



Leading the way

Renewable energy for Hawaii

October is Energy Month in Hawaii. What better time to focus on our state's energy track record?



A MECO crew installs a new photovoltaic security lighting system on the dormitory at Lahainaluna High School. The PV lighting system was paid for through MECO's Sun Power for Schools program.

Did you know...

• About 7% of the electricity sold to customers of MECO and our affiliated companies, HECO and HELCO, comes from renewable sources like the sun, wind, geothermal and biomass. This compares to the nationwide average of only 2%.*

* excludes large hydro dam projects not feasible in Hawaii

• Hawaii outperforms the nation in supporting President Clinton's Million Solar Roofs Initiative. To date, over 80% of the Initiative's installed solar systems nationwide are in Hawaii, thanks to MECO, HECO and HELCO's solar programs.

• We sponsor the largest solar water heating program in the country. Since the program began in 1996, MECO, HECO and HELCO have paid out over \$12 million in rebates to help residents pay for over 12,000 solar water heating systems. Over the next five years, our program goal is to double the number of solar systems installed statewide, adding over 12,000 MORE.

Together these efforts are helping reduce Hawaii's use of oil. Our state does face some challenges in getting even more energy from renewable sources (see "What does it take to get more?"), but at MECO we're committed to moving Hawaii in the right direction.

What can you do?

Here's how you can help Hawaii use more renewable energy:

• **Get your hot water from the sun!** Install a solar water heating system under our program. Not only will you use solar power, you can save up to 90% on your water heating costs. Take advantage of our program's rebates and the 35% state tax credit. For information on our rebate program, call **toll-free 1-888-MECO-SUN (632-6786)**.

• **Help more schools get Sun Power!** Sign up to support our *Sun Power for Schools* program. Thanks to contributions from us and our customers, Baldwin, Molokai and Lahainaluna high schools now have solar electric systems operating on their campuses. Your contributions will help more schools participate. To sign up or get more information, call **871-8461**.



What does it take to get more?

At MECO, we're committed to helping customers use more renewable energy that's reliable and reasonably priced. Not all renewable sources meet this test. Here are some of the challenges we face:

24/7 availability. Except for geothermal and biomass, many renewable sources aren't available on demand. "As available" sources like solar and wind still need back-up generation or energy storage systems to ensure power is available when customers need it — 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Variable power. The variability of wind can affect the quality of power produced. Today's sensitive electronic equipment can be damaged or disrupted by inconsistent power quality.

Higher cost and lots of land. The cost to generate electricity from some renewable sources is still more expensive than from fossil fuel sources like oil. Also, large scale renewable energy facilities may need a lot of acreage — hard to come by in our land scarce state.

Environmental effects. Some renewable energy sources have environmental impacts of their own. One example: Large wind turbines can have visual impacts and potentially harm birds.

Though there are currently some drawbacks to using renewable energy sources, there are also many benefits. MECO continues contribute to national research efforts to improve renewable technology and to use renewable energy sources whenever possible.



Homeless center to *save* with solar

Residents of Maui's Ka Hale A Ke Ola (KHAO) Homeless Resource Center will be saving on their electric bill thanks to a new solar water heating system. The system will be paid for with an estimated \$27,000 MECO rebate and funding from a Maui County community development block grant - which MECO and KHAO collaborated on to obtain.

The solar system is expected to reduce the Center's energy use by 40%, meaning direct savings to the Center's transitional residents. As part of KHAO's program to prepare homeless residents to move back into the community, residents pay their own electricity costs. Seventy five percent of the solar savings will go to the residents.

KHAO provides housing, health care, job training and education opportunities for approximately 900 emergency and 420 transitional residents annually. At MECO, we're proud to partner with KHAO in improving the lives of Maui's residents through energy efficiency programs. For more information, call 871-8461.



What is "IRP Cost Recovery" and why is it increasing?

There's a line item on your electric bill labeled "IRP Cost Recovery." Ever wonder what that is? IRP stands for "Integrated Resource Planning," MECO's long-term energy planning process. Working with outside experts and with an advisory group of representatives from government, businesses, and the community, MECO follows a very detailed process to determine Maui county's long-term energy needs and the best way to meet those needs at a reasonable cost to you, our customers.

The "IRP Cost Recovery" surcharge is used to recover the costs of this planning process and related energy efficiency programs. The costs must be reviewed and approved by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). Recently, the PUC approved IRP general planning costs for the years 1995-1999. As a result, you will see an increase in the "IRP Cost Recovery" line on your bill. For example, a residential customer on Maui using 600 kilowatt-hours will see an increase of \$1.80 a month; Molokai and Lanai customers will see increases of \$1.48 and \$1.97 a month, respectively.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Vegetarian Lasagna

- 1 block (20 oz.) firm tofu
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 jar (32 oz.) prepared spaghetti sauce
- 1 cup water
- 1 lb. frozen cut leaf spinach, thawed and drained
- 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning, optional
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 pkg. (12 oz.) lasagna noodles
- 4 cups shredded low-fat cheese (Monterey/cheddar blend)
- 3/4 cup low-fat ricotta cheese



Place tofu in a cheese cloth; squeeze to remove excess liquid. In a saucepan, heat 3 tablespoons of the olive oil and brown tofu. Add garlic and onion and cook until onion is clear. Add spaghetti sauce, water, spinach, and seasonings; simmer for 10 minutes. Oil bottom and sides of a 13 x 9-inch pan with the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil. Layer uncooked noodles, sauce mixture, and shredded cheese. Repeat layers; spread ricotta cheese over top layer. Cover and bake in electric oven at 350°F for 45 minutes. Uncover and bake for 15 more minutes. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

