



Help more schools get Sun Power



HELCO's **Sun Power for Schools** program continues to bring the sun's energy to public schools around the state. The next school to participate will receive a photovoltaic (PV) lighting system for its campus, demonstrating another practical application of solar technology. Previous installations at **Hilo** and **Kealakehe High Schools** were 1 kilowatt roof top PV systems. The teachers from the participating schools are currently developing renewable energy lesson plans for their students in science and other related classes.

For a great way to see how photovoltaics work, check out HELCO's educational display at the Hilo High School library lanai. The display features information about the Sun Power for Schools program, how a solar electric system works, details about the system at Hilo High, and interactive data monitors, which display current information about the solar electric system's performance and sunshine availability.



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To further support the educational objectives of the Sun Power program, HELCO has worked with Suzanne Ito, Kaumana School teacher and Project BITS (Business Internship for Teachers) intern to develop an elementary school teacher's guide, *Adventures in Renewable Energy Education on the Big Island*. The guide will be available to teachers soon.

Customer contributions, together with HELCO's \$20,000 contribution, have helped pay for the Big Island PV systems, but you can help more public schools benefit. It's easy. Become a Sun Power Partner by contributing as little as \$1 a month more with your electric bill. Just **fill out the postage-paid sign up card** included with this month's electric bill. For more information, call **969-0137**.



Join HELCO at the **12th Annual Earth Day Fair** on Thursday, **April 20** at the University of Hawaii at Hilo and Hawaii Community College upper campus. We'll be there from 12 noon to 4 p.m. with displays, hands-on activities, prizes and information on HELCO's energy efficiency programs. The fair is sponsored by the Associated Students of the University of Hawaii-Hawaii Community College, Students Activities Council and the University of Hawaii at Hilo Student Association. See you there!



Do you qualify for \$3,816?

If you earned less than \$30,580 in 1999, you may be eligible for a tax refund. The **Earned Income Credit (EIC)** allows working families to get as much as \$3,816 from Uncle Sam. The amount of the credit depends on the number of dependent children in your household and your taxable income. Families earning less than \$30,580 in 1999 and with more than one dependent child may be eligible for a credit of \$3,816. Households earning less than \$10,200 may still qualify for a \$347 credit, even if they have no children. Filing for the EIC is simple. You must file a 1999 federal tax return and attach a completed Schedule EIC. If you are eligible for the credit, you either owe less in taxes or you get a bigger refund. For more information on the Earned Income Credit, see your 1999 federal tax package, or call the IRS's Tele-Tax information service at 1-800-829-4477 and ask to listen to topic #601. Or check out the IRS website at www.irs.gov/tax_edu/teletax/tc601.html.



POWER TIPS



Some charcoal grills aren't so bad, after all

A few months ago, *Consumer Lines* ran an article, "The Electric Backyard," which extolled the environmental virtues of using electric appliances and tools. We noted that electric grills can use 91% less energy than charcoal grills. A customer emailed this reminder: While electric grills are more energy-efficient than grills using conventional coal briquettes, they're not as environmentally friendly as using charcoal made from keawe or other biomass. In those cases, the trees grown to produce the keawe absorb the carbon dioxide generated from burning the charcoal. Bottom line: Using keawe or other biomass charcoal results in no additional carbon dioxide in the environment.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Great Gazpacho

- 1 cucumber, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped green onions
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups tomato or tomato-vegetable juice
- 1 can (14-1/2 oz.) diced tomatoes, including liquid
- 3 tablespoons chopped cilantro (Chinese parsley)
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon hot pepper sauce (optional)



Combine all ingredients. Put 1/2 of mixture into a food processor or blender; blend to desired consistency. Combine blended mixture with chunky mixture. Chill for several hours. Soup can be garnished with croutons or crumbled baked tortilla chips. If soup is chunky, it can be ladled over a plateful of pasta. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

