



For Immediate Release

September 21, 2011

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Maui Smart Grid Project Now Recruiting Volunteers

Project Goal is to Evaluate Consumer and Utility Smart Grid Technologies

Maui, Hawaii ----- The Maui Smart Grid Project is actively recruiting volunteers from the Maui Meadows neighborhood in South Kihei to participate in a pilot project that will help Hawaii reduce its dependence on imported oil.

Organizers are looking for up to 200 volunteers for this completely voluntary program. All of the project technologies will be provided and installed at no cost to participants.

Hawaii depends on imported oil for approximately 90 percent of its energy. The technologies that will be evaluated by the Maui Smart Grid Project are designed to give customers more control over their energy use, increase energy efficiency and allow greater integration of clean energy resources.

“Maui is the perfect location for this kind of smart grid research. Approximately 26 percent of the energy on its relatively small electrical grid comes from renewable resources,” said Dr. James Griffin, project director for the Hawaii Natural Energy Institute at the University of Hawaii, which is one of the project’s lead organizations.

Participants will have a smart meter installed in their home as well as access to a personalized, secure website displaying information on energy use measured by the new meter. They will also have the opportunity to try additional smart grid technologies in their home, such as an in-home energy use display and a smart thermostat. These technologies will provide project participants with more information on, and control over, how and when they use energy.

In addition to the home-based equipment, Maui Electric Company (MECO) will be evaluating a variety of smart grid applications such as community energy storage and an advanced computer system to monitor and manage delivery of electricity to customers.

“Improving each island’s electricity grid through new smart grid technologies is a key element of Hawaii’s landmark clean energy goals,” Griffin said. “Through the experiences of Maui residents in this project, we will learn valuable lessons about the best ways to modernize Hawaii’s electricity system.”

“When it comes to adding more clean energy to our stand-alone island grid, initiatives like the Maui Smart Grid Project are vital to successfully balancing service reliability and as-available sources of power like solar and wind,” said Maui Electric Company’s President Ed Reinhardt. “The success of the Maui Smart Grid Project will give our customers greater control of energy use in the home and help MECO manage demand during peak usage times, reduce outages, and enable quicker restoration of power.”

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Maui Smart Grid Project

"The first step in reducing energy use is to understand how our choices affect energy use," said Mayor Alan M. Arakawa. "Volunteers in this project will see how much electricity is used when they turn on their computer, television, or lights. The Smart Grid project has great potential."

The project team will be holding a community meeting to provide further details on the project and answer questions from community members. The date for this meeting has not been scheduled yet but is planned for some time in the next couple of months.

The U.S. Department of Energy is funding this initiative as part of a nationwide set of demonstration projects. HNEI and MECO are the lead organizations on the project. Other project partners include the Hawaiian Electric Company (HECO), Silver Spring Networks, GE Energy, County of Maui, Maui Economic Development Board (MEDB), Sustainable Living Institute of Maui at the University of Hawaii-Maui College, HNU Energy, and SRA International.

To learn more about the Maui Smart Grid Project and to sign up, please visit: www.mauismartgrid.com or call 808-270-6803.

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