

CNHA Hawaiian Convention opening day

At center, Robin Danner, president and CEO of the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement, takes the stage along with CNHA staff for the opening oli. - Photo: Lisa Asato

CNHA Hawaiian Convention opening day

Ka Wai Ola

The Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement's eighth annual Native Hawaiian Convention kicked off yesterday at the Hawai'i Convention Center with an oli workshop, trade show, information booths, art exhibit and speeches by CNHA president and CEO Robin Danner, U.S. Congressman Neil Abercrombie and Lt. Gov. Duke Aiona. The three-day convention wraps tomorrow, Aug. 27, and includes speeches by U.S. Sens. Daniel Inouye and Daniel Akaka and a visit from Kal Penn, who will attend as a representative of President Obama. – Photos by Lisa Asato

Kumu Leina'ala Kalama Heine led the opening oli. - Photo: Lisa Asato

CNHA director Puni Kekauoha introduces CNHA board members, including OHA Trustee Robert Lindsey, in foreground, and, at the opposite end of the stage, Alvin Parker, the board's chairman. - Photo: Lisa Asato

CNHA's Rosalee Puaoi hands a presidential survey to Mapuana Waipa of Keaukaha Community Association. The survey asks attendees, "If you could ask President Obama directly to do three things to impact the condition in Native Hawaiian communities, what would they be?" CNHA president Robin Danner said the priorities will be tallied and shared with the president, whose representative Kal Penn will attend the convention tomorrow, Aug. 27. - Photo: Lisa Asato

Waim nalo resident Kamakana Aquino, at center, was named the undergraduate recipient of the inaugural Next Generation Leader Award, which came with \$500 from the University of Hawai'i at M noa's Hawai'inui kea School of Hawaiian Knowledge and CNHA. For three years, Kamakana, a Hawaiian Studies major, has also received a OHA Post-High Scholarship of \$2,000 per year. Joining Aquino, from left, are: Hawai'inui kea dean Maenette Benham, Aquino's mother Marbeth Aquino, his grandmother Lucy Akau, his father Rogelio Aquino and UH professor Lilikal Kame'eleihiwa. - Photo: Lisa Asato

Natalie Kehau Kong, at center, was the graduate recipient of the new Next Generation Leader Award, which was presented by Maenette Benham, at left, dean of the Hawai'inui kea School of Hawaiian Knowledge at UH-M noa. Joining them, from left, are Kelli-Ann Frank Voloch, M.D., who is a pediatrician and assistant professor at the John A. Burns School of Medicine's Department of Native Hawaiian Health, and Kong's sister Helene and mother Francine. The award came with \$500, a joint gift from CNHA and Hawai'inui kea. Kong, who will be graduating in May 2010 from the Burns medical school at UH, was featured in the December 2007 issue of Ka Wai Ola as a participant in the Imi Ho'ola program, which helps students gain entry into the medical school. - Photo: Lisa Asato

Charley and Elizabeth Gumapac of Charley's Native Enterprise were among the vendors selling their wares at the convention's trade show and exhibit area. Most of the necklaces displayed are made of wiliwili, which Charley says are

no longer available because of gall wasps. - Photo: Lisa Asato

A Maoli Art exhibit made its debut at the convention, displaying and selling the works of about 16 Native Hawaiian artists. The drum pictured, by artist Pat Pine, sold for \$6,200 on the first day. The exhibit runs through 2 p.m. Aug. 27. Thirty percent of all sales made at the exhibit will go to the Hawaiian Way Fund, which supports community-based organizations and initiatives. - Photo: Lisa Asato

Keynote speaker U.S. Congressman Neil Abercrombie updated the lunchtime audience on the Akaka Bill, saying lawmakers are working with the U.S. Department of Justice to craft a bill that will withstand the inevitable legal challenges that will come "as sure as I'm standing here today." - Photo: Lisa Asato

Jim Gray, principal chief of the Osage Nation, presents a Pendleton blanket to Congressman Neil Abercrombie. - Photo: Lisa Asato

Jim Gray of the Osage Nation presents a Pendleton blanket to William Ornellas, who accepted on behalf of CNHA board chairman Alvin Parker. - Photo: Lisa Asato

Addressing the plenary session "Hawaiian Institutions Working for Community," Lt. Gov. Duke Aiona urged Hawaiians to become "politically active and responsible" — taking active roles in voting, healthy living and contributing to society. "Responsibility and accountability — that is how we, as a people, can preserve our culture, protect our resource and empower our community to succeed," Aiona said. - Photo: Lisa Asato

James "Little Man" Akiona Jr. accepted the 2009 Native Hawaiian Advocate Award from the Native Hawaiian Legal Corp. on behalf of his father, James Akiona Sr., who was among a group who had fought and won a legal battle with the state Department of Hawaiian Home Lands over pastoral lands. Akiona, who is in his 80s was hospitalized with a torn artery and unable to make yesterday's ceremony. But his wife, Nyna Akiona, pictured, and about one dozen members of the Akiona family flew in from Kona for the ceremony. NHLC litigation director Alan Murakami said afterward that the family, along with 10 other plaintiffs, is engaged in a new lawsuit against DHHL over water, which he said should be provided in adequate supplies under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act. - Photo: Lisa Asato

James Akiona Sr. - Courtesy photo

Mahealani Wendt, who will retire as executive director of the Native Hawaiian Legal Corp. in December after three decades with the organization, was awarded a 2009 Native Hawaiian Advocate Award from the organization. With her are NHLC staff attorney Moses Haia and former staff attorney Paul Nahoia Lucas, who is now with Kamehameha Schools. - Photo: Lisa Asato

Stanton Enomoto, OHA's Special Assistant to the Administrator, updates the gathering on OHA's new six-year strategic plan. - Photo: Lisa Asato