



WEATHER



82° F

Partly Sunny

HIGH: 84° F LOW: 71° F

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Opinion

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Posted on: Monday, October 30, 2006

UH-Manoa energy goals a guiding light

On the heels of a statewide power outage triggered by the recent earthquake, the state now, more than ever, must recognize the need for energy conservation and aggressively exploring energy alternatives.

That's why the University of Hawai'i-Manoa's partnership with Hawaiian Electric Co. is so encouraging.

By 2012, the university hopes to reduce its energy consumption by 30 percent; by 2015, the campus plans to cut use by 50 percent. In addition, university officials plan to have 25 percent of campus energy supplied by renewable sources by 2020. That's an ambitious goal — and a worthy one — considering the university is the second-largest consumer of electricity on O'ahu.

HECO will help by monitoring energy use at the 300 buildings on campus, identifying areas where consumption can be reduced and where electrical and energy-efficient upgrades can be put in place to reduce costs.

This isn't the first promising partnership with HECO. The military is HECO's largest consumer of energy, and regular meetings with military leaders have proven to be effective, according to Karl Stahlkopf, HECO's chief technology officer. After educational briefings on conservation, energy consumption at Pearl Harbor was reduced by 20 percent last year. Following the same practices, Stahlkopf hopes the university's plan will be just as successful.

These conservation efforts, along with the Lingle administration's slew of energy bills passed in May exploring alternative energy, have placed the state on the right path toward energy independence. To get there,

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[Letters to the Editor](#)

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[Today's headlines](#)

[Back issues](#)

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[Columnists](#)

[Photo galleries](#)

[Blogs](#)

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[Today's front page](#)

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however, everyone must get on board.

Every little bit helps, from switching to energy-efficient fixtures to shutting down computers and monitors when they are not in use.

"It takes a change in philosophy and a slight change in living," Stahlkopf said.

It also takes leading by example, which UH-Manoa officials have admirably done.

▲ [Top](#)



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- BUSINESS** : [Hawai'i stocks](#) | [Hawai'i mutual funds](#) | [Hawai'i mortgage rates](#) | [Island bank rates](#) | [Stock quotes](#) | [Moneywire](#) | [Coming events](#) | [Trade Winds](#) | [Local resources](#)
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