

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Community Champion Award to Hawaiian Electric Company**

HONOLULU, HI – The Native Hawaiian Economic Alliance (NHEA), a community nonprofit gave its Community Champion award to Hawaiian Electric Company (HECO). Every year, NHEA recognizes an individual or firm that makes vital contributions to the economic self-sufficiency of Native Hawaiians.



“HECO has been an incredible partner on the development of a solar program for working families in Hawaiian communities across the state,” said Li Garcia Ballard, a homesteader from Kalawahine and NHEA Founder. “There was no hesitation when our team visited HECO to ask for help, wanting to design a sustainable community program that would bring economic value to every day, working families. The result is the Homestead Energy Program that our nonprofit and other community groups will be coordinating this year and hopefully for many years to come.”

On August 27, 2009, during the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Native Hawaiian Convention, NHEA presented the Community Champion Award and Robbie Alm, Executive Vice President accepted the award on behalf of HECO. “The solar program is going to change the economic reality of thousands of families. We could not be more pleased to recognize HECO for its partnership and enthusiasm to help us reach families to reduce energy costs through the installation of solar water heating systems,” Ballard said. “We aim to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, it just makes good economic sense.”



The Native Hawaiian Economic Alliance (NHEA) was established in 2002, as a private nonprofit dedicated to the economic development of Native Hawaiians. It was founded by locally owned small business owners and community leaders to promote economic self sufficiency. NHEA is managed by the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) in Honolulu, Hawaii, and each year recognizes Community Champions and administers internships and fellowships to encourage the next generation to engage in commerce and social responsibility.

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