



COUNCIL FOR NATIVE HAWAIIAN ADVANCEMENT

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NATIVE HAWAIIAN, AMERICAN INDIAN & ALASKA NATIVE TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE EXPANDS TO WAIMANALO

Honolulu, HI – Seven new employees start work at a new Technology Center located in Waimanalo this month. The Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) and its enterprise company Hawaiian Homestead Technology expanded their operations adding 7 new jobs on Oahu, resulting in a total of 17 positions statewide in rural communities on 2 islands. CNHA joined a coalition of 9 American Indian and Alaska Native tribes in 2002 to create technology companies around the nation to convert maintenance manuals to high quality digital formats. Less than a year later, the first technology center opened in Anahola, Kauai, followed by the second technology center opening in Waimanalo a couple of months ago.

“CNHA incorporated Hawaiian Homestead Technology to create technology related, living-wage jobs directly inside Hawaiian Homestead communities throughout the state of Hawaii” said HHT President Ray Soon and Chairman of the Board of CNHA. “It’s extremely gratifying to be expanding and hiring staff at our second site in Waimanalo”.

HHT is an enterprise company wholly owned by CNHA, a nonprofit. As a result, 100% of any profits from HHT’s operations are directed back into the community development initiatives of the nonprofit. HHT’s primary technology niche is to convert into electronic form paper documents from corporate and government clients that need maintenance manuals or other documents digitized for storage or increased use in the field. Completed projects include the conversion of an engine manual for Delta Airlines as well as maintenance manuals for vehicles for the Army and Air Force. HHT is also capable of converting engineering/architectural diagrams and maps from paper into electronic format.

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Indian tribal partners are located across the United States and include among others, the Zuni Pueblo people of New Mexico, the Tlingit people from Alaska, the Choctaw from Oklahoma and the Arikara from North Dakota. A total of \$65 million in contracts have been awarded to the 10 members of the Native Hawaiian, American Indian and Alaska Native firms nationwide.

Soon elaborated, “Through our partnership with Indian nations from around the country and national industry leaders in the field of conversion software, HHT has been able to ramp up in a relatively short amount of time. Locally, we partner with community associations that want to create jobs inside their communities for their residents. The local support by private and public sector partners has been tremendous.”

American Savings Bank has been a key supporter, along with Bank of Hawaii, First Hawaiian Bank, and the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation. From the public sector, the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and Kauai Community College have provided training funds that enable HHT employees to increase computer skills needed to perform document conversion tasks that meet the high standards of HHT’s clients.

“We have challenged our employees to learn a technical trade quickly and excel in production quality. Our staff in Anahola went from little computer experience to the ability to work with complex SGML documents,” said Olin Lagon, HHT General Manager. Lagon added that “now, we are challenging our Waimanalo staff to quickly learn and excel at Computer Aided Drafting conversions. Like our Anahola launch, it will not be easy but we are confident of similar positive results as we have found so much raw talent in and around Hawaiian Home Lands.”

Employees are trained on the job for at least three months, from the very basic of computer skills to the complexity of Computer Aid Drafting techniques necessary to perform and deliver high quality products to our clients. Lagon trained the first team of employees at HHT’s Anahola site and will begin on-the-job training with the new Waimanalo team of 7 employees in the next couple of weeks.

For more information, please visit www.hhtech.net and www.hawaiiancouncil.org.

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