West

No Small Success For Owner Of Energy Conservation Hawaii

By Mark Skaer / Senior Editor. E-mail him at markskaer@achrnews.com.

Small Business Administration Honors Business Owner Kimura.

HONOLULU, HI — Darren Kimura and Energy Conservation Hawaii (ECH) have each come a long way since 1995.

Kimura, who started ECH more than six years ago, has developed into quite a businessman, recently being named the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA's) 2002 Young Entrepreneur of the Year for Hawaii. Not only that, he was named SBA's Young Entrepreneur of the Year for Region 9, which includes California, Arizona, Hawaii, Nevada, and Guam.

"It's an honor," is all Kimura could say, reluctant to brag or boast. Winners must be under 30 years of age and have owned their business for at least three years.

Gwen Yamamoto, the business banking manager with City Bank who nominated Kimura for the SBA award, said she knew as soon as she met Kimura that he would be successful in business.

"He has all the qualities everyone wants," she told the local newspaper, the Honol Bulletin. "He's very focused, goal-oriented, articulate, and mature. As soon as I go him, I knew he was the right candidate."

Kimura turned a one-time division of a large electrical contractor in Hawaii into the million dollar energy conservation business it is today. In 2001, ECH oversaw nea million in construction and energy upgrades, he noted.

"We are proud of our growth and are excited to offer energy services that continue provide Hawaii's businesses with an opportunity to reduce their overhead, increas savings, and improve their indoor working conditions," said Kimura.

SLOWLY BUT SURELY

Getting started was not easy.

- Breaking News
- Calendar of Events
- Training Track
- What's New

resources

- Advertiser Index
- Books
- Classifieds
- Editorial Archives
- Exclusive Industry Research
- HVACR Directory & Source Guide
- Industry Links
- Manufacturer Reports
- Product Gallery
- Regional Reports
- Career Center
- Learning Center

services

- Contact Us
- Editorial Contacts
- Advertising Contacts
- E-mail Newsletter
- eProduct Info
- How to Submit a Press Release to The NEWS
- Media Kit
- Subscription Information
- List Rental
- Reprint
- Card Deck

new products

Product Gallery

hvac directory

"I started the company as a division of a larger electrical contractor here in Hawaii, Kimura. "They were interested in adding more services to their existing business, t brought in to be the director of the new division. In this role we studied lighting, en management systems, UVC systems for hvac, efficient pumps, efficient motors, a replacements/retrofits.

"Because we were formed as a larger company focusing mostly on contracting, it difficult to begin to educate our customer base of the energy efficient side of things traditional contracting has been about value engineering projects and cutting costs Additionally, Hawaii is historically behind the curve as far as trends go and at that many businesses were not aware or as receptive to energy efficiency.

"Things were slow moving in 1995, but we continued to push forward and we conti grow."

In a matter of three years, ECH had performed and installed hundreds of lighting p the Big Island. These projects included the Ululani Professional Building, Puuhonu Professional Plaza, Hilo Lanes, Kona Professional Building, and Hilo International

By 1998, Kimura decided to split off from the electrical firm to become an indepen energy service company.

"We added a new name to our company, called Pacific Energy Services," he said. Energy Services is the division of Energy Conservation Hawaii where we provide engineering solutions. ECH, on the other hand, provides the project management, assistance, and field support to our projects. Combined, the companies provide tu energy efficient services for our customers."

With success on the Big Island, Kimura decided to move the company's head offic Honolulu, the center of business in Hawaii. A year later it opened a Maui operation ECH designed and implemented lighting projects for such Maui businesses as Na Parts; McDonald's of Hawaii-Kihei, Wailuku, and Kahului locations; and several la buildings.

A NATURAL

Energy conservation was just a natural in Kimura's eyes.

"For our energy conservation measures, we focus on air conditioning in a big way, "Because we're here in Hawaii, our ambient temperatures call for space cooling n round. Air conditioning and water heating in a condominium, apartment building, o can account for 40%, up to 65%, of a facility's gas and electricity utility cost.

"The chiller plant will normally have the largest motors in the facility, so with air conditioning at 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week requirement, any percentage gain in efficiency on this system can provide significant reductions in utility bills."

He said Hawaii's year round warm ambient conditions and high cost of synthetic natural gas (SNG) or propane, provide a great opportunity to take advantage of heat pumps, not for space cooling and heating, but as an efficient source of water heating.

Energy Conservation Hawaii president

Kimura (left) goes over a project with vi president Duane Ashimine.

“Air source heat pumps are providing COP of 2 to 3 year around,” he said. “Water source heat pumps, using waste heat from either the chilled-water return or condenser water system can provide c COPs over 4. The use of waste heat for hot water generation provides an addition in reduced cooling tower and chiller operation cost.

“It is the integration of multiple facility needs and the implementation of efficient technologies that has provided the utility cost reductions.”

Believe it or not, finding qualified workers has not been a problem for Kimura.

“Finding skilled workers in Hawaii isn’t difficult,” he said. “In fact, we have many ac to gaining good, qualified employees. We have the obvious tropical climate that pe enjoy and actually seek out, as well as a geographic advantage where Hawaii is a from the U.S. to Asia.

“Some of our engineers or consultants are actually Hawaii residents now, who visi vacation and enjoyed it so much they decided to make it home here. Our employe from administration, project managers, engineers, project engineers, sales people technicians.”

Sidebar: One Example — Arcadia Retirement Residence

By installing several technologies in the Arcadia Retirement Residence, Energy Conservation Hawaii (ECH) president Darren Kimura said it has help the Hawaiian retirement facility see a 33% reduction in electrical cost and a 75% reduction in ga consumption.

A feasibility study of the facility was conducted over a six-month period to identify conservation measures that could be implemented to reduce operating cost. The s identified the need to do the following:

- Replacement of a 400-ton centrifugal chiller with a 300-ton Trane CenTraVac c chiller with variable-speed drive.
- In new cooling towers, install premium efficient motors and variable-speed drive
- Installation of a Delta Controls energy management system to monitor and cont common area air conditioning and water heating equipment.
- Installation of a variable-primary flow chilled-water loop.
- Installation of premium efficient motors on all common area air-handling units.
- Replacement of synthetic natural gas-fired gas water heaters with a condenser source heat pump water heater.
- Retrofit of common area lighting to CFLs and T-8 lamps with electronic ballast.
- Replacement of two 15-hp constant-volume domestic water booster pumps with hp, multi-stage pumps with variable speed drives.
- Installation of a swimming pool heat pump water heater.

- Modulating control of outside air flow rates, based on indoor carbon dioxide lev
- Qualified the facility for over $30,000 in utility demand side management fundin

“A guaranteed savings contract for the installation, commissioning, and maintenan facility was completed,” said Kimura. “The installation was completed in April 2001 in the process of completing the first year’s summary, but to date we have exceed guarantee by 18%.”

— Mark Skaer

Posted on: 05/04/2002

The Air Conditioning, Heating & Refrigeration News