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Event honors small-business achievements in Maui County

POSTED: October 25, 2009

WAILEA - A half-dozen small-business operators were honored for their achievements Friday night during the Mayor's Small Business Awards at the Wailea Beach Marriott Resort & Spa.

The lifetime achievement award went to Robert "Bob" King of Pacific Biodiesel Inc.

King has been a small-business owner in Maui County since 1980 when he started King Diesel, according to the announcement of the award winners. His business became the Cummins Engine dealership for Maui County.

In 1996, King's experience with diesel technology led him to venture into renewable energy, and he founded the first commercial biodiesel business in the United States.

The mayor's community service award went to David Fisher, who has been providing advice through the Hawaii Small Business Development Center since 1990, when he taught the first Internet classes on Maui.

Fisher has offered a regular "Starting a Venture" course for more than 16 years. He now has his own consulting business called MauiVenture Consulting LLC.

James "Kimo" Falconer's MauiGrown Coffee won in the category of a small business with 10 or fewer employees.

In 2006, MauiGrown Coffee opened a retail store on Lahainaluna Road. And, two years later, the business harvested 293,000 pounds of green coffee beans, more than four times the production of prior years. This year's crop is expected to have an estimated yield of 350,000 pounds.

Pacific Defense Solutions was selected as the winner in the category of a small business with 11 to 50 employees. The Maui-grown company develops technology that focuses on the inventory and location of man-made objects in space, and is currently exploring roles in renewable energy.

Founded in 2006, the company has grown to 21 employees, 19 of whom were locally hired. The company's founders include Wes Friewald, president and chief executive officer, who serves on the board of directors of the Maui Economic Development Board and is a director and conference chair to the Advanced Maui Optical and Space Surveillance Technologies Conferences.

Garret Marreo of Maui Brewing Co. was selected as the young business person of the year. The company has grown more than 150 percent in two years. It employs 42 people at its brewpub and cannery.

After being remodeled last summer, the pub is naturally lit and uses about 40 percent less electricity. Marreo designed recyclable cardboard packaging for Maui Brewing products to avoid ringed plastic containers that pose a risk to marine life. And, the company's vehicles run on biodiesel.

The nonprofit angel award went to Jim Sanders of Jim Sanders Realty.

Since 2004, he has helped raise more than \$90,000 for A Keiki's Dream.

Sanders also has been recognized by the Maui Arts & Cultural Center as a loyal and generous supporter.

The Mayor's Small Business Awards started in 2004 as a way to recognize outstanding small businesses in Maui County. Friday's event was sponsored by Central Pacific Bank and numerous other supporters of small business.

Article Photos



SHERYL SAPHORE photo

David Fisher receives the Mayor's Community Service Award from Mayor Charmaine Tavares and Economic Development Coordinator Deidre Tegarden.

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