



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

News Release

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

NELSON B. BEFITEL, DIRECTOR
COLLEEN Y. LaCLAIR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
Phone: (808) 586-8844
Fax: (808) 586-9099

MR 2005 14

For Immediate Release: September 8, 2005

**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ISSUES
\$100,000 GRANT TO HAWAII INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

Strategic Partnership formed to anticipate and develop solution for the projected Labor Shortage in Hawaii's Booming Construction Industry.

Honolulu - The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) has issued a \$100,000 grant to the Hawaii Institute for Public Affairs (HIPA) to launch the Hawaii Jobs Initiative. The initiative will be a year-long, collaborative effort to anticipate the need for construction industry workers in the face of major growth in the building sector, and to develop strategies to effectively coordinate industry workforce supply and demand. The legislature appropriated funds for the project last year.

Hawaii's construction industry is expecting significant growth over the next ten years, driven by military construction, private development, and Hawaii's ongoing high demand for residential housing. Collectively, projects planned and underway will cost several billion dollars and require the addition of thousands of new workers to the industry's labor force. Joining DLIR and HIPA as co-conveners of the Initiative's Advisory Committee are the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii and the Pacific Resource Partnership.

"The Hawaii Jobs Initiative is a proactive effort to ensure that Hawaii's construction labor force is ready and able to meet our current and future construction needs," said Nelson Befitel, Director of the Department of Labor & Industrial Relations.

“This initiative continues the Lingle-Aiona Administration's commitment to work collaboratively with business, construction, training and labor organizations to aggressively meet our workforce needs,” Befitel added.

The Hawaii Jobs Initiative will generate up-to-date data on areas of possible labor shortages and bring together a broad representation of industry and community groups to develop viable solutions. “Having sound data and analysis and a community-based forum to make informed policy decisions on construction workforce issues is a significant component of this project,” said William M. Kaneko, President & CEO of HIPA, an independent nongovernmental public policy institute.

“The emphasis will be on actions that the industry and organizations that train workers are willing to undertake to ensure an adequate supply of skilled workers,” stated Kyle Chock, Executive Director of Pacific Resource Partnership. “We are very interested in seeing that Hawaii residents have opportunities to acquire the skills needed to move into jobs created by the industry’s growth,” Chock added.

James C. Tollefson, President & CEO of the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii stated, “Providing construction jobs for Hawaii residents is good for the community and good for the economy. We need to take advantage of Hawaii’s construction boom to provide living-wage jobs for Hawaii’s people.”

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For more information, contact:
James P. Hardway
Assistant to the Director
Phone: (808) 586-8845
Fax: (808) 586-9099
Email: jhardway@hawaii.gov