



CHRISTINA FAILMA PBN

Malia Johnson, left, owner of Sedona, and Nalani Holliday, owner of Red Pineapple, recycle cardboard boxes at Ward Centre.

Merchants and malls find that recycling makes business sense

ENVIRONMENT

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PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

Nalani Holliday takes a different approach to recycling at Red Pineapple, her gift boutique in the Ward Centre shopping complex.

Instead of carrying cardboard to the center's recycling area, she hits up other store owners for their boxes and packing materials, which she reuses to ship her wares to customers.

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The New Balance store's shoe boxes are perfect for her small orders. And Sedona, which carries a lot of breakables, contributes those Styrofoam "peanuts."

Hawaii businesses are taking a number of approaches to recycling and reusing materials they otherwise would throw away.

Most restaurants and bars already have recycling systems in place, especially for bottles and cans, which are worth 5 cents each under the state's Hi-5 bottle redemption law.

But shopping centers and office tenants, which tend to use more paper and cardboard, also have gotten into the act. Ward Centre has a central area where tenants can take cardboard boxes, as does the Koko Marina Center in Hawaii Kai, which also collects glass.

"We're like any other center — we pay to have people come to pick up our cardboard and glass and plastics," said Koko Marina General Manager Suzie Setzler. "What we've been looking at is something that could be out in the common area for customers."

To that end, the shopping center recently bought a large blue recycling bin that Setzler plans to place in a central location, for customers' glass and plastic beverage bottles.

Oahu Community Recycling, which initially focused on residential neighborhoods, has started servicing more small businesses and shopping centers since the City and County of Honolulu expanded

its residential curb-side recycling, said President Fung Yang.

The company offers full-service recycling of cans, bottles, cardboard, newspaper, paper, computers and ink cartridges, he said.

By full service, he means his staff will pick up and take the materials away, even if the office is on the top floor of a high-rise.

Consumers often make money off of their recyclables but Yang said businesses generally have to pay for recycling services.

"The biggest challenge for us for business recycling is they have to get over the mentality that you have free recycling," Yang said. "They think recycling should be free."

Oahu Community Recycling charges by the frequency of pickups and by the number of bins, so the cost is nominal for a small business with one or two bins that get picked up once or twice a week.

But the state's bottle law allows some groups to profit from the refunds for recycled bottles and cans.

At the University of Hawaii, the group that runs Sustainable Saunders, a pilot project to make Saunders Hall as sustainable as possible, collects about \$85 per week from the bottles, cans and newspapers picked up by Honolulu Recovery Systems.

The group uses the money for campus celebrations such as one this week — launching the first program to use biodegradable containers made from sugar cane and cornstarch from local company Styrophobia in the Gateway Hall cafeteria. The university also is working with Hagedone Printing Co. on a campuswide pickup of all types of paper, including glossy.

Meanwhile, Reuse Honolulu takes Holliday's practice of reusing existing material to an even larger scale. The nonprofit company deconstructs buildings slated for demolition, removing wood, metal and other materials that can be reused, and sells them from its Kakaako lumber yard, said Executive Director Selina Tarantino.