

KIUC Continues to “Go Green”

Līhu‘e, Kaua‘i, HI – 12/06/2016 - A significant drop in fossil fuel usage is an important milestone reached by Kaua‘i Island Utility Cooperative this year.

“We estimate we’ll be using 10 million fewer gallons of diesel in 2016 compared to eight years ago,” said KIUC’s President and Chief Executive Officer, David Bissell. The fossil fuel reduction is roughly one-third of KIUC’s total fuel volume from 2008. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, that amount is equivalent to the greenhouse gas emissions from 18,772 passenger vehicles driven for an entire year.

Bissell credits the accomplishment to a significant increase in the cooperative’s renewable energy portfolio: from 8.3 percent of total generation in 2008 to roughly 36 percent today. “We’ve made tremendous progress on our goal of 50 percent renewables by 2030,” he added.

The bulk of the additional renewable generation has come in the form of solar, primarily from large-scale systems developed in Anahola, Kōloa, and at Port Allen. Earlier this year, KIUC began purchasing power from Green Energy, which operates a 7-megawatt biomass plant just outside Līhu‘e.

“On some individual days this year, we’ve actually generated 97 percent of our energy from renewable sources, with 77 percent coming from solar,” said Bissell. He added that, on the average clear day, with solar at or close to full potential, all but one of KIUC’s diesel generators can shut down.

“It has taken a lot of teamwork to get us this far,” said KIUC Board Chair, Jan TenBruggencate. “That team includes our dedicated workforce, the KIUC Board of Directors, government officials at the county, state and federal levels, and key private sector partners.”

Also notable is a drop in the price of energy for KIUC members. The average price per kilowatt hour for KIUC members is down 18 percent in 2016 when compared to 2008. Bissell notes that the decrease in fuel consumption, coupled with the increase in renewable generation, has helped to stabilize and place downward pressure on rates.

“Our bottom-line goal is to protect our natural resources, while providing reliable power at a stable and fair price for our members. If we can continue to do that, then I think we’re on the right track,” said Bissell.

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KIUC’s Koloa Solar facility
generates roughly 12 megawatts
of energy annually