

# Six Maui businesses have shot at APEC showcase

HONOLULU – Six Maui companies were selected as finalists in the APEC 2011 Hawaii Business Innovation Showcase and are in the running to have an opportunity to promote their companies at venues and events surrounding the international economic conference in November.

Thirty-five Hawaii businesses were selected as finalists in the showcase, and each will receive recognition of excellence awards. A winner from each county and one overall winner

will be selected by a panel of government and business groups on Sept. 6 and receive an opportunity to appear at APEC 2011 Hawaii programs and venues, an announcement said.

“The showcase provides an unprecedented opportunity for businesses registered in the state to showcase innovation in products and services to an international audience . . . and will recognize leading-edge innovation and achievement in Hawaii’s business communi-

ty,” a news release about the program said.

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, whose mission is sustainable economic growth and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region, will hold a “Leaders Week” gathering Nov. 7 to 13 in Honolulu. The meeting is expected to attract 20,000 attendees including business and governmental leaders from the 21 member nations, a news release said.

The six Maui-based finalists are:

- Functional Nutriment LLC, which produces Apocaps cancer therapeutics using plant-based phytochemicals.

- Grower’s Secret Inc., which is increasing food safety through organic agricultural supplements.

- HNU-Energy, which custom engineers renewable energy technology through research and development.

- Noni Biotech International, which claims on its website to be “the world’s largest supplier of Hawaiian noni” and

manufactures, markets and distributes noni products, including juice, powder, puree and concentrate.

- Pacific Biodiesel Inc. and its ‘Aina Mo Project that uses biodiesel by-products to preserve taro cultivation.

- Westec Environmental Solutions, which works on air pollution and greenhouse gas control.

The criteria for selection included the company being attractive to markets outside Hawaii, particularly APEC

member nations, and having developed unique, leading- or cutting-edge innovations in product development, technology, marketing or delivery; positively impacted the state business environment; growth and investment potential; and adopted environmentally sound programs and practices.

The showcase is a product of the APEC Hawaii Host Committee, in partnership with the chambers of commerce on Maui, Kauai, the Big Island and Honolulu.

# Bail reduced in robbery and police pursuit

By LILA FUJIMOTO  
Staff Writer

WAILUKU — Bail was reduced to \$50,000 for a 19-year-old Kula man charged with robbing a man in Kihei early Monday and with reckless endangering during the police pursuit that followed.

An Aug. 23 arraignment was set in 2nd Circuit Court for Mauricio Estrada Romero, who waived his right to a preliminary hearing that had been scheduled for Wednesday in Waituku District Court

Estrada Romero was arrested after a Kihei man reported being robbed of his backpack at about 2 a.m. on South Kihei Road near Hua Place.

"Before this happened, the defendant and victim were strangers," said Deputy Prosecutor Cody Minatodani. "This was totally unprovoked."

She said Estrada Romero lured the victim by asking for a cigarette. After the victim gave Estrada Romero a cigarette, "suddenly this defendant attacks

She said the victim has a black eye and required seven stitches to his chin.

Two other men also were involved in the robbery, police said.

After Kihei patrol officers responded to the robbery and tried to stop the truck that the suspects fled in, a patrol car had to swerve to avoid being hit by the truck on South Kihei Road, police said. A

police chase was called off, but officers later returned to the area, locating the truck and arresting Estrada Romero.

Ball asked for a reduction in the \$84,000 bail that had been set for Estrada Romero.

Ball provided four letters, including one from a retired Maui police detective, vouching for the defendant.

Ball suggested that Estrada Romero was a "getaway driver involved in the taking of the backpack."

But Minatodani said: "The evidence goes more toward him taking part in the attack rather than sitting in the car as a get-

Judge Mimi DesJardins said that although the letters described someone well-respected at work and by neighbors, "the facts of this case cause the court some concern with him being a danger to the community."

She cited the unprovoked nature of the attack and noted that Estrada Romero moved to the state 10 years ago from Costa Rica.

If he posts bail and is released, Estrada Romero was ordered to have no contact with the victim

from the victim's residence. Estrada Romero also was ordered not to consume alcohol or illegal drugs.

He is charged with second-degree robbery, second-degree reckless endangering, six counts of theft of a credit card, eight counts of unauthorized possession of confidential personal information, fourth-degree theft and resisting an order to stop a motor vehicle.

■ *Lila Fujimoto can be reached*