

HPMA Fall 2017 WPMA News Article - final

As I write this, our annual Hawaii legislative session is about to come to a close. It's a 60 'working' days session starting in January and running through May. Our legislators are heavily weighted to the Democrat side of politics, with 70 of the 76 representatives and senators being Democrat. Needless to say, we are always a bit nervous when they are in session!

This year there has really been only one bill of significant concern. That bill calls for the complete elimination of fossil fuel use in ground transportation by 2050; it also calls for a 5% reduction in ground transportation fossil fuel use by 2025. Early versions of the bill called for the state to implement a plan to reach these goals, but that was changed when we and others pointed out that you can't implement a plan that you don't have, that may not be technologically achievable, and you have no idea of the costs of implementation. Now the bill (which looks like it will pass) calls for studies, goal setting, and report, but we are likely to keep having to work to bring some balance to the process.

Hawaii has the distinction of having the second lowest unemployment rate in the country at 2.4%, which is causing some serious challenges in hiring employees for our convenience stores, particularly in the Honolulu area. We are having to increase wages and benefits, but that is not enough in many cases, as we are competing with the unionized hotels and other retail and QSRs for people. We're looking at more creative recruiting methods and broadening our target markets. Of course, better retention of existing employees is best, as turnover is costly and inefficient. We are concentrating on better training, more flexible schedules, and better leadership at store level to help keep those great employees we already have. And I think that we have to figure out how to work with fewer employees in our stores. This probably involves more and better use of technology, more efficient scheduling of employees and job tasks, and hiring and/or training better employees. None of it is easy.

One final reminder about the annual HPMA golf tournament coming up on ***Thursday, October 5, 2017:*** the tournament venue will be the King Kamehameha Golf Club, Maui's only private golf club that features a clubhouse designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. The course sits at 750 feet above sea level with views of the Pacific Ocean and Haleakalā "house of the sun," a dormant volcano. All WPMA members are cordially invited to join us.