

Honolulu Seawater Air Conditioning project signs federal building as customer

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(Pacific Business News) The long-planned \$250 million Honolulu Seawater Air Conditioning project, which would cool Downtown Honolulu buildings with deep ocean water, has signed its first federal government customer with the Prince Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana'ole Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse agreeing to use the seawater cooling system.

The 930,000-square-foot federal government office building and courthouse located in Downtown Honolulu will become the first federal government building in the nation to use seawater for cooling purposes.

“We are excited to announce this agreement with the U.S. General Services Administration,” Eric Masutomi, president and CEO of Honolulu Seawater Air Conditioning, said in a statement. “We are particularly grateful for the support and assistance we’ve received from Hawaii’s congressional delegation in this effort, including the offices of the late U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye, who early on recognized the important leadership role that the federal government can play in bringing this technology to Downtown Honolulu.”

The incorporation of seawater air conditioning into the \$121 million modernization and renovation already under way will help the GSA to meet its goal of reducing the building’s energy consumption by 30 percent and attaining a silver designation under the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED program, officials said.

Masutomi noted that the success of the project’s downtown district cooling system will ultimately be dependent on gaining a sufficient number of Downtown Honolulu commercial, residential, and governmental users to support the privately-financed development project.

“We see this agreement with the GSA as a strong validation of the HSWAC system, and look forward to other government entities — both State and County — eventually taking similar advantage of this opportunity,” he said. “We hope, as well, that this announcement will also spur a host of other private office and residential properties to recognize and capitalize on the advantages of the district Cooling concept.”

The system will cool water to provide air-conditioning to buildings in downtown Honolulu by pumping deep ocean water through a pipeline more than four miles offshore to a cooling station in Kakaako.

The projects reducing electricity usage is the equivalent of a 30-megawatt wind farm or a 42-megawatt solar energy farm, the developer said.

The project is anticipated to create more than 900 construction jobs. In addition to the federal building,

Hawaiian Electric Co., Finance Factors Ltd., First Hawaiian Center, One Waterfront Towers, and Remington College have also signed on.

The project is scheduled to commence construction in late 2014 and to begin providing chilled water services to customers in 2016.

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