of serving Hawaii with the introduction of Hawai'i's first container ship to operate on liquified natural gas (LNG). Named after Pasha Hawaii CEO, George Pasha, IV's late father, the *MV George III* was the first of three LNG-powered container ships in the Pasha Hawaii fleet. In August 2023, *MV Janet Marie* joined the *MV George III* and in January 2024, the *MV George II*, the world's first steamship to be converted into a vessel with an LNG propulsion system, entered service. *MV Janet Marie* and *MV George II* are named after Pasha Hawaii's CEO's late mother and late grandfather, respectively.

These vessels are providing noteworthy environmental benefits to Hawai'i: LNG-powered ships significantly reduce emissions compared to other marine fuels, thereby making a positive impact on Hawai'i's communities. Particulate matter, the fine black dust that's prevalent in neighborhoods near the port, is 99.9% eliminated as is sulfur, which when mixed with moisture in the air creates sulfuric acid resulting in acidic dew and acid rain. Operating vessels on LNG also results in a 90% reduction in NOx and a 25% reduction in CO2.

In keeping with the company's kuleana to caring for Hawai'i's 'aina, Pasha Hawaii, along with its sister company, Hawaii Stevedores, Inc., provides volunteer support to various organizations throughout the year. One of these organizations is Kupu. Kupu is a non-profit based in Honolulu whose mission is to empower Hawai'i's youth to serve in their communities through character-building, service-learning, and environmental stewardship opportunities that encourage pono with ke Akua, self and others.

Members of Pasha Hawaii's and Hawaii Stevedores' employ-

ee community action team program called Hui Hulilima (Helping Hands) recently joined with other companies' volunteers for Lau Kupu, a day of service at Ulupo Heiau in Kailua, where more than 100 like-minded volunteers spent the day eliminating invasive weeds to support the health and abundance of lo'i kalo, as well as the sacred Ulupo Heiau.

Pasha Hawaii was founded in 1999 on the premise of serving Hawai'i. This commitment to service extends beyond bringing in essential goods for the people of Hawai'i. For the company's 500-plus employees in Hawai'i, it means caring for our natural resources and those in need. 🌿





# INTERVIEW WITH PAUL SKELLON OF PACIFIC AIR CARGO

We had chance to chat with Paul Skellon, Director Marketing, Communications & PR for one of HFIA's newest Associate Members, Pacific Air Cargo.

BY ALEXIS CHAPMAN

## **Tell us a little bit about what Pacific Air Cargo does?**

Pacific Air Cargo offers premium air freight services between Los Angeles and Honolulu, 6 days a week, with connecting services to the neighbor islands and also two-weekly service to American Samoa and Guam. Through our Road Fedder Service we also offer seamless connections to all major US mainland gateways.

## **What makes shipping to and from Hawai'i uniquely challenging and how do you handle that?**

Currently the biggest challenge, while improving all the time, remains the post pandemic supply chain issues creating delays or product shortages especially in the e-commerce sector.

## **What kinds of foods can you ship?**

There is just about nothing that we cannot ship when it comes to food and fresh produce. If the department of agriculture allows the product to ship in or out of State then provided the produce is correctly packaged, we can fly it. With a flight time of less than six hours, freshly harvested produce can be in stores or on tables within 24 hours or less.

## **In addition to shipping between Los Angeles and Hawai'i, you also ship to Pago Pago, American Samoa, and Guam. What's different about these routes?**

Because the flight frequency is not the same as to the US mainland, products shipped to or from these markets have to be more carefully considered for shelf life.

## **What are some challenging/unique/interesting shipments you've made recently?**

We are the 'go-to' air cargo carrier between Los Angeles and Hawai'i when it comes to special or precious cargo. For example, in recent years, Pacific Air Cargo (PAC) partnered with the Honolulu Zoo as part of our PAC Gives Back community philanthropy and we've shipped giraffes, hippos, rhinos, chimps and stalks. All of these particular animals are part of the zoo's endangered species

care and breeding programs.

We also ship high value traveling art exhibitions as well as sound, lighting and stage equipment for many of the big name performers who visit Hawaii, and we support many of the large exhibitions which take place in Honolulu. On multiple occasions that I'm aware of, we have provided a business lifeline to local hotels and restaurants when vital equipment, such as stoves, fridges and elevators, required parts or critical components to get them back up and functioning.

Perhaps the service we are most proud of is when we provide an actual lifeline to Hawai'i and the Pacific Islands, partnering with FEMA to deliver emergency, time-critical supplies when disasters such as hurricanes and tsunamis strike. One example is that we shipped the first life-saving COVID-19 vaccines to American Samoa at the height of the pandemic.

## **What is something you want your fellow HFIA members to know about Pacific Air Cargo?**

The team at Pacific Air Cargo prides ourselves on our exceptional service that has created long-lasting, trusted partnerships with our customers over the past quarter century. As a home-grown business, we understand many of the unique challenges posed by Hawai'i's geographic isolation and the high cost of living and doing business here. We really enjoy working with local growers and small businesses to understand their specific challenges and to offer our expertise, experience, and support wherever possible to help them grow and prosper.

Aside from our scheduled services, we also offer part and full charters throughout the Pacific specializing in over-size cargo, and we are looking forward to soon opening exciting new markets with direct service to the islands, so watch this space!

As a fellow member of this great food industry organization, I would like to say, if you have a question or a specific challenge that you think Pacific Air Cargo may be able to help with, call us, we'd love to be part of your solution and your ongoing success! ❀







**T**he Hawai'i Food Industry Association (HFIA) Hall of Fame pays tribute to the individuals who have led, innovated, and built the food industry in our state. Gregory R. Gomes, Founder of Webco Hawaii truly exemplifies what it means to be a leader in Hawai'i's food industry. As an entrepreneur and philanthropist Greg made countless contributions to our industry and his community throughout his life. Though Greg passed in December of 2020 his leadership, team spirit, and giving nature are a legacy that will endure. We are honored to announce Greg as our 2024 Hall of Fame Inductee and posthumously award him the HFIA Ni'o Award of Excellence.

Greg truly built Webco Hawaii from the ground up, or rather the trunk up. When he founded the company in 1966 he had one brand to distribute and he sold it out of the trunk of his car. He earned \$578 dollars his first month in business, which would be the equivalent of over \$5000 today and is not bad for a first month earnings for a one-man startup. Of course, Greg didn't stop there. He built his company by building connections. He created positive, enduring relationships with brands and retailers over decades. Today, Webco Hawaii works with 150 manufacturers, representing over 300 brands with teams across the state.

Greg truly cared about the manufacturers and retailers that he worked with. He created a family company that continues to build relationships with global manufacturers and retailers. 58 years later, Webco employees hundreds in each county across Hawai'i and continues to provide life's essentials with aloha to local families and individuals around the state.

Anyone who knew Greg could tell you that his care for his community extended beyond his business. He was nominated for the HFIA's Hall of Fame by Safeway's Hawai'i leadership team and unanimously approved by the Executive Committee. In their nomination, Gary Okimoto of Safeway noted, "His entrepreneurship always set an example for others in the industry to follow. His contributions to the community and St. Louis High School are legendary."

Legendary is an apt description, as a sponsor of the St. Louis School Golf Tournament Greg was able to help raise over \$1million

for the school. And once again, he didn't stop there. Inspired by the success of the tournament he created the Webco Foundation which gives to a range of causes. He continued to sponsor several scholarships a year and created a legacy of giving that continues to enable many young people to get an education at St. Louis School now and in the future.

Greg's grandson Patrick Sato-Gomes, now President, talked about Greg's priorities,

"My grandfather was happiest taking care of others. He believed it wasn't just his civic duty to give back to as many as he could, but it was his privilege. He was always humbled by those who supported his drive to enable future generations to carry on the Aloha spirit that made Hawai'i the only place he ever wanted to be.

He wove that love of the islands and its people into the fabric of Webco. Because of the example that he set our employees have the mentality that it's not enough to be good in business, you need to be an even better corporate citizen and give back to the community. To educate our children to ensure that our local businesses continue to thrive and be around to provide opportunities for our island Ohana. His greatest joy was seeing local business and local residents succeed and perpetuate The Magic of Hawai'i."

Greg would certainly be happy seeing the success of Webco, our Association, and the food industry in Hawaii. For many years Webco has been an active HFIA member, especially in terms of supporting HFIA events; a positive force in their community; and of course a vital part of our industry. As we reflect on Greg's induction into the Hall of Fame we are grateful for the friendships and connections that he shared, his entrepreneurial spirit, and his enduring legacy of Aloha. 🌺





PHOTO COURTESY MADE IN HAWAII FESTIVAL

# 30 YEARS OF THE MADE IN HAWAII FESTIVAL

BY ALEXIS CHAPMAN

There are dozens of great festivals, fairs, and other events around our state each year, but there's only one Made in Hawai'i Festival. This year marks the 30th Annual Made in Hawai'i Festival and we think it's going to be one of the biggest and best ever! It's not just the size of the Made in Hawai'i Festival that makes it unique; the history, the economic impact, the guarantee of truly locally made products, the entertainment, the food, the sponsors, and the Made in Hawai'i Festival Community all combine to make this an event like no other.

## THE HISTORY OF THE MADE IN HAWAII FESTIVAL

Thirty years ago, Representative David Morihara had an idea for a Festival. He saw the struggles that our local small manufacturers faced, and he had an idea to create an event that would help them thrive. A multiday festival featuring only Hawai'i made products that could connect local businesses with not just customers but also retailer buyers was a big idea, and it could have remained just an idea. While many undoubtedly saw the value of Morihara's vision, few were eager to take on the challenge. The expense, logistics, organization, and management capacity needed to pull off the Made in Hawai'i Festival were all unknown variables at the time. Morihara shared his idea with numerous groups but at first there were no takers. David Morihara's father owned a grocery store in Kula Maui and was an HFIA Member,

so the Representative had a connection with HFIA even outside the legislature, and eventually he reached out to HFIA.

One person, who had earned a reputation for never shying away from a challenge was HFIA's Dick Botti. He saw the potential of the Made in Hawai'i Festival and knew that HFIA could make it a reality. Getting the HFIA Board on board could have proved tricky for anyone else, but they knew they could trust Dick. From this seed of an idea Dick, Representative Morihara, HFIA's leadership, and local vendors worked to cultivate an event like no other. In 1995 the Made in Hawai'i Festival came to life. The first Festival featured just a few dozen booths of locally made clothes, crafts, art, and food. It was a modest start but the soul of what makes the Festival so special was there. Vendors of truly locally made products were able to connect directly with customers and retail buyers. And shoppers knew that what they were getting was authentically made in Hawai'i.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

Representative Morihara's idea was not just about growing a Hawai'i business, or a few Hawai'i businesses, it was about growing Hawai'i business, and it has done just that. In a 2008 interview Dick Botti said, "We like to think of the festival as a small-business incubator. That's why we invite the buyers. If buyers come, they see new items and they can negotiate a price on quantity and will be able to keep these businesses growing and making products for the

next year"

The Festival can be a vital tool for local businesses to launch a new endeavor, test or showcase new products, reach new customers, connect with retail buyers, and boost sales. For individual businesses the economic impact of the Festival can be huge, some work all year to create product to sell at the Festival and it makes up a large percentage of their annual sales. Other businesses large and small utilize the Festival as a product launch. The great Festival PR and huge crowds mean businesses can get a lot of eyes on a new product and have good data to measure customer response. Buyers Hours are one of the most economically important aspects of the Made in Hawaii Festival, and one of things that set it apart from other events. Each year for two hours before the Festival opens to the public over 1500 retail buyers from all over Hawai'i, the mainland, and abroad are invited into the Festival to shop and meet with vendors. For vendors looking to scale up this is an unparalleled opportunity to connect with the next link in the supply chain.

HFIA is well aware of how important the Festival can be to keeping these local businesses going. In 2020 when it was not possible to have a live Festival HFIA decided to create something new, an online Made in Hawai'i Festival Marketplace. The Marketplace was a logistical challenge and a significant financial burden for the Association, but HFIA knew that to keep these businesses going, they had to stay connected with their customers. The Online Marketplace was a success for many vendors and allowed them to make up some of their lost revenue to do pandemic related closures and restrictions.

The positive economic impact of the Made in Hawai'i Festival doesn't end with the Festival vendors themselves. When the Festival began it was not common to see stores selling a lot of locally made authentic Hawaiian products. Now "local" and "Made in Hawai'i" are proudly used as advertising call outs for products on shelves and there are businesses around the state that focus on selling primarily Hawai'i products. The Made in Hawai'i Festival has worked with other agencies and organizations like the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Businesses Economic Development and Tourism, Mana Up, and others to help ensure that the market for locally made products continues to grow and that customers get a chance to know the value of Made in Hawai'i.

## TRULY MADE IN HAWAII

The defining characteristic of the Made in Hawai'i Festival is that products have to be legitimately made here in the state. Specifically, that means all products sold at the Made in Hawai'i Festival must be at minimum 51% value added in Hawai'i. This is codified by law in the Hawai'i Revised Status. In 2009 HFIA supported legislation to strengthen the regulations ensuring that the words "Made in Hawai'i" could only



# NEW TOBACCO LAW

Chapter 245, Hawai'i Revised Statutes

Wholesalers, dealers, and retailers of  
**electronic smoking devices (ESDs) and e-liquids**

**This law affects your business and business taxes**

**“Tobacco product”** definition now includes:



Electronic Smoking Devices  
(ESDs, e-cigs, vapes, etc.)



E-Liquids  
(vape juice, pods, etc.)

The Hawai'i State Department of Taxation requires:

## Wholesalers/Dealers to:

- Obtain a tobacco license
- File a monthly tax return
- Report monthly shipments
- Pay an excise tax of 70% of wholesale pricing
- Keep records of sales, prices, and taxes payable

## Retailers to:

- Obtain a retail tobacco permit (for each retail location)
- Keep complete record of tobacco product inventory

For more  
information,  
scan to view:



Hawai'i State Department of Health  
Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Division  
Tobacco Prevention & Control Section





be applied to products that were legitimately created in the state. Vendors who apply to the Festival must confirm that their products meet these requirements before being accepted.

Most Festival vendors exceed the 51% threshold, and some take it even further. Using locally grown agricultural products and locally sourced materials to manufacture value-added products means local farmers benefit too. It also means customers are getting more local bang for their buck. Of course, there are a wide range of food and beverage vendors at the that take this approach and make a huge range of delicious food from Hawai'i grown fruits and veggies. Other vendors are sourcing local raw materials too. Made in Hawai'i Festival skin care and cosmetic brands are using local ingredients, jewelry makers artisans and crafters of all types use local wood, shells, and other materials. As demand for these products grows new opportunities are created and even more Made in Hawai'i businesses can thrive.

## ENTERTAINMENT

High caliber entertainment has been a part of the Made in Hawai'i Festival since its inception and is another defining characteristic of the event. Alan Yamamoto has been the Made in Hawai'i Festival's Entertainment Coordinator since the beginning and is a big part of why Made in Hawai'i Festival entertainment includes such big names every year. In 1995 Alan was invited to coordinate entertainment. He was already working with Na Hoku Hanohano award winning artists and was able to bring them to the festival. He was already working with Na Hoku Hanohano award winning artists and was able to bring them to the festival. Since then, the Na Hoku Award winners along with Grammy nominees, rising stars, and local legends have all played the Made in Hawai'i Festival. Alan recalls that these talented local performers helped set the Festival apart from the beginning, "It wasn't the same stuff that you would here at the touristy places in Waikiki." This was an important distinction and set a tone for the life of the Festival as an event that celebrated Hawai'i centered authentic contemporary local culture.

As food became a more integral part of the Festival, Chef Demos were added to the entertainment lineup. Now Festival goers can watch celebrity chefs prepare masterpieces and enjoy tasting them! Of course one of the most entertaining aspects of the Festival every year is the cooking demo emcee Derek Kurisu. As Derek noted in the opening ceremony of the Festival last year, he is himself "made in Hawai'i" and he is a local institution. Derek's energy and joy for all things Made in Hawai'i is infectious and helps bring the spirit and the flavor of the Made in Hawai'i Festival to life each year.

One iconic piece of the Festival entertainment lineup that was lost and then

# TALKING STORY WITH DAVID MORIHARA

BY ALEXIS CHAPMAN

**T**he Made in Hawai'i Festival was originally the idea of then Representative David Morihara of Maui. David and HFIA's Dick Botti worked together to make the Festival a reality. Sadly, Dick passed several years ago, but we know he would be thrilled to see how far this wonderful event has come. He probably would not be at all surprised, given his unwavering belief in the strength of the concept and the strong foundation he helped create for this event to grow.

We had the chance to talk story with the other father of the Festival David Morihara.

## Alexis: What sparked the idea for the Made in Hawai'i Festival?

**David:** I became chair of Agriculture Committee for the State House of Representatives. We were going through a little bit of a recession at that time. We wanted to promote local agriculture, but not just local ag, all kinds of local products. But at the time was never a cohesive way to bring everybody together. I felt like we needed to put together a show, and we wanted a name to sell the exact concept we were trying to promote.

## How did HFIA end up producing the Festival?

At that time, everybody wanted to support the concept, but there was no event that brought it all together. I was a member of HFIA because I ran Morihara Store in Upcountry Maui. But HFIA wasn't the first person we talked to. But other people were just not interested enough, there was a lot of risk and other organizations were risk averse. But Dick knew he could do it. To us it seemed like a no brainer that this would work.

## How did it develop from that concept into an actual event?

Some of the banks at the time like First Hawaiian Bank, and Bank of Hawaii were also working to promote local products so we reached out and got them on board as key sponsors.

We reserved half the Blaisdell and then we had to get vendors. We were really hustling to get them signed up, we were talking to vendors on all islands, trying to get enough to fill the space and put on the show.

## How did the Made in Hawai'i Festival progress in the early years?

When we were able to get the first show off the ground people just poured in. We had people selling out the first day.

It was totally different than anything else. We were getting local vendors, not mass produced, local vendors with their own ideas, their own designs. We had a local farmers market. We bought stuff. We wanted to prove that this is a business opportunity. People began to see that this is a private entrepreneurs doing well selling their concept of what made in Hawai'i is. A lot of artists launched through the show. The entertainment was a big part of it and it helped them too. It exposed the entertainers to a new audience, and exposed the audience to new local music.

Now people come and plan trips around it, we had a hard time getting tourists interested at first. The locals supported first and then it caught on with the tourists.

Along the way we sold the concept, and proved it was valuable. That was what we wanted to prove and it took off beyond our expectations.

found is the Fashion show. The first few Made in Hawai'i Festivals had fashion shows, but with the size of the Festival at the time the clothing vendors didn't think it was worth the logistical challenge of putting on a full show. Now with the Festival drawing close to 50,000 people fashion shows have just recently come back and will be part of the 2024 Festival as well.

## A TASTE OF MADE IN HAWAII'I

The Made in Hawai'i Festival is an excep-

tional place to get to experience locally made food. The Festival features a huge array of delicious food and drinks. There are new products made with local staples like kalo and ulu; classic favorite baked goods like shortbread cookies, banana bread, and pie; traditional local foods; internationally inspired treats; and of course, a huge variety of products featuring coffee, chocolate, mac nut, tea, jerky, li hing mui and the list goes on and on. Because of the variety of products, the innovation of local food man-



Chef Chai and Derek Kurisu put on a show at the 20th Annual Made in Hawai'i Festival.



PHOTO BY ANTHONY CONSILIO

a new idea and the Made in Hawai'i Festival Beer Garden was born. Even if Festival attendees couldn't sample quite as many foods as before they could enjoy locally canned and bottled Coca-Cola products, and locally made beer from companies like Kona Brewing. The Beer Garden is now a highlight of the Festival and a delicious example of how the Made in Hawai'i Festival continues to evolve and change.

## THE MADE IN HAWAII FESTIVAL COMMUNITY

HFIA, the Festival Management Team, the Sponsors, the vendors, entertainers, volunteers, retail buyers, and of course the attendees all form a community that knows the value of Hawai'i made products and local businesses. While the economic impact of the Festival can be measured, there are other values that cannot be quantified. The Made in Hawai'i Festival is a celebration of authentic contemporary Hawai'i culture. The Festival shows how the fashion, art, music, and food of Hawai'i is rooted in tradition, and evolves and becomes enriched as new makers learn from the past and innovate for the future. Hawai'i's diversity and multicultural identity is on full display at the Festival and there is truly something for everyone. The Festival is a showcase of

ufacturers, and the launch of new products at the Festival every year attendees are guaranteed to come across a something new. To entice shoppers further many Festival food vendors generously offer samples.

No one is quite sure how samples became such an iconic part of the Made in Hawai'i Festival. Due to the concession rules at the Festival's original venue there were relatively few food vendors, in spite of it being produced by the Hawai'i Food Industry Association. One long time vendor recalls that at one of the early Made in Ha-

wai'i Festival someone wanted to give out samples, but no one was quite sure if that was allowed to or not. This was in the days before cell phones, so someone hopped on a bike and rode over to the Capitol to check. Apparently, the word from the Capitol was good and samples soon became one of the most celebrated aspects of the Festival. Unfortunately, in 2021 due to health regulations related to the pandemic samples were tightly restricted. But that same year, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, a subsidiary of the Odom Corporation stepped in with

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Left: Opening the 2023 Made in Hawai'i Festival



Right: HFIA Members Salty Wahine, shown here in 2014, have been a part of the Festival for over a decade.

PHOTOS BY ANTHONY CONSILLIO

the things that make Hawai'i unique and connect us.

This unity and care for each other that is so much a part of Hawai'i culture was demonstrated in a big way during the Made in Hawai'i Festival last year. The devastating fires on August 8, 2023, shook our state. In the immediate aftermath of the fires, it was unclear if the Festival could or should proceed. After a great deal of thoughtful discussion among HFIA leadership, the Festival management team, the Hawai'i Convention center, and our Maui vendors, a decision was made to go ahead with the Festival and use it as an opportunity to raise funds for those on Maui who had been impacted by this tragedy. Thanks to HFIA's quick decision to pivot the fes-

tival to help raise funds for Maui, the 2023 Made in Hawai'i Festival donated \$58,192.87 to the Maui Strong fund.

Hawai'i has weathered many challenges recently, and while the future is uncertain, the Made in Hawai'i Festival's continuation is a certainty. From its humble beginnings with just over 60 vendor booths, this year's event has expanded impressively to feature 700 booths, vividly showcasing the festival's dynamic spirit and growth. To everyone in the Made in Hawai'i Festival community, a heartfelt mahalo nui loa for your enthusiasm and support. We can't wait to see you at the Festival! 🌺

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# NEW MEMBERS



## KONA CROWN COFFEE

Coming back to our heritage of agriculture in Hawai'i, we are a family owned and operated farm. We are situated at a perfect elevation for growing coffee on the slopes of Hualalai. The farm has been producing some of the finest Kona coffee for over 20 years. For the first time in 2023 we entered our Darnall Estate green beans in the Kona Coffee Cultural Festival Cupping Contest winning the Heritage and Crown awards scoring an 85 for our Kona Typica.

We sell our green coffee beans to roasters and wholesalers.

In 2024 we will launch our roasted and packaged coffee for retail directly to consumers.



**CATALINA**  
CAPITAL GROUP

## CATALINA CAPITOL GROUP

Aloha! At Catalina Capital 401(k), we help companies in the food industry streamline and manage their 401(k) retirement plan by offering customized, low-cost solutions. In addition to providing guidance to employers, we also engage directly with your employees to highlight the important 401(k) benefit you provide them and to offer investment advice and education directly to them. We act as your plan's fiduciary, which means we take on the liability and risks – taking them off the shoulders of a company's owners/principals. As your trusted 401(k) advisor and fiduciary, we guide you and your employees' financial futures with integrity and expertise built over decades in the 401(k) space.

**Learn more about  
our newest members  
at [hawaiiifood.com](https://hawaiiifood.com)**



KUBOTA RICE INDUSTRY (SGP) PTE.LTD.

## KUBOTA RICE FACTORY

Established in 2023, KUBOTA RICE INDUSTRY HAWAII INC. is pioneering advancements in Hawaii's food supply.

Our mission is to manage the production and distribution of safe, fresh and high-quality Japanese rice, contributing to local culinary culture and health.

Our integrated management and transportation systems, facilitated through contract farming, ensure the monitoring of the entire production process guaranteeing the highest standards of quality. Leveraging state-of-the-art rice milling and refrigeration facilities, we import fresh brown rice from Japan, which meets or exceeds the quality of rice sold in Japan.



## NEW BELGIUM BREWING COMPANY

From the beginning, we've focused on our superpower – making great beer, and doing it responsibly. Our coworkers are skilled experts, with talents honed over time, who take pride in their craft. Becoming one of America's largest and fastest-growing craft breweries has only increased our ability to invest in innovation and quality. Over the years, we've won 34 medals at the Great American Beer Festival – starting with a Gold for our original Abbey Ale in 1993, and most recently winning Gold for our Trippel in 2021. Our team started making sours way back in 1999, and now operate the largest sour beer program in the United States.



## MUN CPAS

MUN CPAs will unlock the power of accounting intelligence. With advanced algorithms and real-time data analysis, we deliver actionable insights that empower businesses to make informed decisions, optimize financial performance, and drive sustainable growth with confidence. We are very committed to providing the highest quality service and exceeding client expectations. We are confident in our ability to provide services that will address your needs and look forward to the opportunity to earn your trust.



## PACIFIC AIR CARGO

IPAC specializes in air freight of vital perishable foods, pet transport and is also the market leader for air transportation of large, bulky, and oversized consignments such as large aircraft engines, medical equipment, and emergency supplies.

Pacific Air Cargo (PAC) provides exclusive Boeing 747-400F express air services between Los Angeles and Honolulu, with onward connections to Hawaii's neighbor islands, and weekly services to Pago Pago, American Samoa, Guam and beyond. With PAC RFS, our Road Feeder Service, customers can ship to and from the main gateway cities all across the U.S. mainland. PAC also offers part and full charter services throughout the Pacific.

Today, Pacific Air Cargo CEO, Tanja Janfruchte and her professional, friendly team have a long and well-respected history of reliable, on-time service to the air freight markets in Hawai'i, the United States mainland, and throughout the Pacific. Pacific Air Cargo is supported by the majority of domestic and international freight forwarders, integrators and airlines, all of which have significantly contributed to the company's ongoing success.



## LIKO LEHUA

Liko Lehua Butters are handcrafted fruit flavored spreads (similar to a curd) that capture the essence of Hawai'i. Every jar contains childhood flavors and smells that invoke the memories of Hawai'i we love and hold dear. Liko Lehua Butter always uses fresh, natural ingredients and locally sourced products. Every jar of Liko Lehua Butter is hand poured, labelled and packed with care by our Ohana. We presently offer seven unique Butter flavors: Liikoi (passionfruit), Guava, Mango, Coconut, Pineapple, Tahitian Lime, and Vanilla and we highly suggest following us on Facebook and Instagram as we are always creating new seasonal flavors.



# MEMBER NEWS

## Planted by La Tour Cafe Opens in Ward Village



This April Planted by La Tour Cafe opened in Ward Village. The plant-based concept first found success as a pop-up in Aina Haina, and now has a permanent home in Ward Village. Planted carries an array of pastries, snacks, a rotating selection of limited-time flavors, and special menus throughout the year. The café will be open daily from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.



## Hawaii Foodservice Alliance (HFA) Proudly Sponsors Mink Mentorship Program at YWCA



HFA is thrilled to announce its sponsorship of the Patsy T. Mink Center for Business & Leadership, Mink Mentoring Program at YWCA O'ahu. The Mink Mentorship Program was designed to empower and support female leaders and entrepreneurs by nurturing a culture of mentorship, skill development, and professional growth. This program aims to provide a platform for experienced mentors to guide and inspire mentees of all levels, helping them to dream big and achieve their career or personal goals and navigate various

challenges.

HFA's Co-Owner, Stephanie Buck, is also honored to highlight the women of HFA who are championing non-transitional female leadership roles in areas such as warehouse operations, transportation and logistics. HFA is committed to breaking barriers and promoting diversity in the workplace and in leadership by providing women with access to executive positions traditionally underrepresented. Through initiatives such as first-generation leaders, peer-led leadership training and coaching, and flexible career paths, HFA empowers women to pursue and excel in leadership roles, fostering a culture of inclusivity, innovation, and excellence.

## Hawaii Gas Celebrates 120 Years



With twelve decades of history, Hawai'i Gas is one of the oldest companies still operating in the state today. Established in 1904 as the Honolulu Gas Company, Ltd., we began fueling homes and businesses on O'ahu with gas from our original plant in Iwilei, eventually growing into an integral energy provider serving diverse communities across the

state.

During our long tenure as one of Hawai'i's primary energy providers, we have installed gas pipeline infrastructure, built bulk storage facilities with access to the harbor and developed a highly skilled workforce on every major island. 120 years later, we continue to invest in technology that diversifies and decarbonizes our fuel mix, and remain committed to providing safe, affordable, reliable energy solutions to create a better quality of life for our communities.

## Tokyo Central Opening in Kailua



Tokyo Central Kailua, scheduled to open May 7, will be the first Tokyo Central location in the islands. Tokyo Central Kailua is part of the Pan Pacific Retail Management Hawaii family of stores including Times Supermarket, Don Quijote USA, Marukai Hawaii, Big Save Markets, Shima's Market, and Fujioka's Wine Times.

Tokyo Central is a Japanese specialty market offering grocery items, snacks, beverages, ice

cream, and bakery treats. You'll also find seasonal fruits, vegetables and seafood imported from different regions of Japan. Our Meat Department offers Japanese style thin cut meats for shabu shabu, sukiyaki, and hot pot cooking as well as grilling steaks perfect for the next family picnic.

If you're on the go or heading to the beach, Tokyo Central offers convenient Japanese style bento, Wagyu beef plate lunch, self-serve hot food entrees, sushi and island favorite poke and poke bowls.



## Foodland Launches Project Keiki

This April Foodland Super Market launched Project Keiki, a new statewide community giving program that will help provide lunches and meals to Hawai'i's children on days they don't have access to school lunches. Support will go to

the Hawai'i food banks on four islands to fulfill this mission.

Many children statewide rely on school-provided lunches for their nutrition during the academic year. On weekends and when school is out, many of them lose access to their most reliable and consistent source of food and nutritional balance.

Foodland created Project Keiki to support a community need, helping the Hawai'i Foodbank, Maui Foodbank, The Food Basket: Hawai'i Island's Food Bank, and Hawai'i Foodbank Kaua'i fund their critical work and programs providing Hawai'i children with meals when school is not in session. Throughout the month of April, Foodland customers were invited to participate in Project Keiki to help feed a brighter future.

## ABC Stores Opens Island Country Markets in Waikiki



The historic location on Ena Road in Waikiki that was formerly Wailana Coffee House is now home to ABC Stores' newest Island Country Markets.

An Island Lifestyle market and gift shop in one, this Island Country Markets location features a full-service deli offering fresh poke, hot sandwiches, burgers, flatbread pizzas and local plate lunch specials; sushi rolls and bentos made fresh daily; and a



coffee bar with coffee and tea drinks, pastries, and gelato. The market also offers fine wines and spirits, gourmet meats and cheeses, fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh cuts of meat and seafood, groceries, drugs and cosmetics, local and logo apparel, and gifts and souvenirs - just about everything you'll need!



# A SEASON OF RENEWAL AND REMEMBRANCE

BY LAUREN ZIRBEL



At HFIA, spring signals a time of vibrant activity and thoughtful reflection. As we wrap up our Annual Golf Tournament and the Legislative Session, we eagerly anticipate the highlights of our summer calendar: the Convention and the Made in Hawai'i Festival. Each event offers an opportunity to celebrate our community's dynamism and to foster deeper connections within the industry.

## CELEBRATION AND COMMEMORATION AT THE CONVENTION

The Convention serves as our annual gathering, bringing together the luminaries of Hawai'i's food industry to celebrate and collaborate. It's also a moment to recognize the extraordinary contributions of our members. This year, we will pay tribute to Greg Gomes, whose impact on our community was profound and far-reaching. Greg was not only a pillar in the food industry but also a generous benefactor whose charitable efforts touched many lives. In honoring him, we remember his compassionate spirit and his enduring dedication to making a difference. His legacy continues to inspire us, and we are proud to posthumously induct him into our Hall of Fame.

## STRATEGIC SHIFTS

Our Annual Membership Meeting marks a time of transition and renewal. In the past months, Alexis and I have engaged deeply with our Board Members, shaping a vision for the future while staying rooted in the values that define our Association. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our retiring members and welcome those stepping in, whose fresh perspectives promise to drive HFIA forward.

## INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

One of the highlights of this year's Convention is the panel discussion on "How to Make Local Food More Competitive." This session aims to tackle one of the most pressing challenges in our industry—boosting the competitiveness of local food. Through a thorough analysis of past efforts and a collaborative approach to new strategies, we seek to enhance our local food markets' vitality and appeal.

## LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

This legislative session was particularly rewarding for HFIA, thanks largely to dedicated public servants like Representative Scott Nishimoto. His unwavering support helped us secure \$1.5 million in recurring funds for the DA BUX program in the State Budget, which will be matched 1:1 by the federal government. This funding is a crucial boost for the local food industry and a testament to the impact of thoughtful and committed leadership.

In addition to passage of recurring funding for DA BUX, HFIA helped pass Summer EBT which will bring in 20 million dollars into our state to address childhood hunger and strengthen our food economy.

## THE 30TH MADE IN HAWAII FESTIVAL

This year marks the 30th Annual Made in Hawai'i Festival, presented by Hawaiian Airlines, an event that has grown into a flagship showcase of local entrepreneurship and creativity. Along with major support from Central Pacific Bank, Mahi Pono, and the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation, the festival draws a vibrant community of sponsors and participants. Our member sponsors, including Safeway, ALTRES, The Odom Corporation, Maui Soda and Ice, RNDC, Island Distributing, Hawaii Volcanic Beverages, PepsiCo, and more, will highlight the diversity and richness of locally made products. Esteemed brands like Meadow Gold, Diamond Bakery, Paniolo Gourmet, and Noms Candy, serving as Island Sponsors, are set to unveil exciting new products.

## COMMUNITY AND GROWTH

Beyond a marketplace, the Made in Hawai'i Festival is a celebration of resilience and innovation, featuring stalwarts like Maui Fruit Jewels, Hawaiian Chip Co., Hawaiian Pie Co., Hawaiian Soda Co., and many more. The festival holds a special place in my heart; as a supporter and aficionado, seeing these businesses thrive is immensely gratifying. Having guided the festival through its ups and downs, I am more convinced of its value and potential than ever. Looking forward, I am excited about what the next three decades will bring, anticipating greater achievements and deeper impacts on our community. ❖

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