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PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

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Hooked on power?

Company aims to break the hold

Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - October 27, 2000 by [Heather Tang](#)

As oil prices nationwide and locally continue their ascent, Darren Kimura is convinced his new company's services will increase in value. Next month, Kimura will launch [Pacific Energy Services Co.](#), a firm designed to help Hawaii companies with new energy technologies -- building retrofits, conservation, energy management and alternative energy. It will also design and build energy-efficiency systems.

The new company will target large commercial properties such as towers in downtown, hotel properties, condominiums and large shopping centers. Its primary service will be evaluating energy use and suggesting ways to use it more efficiently.

Kimura is no stranger to "earth-friendly" technology. He's also president of the 6-year-old lighting retrofitting company Energy Conservation Hawaii. His duties there have taught him the nuances of convincing the public that saving energy is important.

When he first started that business on the Big Island, he had to spend hours selling a \$2,000 job. Now, things are different. People are more accepting and proactive about energy efficiency, so much so that Kimura is convinced of a new energy need. That's where Pacific Energy Services Co. comes in.

The future of Energy Conservation is limited by the nature of its business, he says.

"We're toward the end of mortality; it's a predatory business. You go in and do the energy retrofit, [then] most of our clients never see us again," Kimura says. "We have a lot of word-of-mouth customers but not very many repeat customers."

More energy service companies like Pacific Energy Services are needed on Maui and Oahu, says Brian Kealoha, customer account manager at Maui Electric Co.

"There aren't a lot of real active energy service companies on Maui and the ones that are here are pretty busy with construction work," Kealoha says. Part of his job at Maui Electric to promote long-term energy efficiency is linking customer needs with relevant vendors. "Anytime there are more options available, you get a better product, better choices and, hopefully, better pricing."

Energy service companies such as Johnson Controls Inc., Honeywell and Noresco also audit, design and build energy efficiency systems. Luckily for Kimura, these companies focus primarily on large-scale projects.

"Most of our customers are the federal government, local governments, universities, health-care providers -- usually large organizations," says Noresco Pacific Region Manager Steve Olsen. "There's a limited market for that; we're not competing in the same market."

In contrast, Pacific Energy Services will focus on smaller-scale projects in the cost range of \$250,000 to \$2 million, Kimura says.

"We're similar to energy service companies, but we'll go after private-sector work, buildings, hotels, malls," he says. "There are no competitors in that market, not yet, but there will be definitely later."

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