

INSIDE HAWAII'S PUSH TO BUILD A SEMICONDUCTOR WORKFORCE

Written By Jenny Brown, Industry Relations Coordinator, The Institute of Electrical and Engineers (IEEE) Hawaii Section



[PHOTO 1: Interns Kelsey Ikeda, a post-baccalaureate psychology major with a background in chemistry based at Kapi'olani CC, and Brianna Tabayoyong, a current UH Mānoa electrical engineering student, test and characterize a self-fabricated OLED device, the same display technology found in many smartphones and TV screens, in UH Mānoa's cleanroom, watching it light up.]

Microchips may seem like Silicon Valley's domain, but they're inside everything from smartphones to household electronics. As AI drives demand for greater computing power, the need for chips continues to grow, making semiconductor workforce development an economic priority and Hawaii is beginning to carve out a role.

In June 2026, eleven University of Hawaii (UH) students suited up in the cleanroom for the first time. Six weeks later, they were running processes that power modern chip technology—patterning, deposition, and characterization—skills at the core of the U.S. push to rebuild domestic manufacturing and design capacity.

CLEANROOM HAWAII INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (CHIP)

The Cleanroom Hawaii Internship Program (CHIP), a six-week intensive program coordinated by UH Mānoa's Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, recently wrapped up its second cohort. The program pairs hands-on semiconductor fabrication training with a \$4,000 stipend, roughly \$25 an hour based on its part-time schedule.

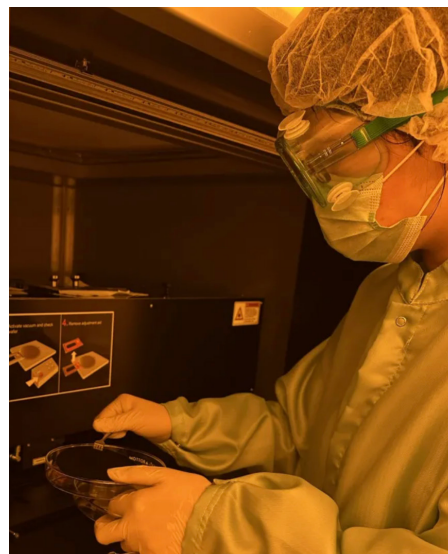
"Major impact requires broad collaboration. Thanks to foundational federal investment, this initiative brings together the nation's premier engineering institutions. We're honored to play a role in building a stronger, more resilient domestic semiconductor ecosystem." — Dr.

Boris Murmann, Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering.

CHIP is supported by the California-Pacific-Northwest AI Hardware Microelectronics Commons Hub, a Department of Defense initiative under the CHIPS and Science Act. It also draws on partnerships with IEEE, industry professionals, and UH faculty to connect interns to the broader workforce.

"The future of engineering depends on creating opportunities where students can engage with emerging technologies early. Programs like CHIP connect classroom learning with hands-on experience and industry exposure, priming our students for the workforce of the future and equipping them with the skills needed to succeed." — Kim Perez Hults, Director of Marketing and Outreach Relations

INSIDE THE CLEANROOM



[PHOTO 3: Intern Sophia Kihei, a mathematics major based at Kapi'olani CC, prepares a silicon wafer for photolithography using her own custom-designed pattern in UH Mānoa's cleanroom.]

"You read about photolithography in an engineering textbook, sure. But it's different when you're the one in the bunny suit, watching your own design appear on something you fabricated with your own hands. I had that moment during CHIP, and I watched my classmates have it too." — Kelsey Ikeda, 2026 CHIP Intern.



[PHOTO 2: 2026 CHIP interns and staff in front of Holmes Hall, UH Mānoa.]



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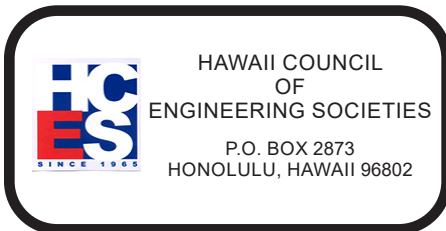
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

New IEEE UH Mānoa Robotics and Automation Society (RAS) Student Branch Chapter Established

The IEEE Hawaii Section is excited to announce the formation of the IEEE University of Hawaii at Mānoa Robotics and Automation Society (RAS) Student Branch Chapter. This new student organization provides an exciting opportunity for students interested in robotics, automation, intelligent systems, and emerging technologies to connect with peers, develop technical skills, and participate in professional and educational activities. The chapter aims to foster innovation, collaboration, and leadership while supporting the next generation of engineers and researchers in robotics and automation. Students, faculty, and community members interested in learning more or getting involved are encouraged to reach out to Chair Byron Soriano or Faculty Advisor Dr. Daniel Drew for additional information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

IEEE Hawaii September ExCom

Date: 01 Sep 2026

Time: 05:30 PM HST to 06:30 PM HST

Location: Webex

Event Link: <https://events.vtools.ieee.org/m/562811>

IEEE Hawaii YP September ExCom

Date: 09 Sep 2026

Time: 05:30 PM HST to 06:30 PM HST

Location: MS Teams

Event Link: <https://events.vtools.ieee.org/m/563224>

IEEE Hawaii WIE Financial Literacy Workshop with WestPac

Understanding your finances is an important part of building the future you want—both personally and professionally.

Join IEEE Hawaii Women in Engineering (WIE) and WestPac for an interactive evening focused on financial literacy, retirement planning, and making informed decisions about your money.

Whether you're a student preparing for your first job, a young professional building your career, or an experienced professional looking to strengthen your financial knowledge, this workshop will provide practical information you can use throughout your career and everyday life.

Topics will include 401(k) retirement plans, understanding your retirement benefits, financial planning strategies, and ways to make informed decisions as you work toward your financial goals.

Come ready to learn, ask questions, meet other professionals, and build your financial confidence in a welcoming environment.

What to expect:

- Understanding 401(k) plans and retirement savings
- Practical financial literacy and planning insights
- Strategies for working toward your short- and long-term financial goals
- An opportunity to ask financial planning questions
- Networking with IEEE members and local professionals
- A relaxed evening at The Pacific Club

You don't need to be a financial expert—just bring your questions and curiosity!

Date: 15 Sep 2026

Time: 05:30 PM HST to 07:30 PM HST

Location: 1451 Queen Emma St, Honolulu, Hawaii, United States 96813

Event Link: <https://events.vtools.ieee.org/m/572738>

Network with the technical community and learn about IEEE in Hawaii

Friday October 9th, 2026
5:30PM-8:30PM
Dave & Buster's Ala Moana

events.vtools.ieee.org/m/571600

General Meeting/IEEE Day Celebration

Join the IEEE Hawaii Section in celebrating IEEE Day!

We are hosting an event at Dave & Buster's Ala Moana. Date and time is October 9th, 2026 from 5:30PM to 8:30PM.

Attendance is free, registration is required. Registration is capped at 54 attendees. Please only register if you plan to attend the event.

Food and beverage will be provided. For questions, please email Calvin Lee at calvinlee@ieee.org.

The event will open with a brief presentation about IEEE followed by time to socialize and mingle. Whether you are curious about opportunities to volunteer or are looking for a relaxing and fun time, please consider attending!

Date: 09 Oct 2026

Time: 05:30 PM HST to 08:30 PM HST

Location: Dave and Busters, Ala Moana Shopping Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, United States 96814



IEEE Hawaii and ASME Hawaii tour Tileco Manufacturing Plant together

Event Link: <https://events.vtools.ieee.org/m/571600>

PAST EVENTS

IEEE Hawaii Joins ASME Hawaii for Tileco Manufacturing Plant Tour

On August 14, ASME Hawaii invited IEEE Hawaii to tour the Tileco Inc. manufacturing plant in Kapolei. We got an exciting, behind-the-scenes look at how concrete masonry products are produced. During the plant tour, we walked through the process of aggregate crushing, sand washing and block manufacturing. Please see ASME Hawaii's section of Wiliki for more info.

Mahalo to Tileco for hosting us and ASME Hawaii for inviting us!

IEEE Hawaii WIE Girls' Night Out: Piece by Piece

On July 24, 2026, the IEEE Hawaii Women in Engineering (WIE) Affinity Group hosted IEEE WIE Girls' Night Out: Piece by Piece at The HALL by Beer Lab HI in Pearlridge, Aiea. The event brought together women engineers, engineering students, Young Professionals, IEEE volunteers, and prospective members for an evening focused on networking, collaboration, and community building.

Designed to foster meaningful connections in a welcoming and relaxed environment, the evening featured a variety of interactive activities. Participants collaborated on Studio Ghibli-themed and cat-themed 1,000-piece puzzles, created personalized DIY beaded keychains, and enjoyed networking games including Jenga, Sabobitage: The Boba Card Game, You Laugh, You're Out, and Jumbo Playing Cards. These activities encouraged teamwork, conversation, and new friendships among participants from different engineering disciplines and career stages.

Throughout the evening, attendees shared refreshments while exchanging experiences, discussing career paths, and learning more about opportunities within IEEE Hawaii's Women in Engineering. The event strengthened the local WIE community by promoting collaboration, mentorship, inclusion, and professional growth, while also introducing prospective members to the many benefits of IEEE WIE. The evening

served as a reminder that strong professional networks are often built one conversation—and one connection—at a time.

IEEE JOB LISTINGS

The following job is currently listed on the IEEE Job Board.

Platform Engineer (Site Reliability & Infrastructure) - LinkedIn AI

Want to post a job? r6.ieee.org/hawaii/post-a-job

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

- [2026 Annual Conference on Magnetism and Magnetic Materials \(MMM\)](#). 2 - 6 November 2026 | Hawaii, USA | Event

Format: In-person

- [2026 International Conference on Field Programmable Technology \(ICFPT\)](#). 7 - 10 December 2026 | Hawaii, USA | Event Format: In-person
- [2026 65th IEEE Conference on Decision and Control \(CDC\)](#). 15 - 18 December 2026 | Hawaii, USA | Event Format: In-person
- [2027 IEEE 40th International Conference on Micro Electro Mechanical Systems \(MEMS\)](#). 17 - 21 January 2027 | Hawaii, USA | Event Format: In-person
- [2027 Pan Pacific Strategic Electronics Symposium \(Pan Pacific\)](#). 25 - 28 January 2027 | Hawaii, USA | Event Format: In-person
- [2027 International Conference on Computing, Networking and Communications \(ICNC\)](#). 15 - 18 February 2027 | Hawaii, USA | Event Format: In-person
- [IEEE INFOCOM 2027 – IEEE Conference on Computer Communications](#). 24 - 27 May 2027 | Hawaii, USA | Event Format: In-person

For more information about upcoming conferences, visit bit.ly/ieeehiconferences

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IEEE Hawaii WIE Girls' Night Out

CONT'D FROM PAGE 1, "INSIDE HAWAII'S PUSH TO BUILD A SEMICONDUCTOR WORKFORCE"

Reflecting CHIP's commitment to reaching students at UH's community colleges as well as its four-year campuses, many interns in this cohort came through Kapi'olani, Leeward, and Honolulu Community Colleges, alongside a handful of students from UH Mānoa. Students from any campus in the UH system are encouraged to apply, and no electrical engineering background is required. Majors included mathematics, psychology, computer science, chemistry, and engineering, with participants ranging from first-year undergraduates to graduate researchers, each bringing a different path into the field.

Through labs and faculty lectures, interns learned the full device fabrication workflow: photolithography, thin-film deposition, etching, dicing, packaging, materials characterization, and device testing. They worked across conventional semiconductor processes and emerging organic electronics, including OLED fabrication. Along the way, they gained a firsthand understanding of how a device moves from design to fabrication and testing.

"Students trained on industry-standard tools, most notably the Heidelberg MLA 150, while developing technical communication skills by writing standard operating procedures (SOPs) for their devices." — Kailer Okura, Cleanroom Lab Manager

Outside the cleanroom, interns visited Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, Oceanit, Nalu Scientific, and research laboratories across UH—including facilities in astronomy and physics—to see how engineering skills are applied across industry, government, and academic research.

BUILDING A FUTURE IN HAWAII

In an anonymous survey, this year's interns were asked whether they saw their futures in Hawaii and what factors might shape that decision:

"What's keeping me here is family. My fiancé and I have decided we want to keep Hawaii home."

"I just hope I can find work anywhere that's fulfilling and helps people."

"I want to stay in Hawaii for family and friends and quality of life, and also career. I understand the pressure to go to the mainland to make money, but I know just as well that the path to growing these areas of study that resonate well in Hawaii must start here."

Five of the eleven interns arrived undecided on a career direction. The other six had interests in aerospace, biotechnology, or software, but little exposure to semiconductors or electrical engineering. Six weeks in the cleanroom shifted that picture: the majority found themselves drawn to microfabrication and semiconductor technology, while others gravitated toward power systems and hardware, specific branches of electrical engineering they hadn't considered before. A few alumni are already carrying that momentum into federal jobs at Pearl Harbor, private-sector roles, and graduate school.

EXTENDING HAWAII'S APPROACH BEYOND THE ISLANDS

Kailer Okura and Jenny Brown presented CHIP at UGIM, the University-Government-Industry Microelectronics Symposium at Stanford University, sharing Hawaii's approach with a national audience and exchanging ideas



[PHOTO 4: Left to right — University of Hawaii representatives Professor Jeffrey Weldon, Kailer Okura, Jenny Brown, Andrea Murillo, and Professor Boris Murmann at UGIM at Stanford University in Stanford, California.]

on lab operations and student engagement.

The longer-term goal is to ensure those opportunities take root in Hawaii.

"The CHIP program provides students in Hawaii with the education and hands-on training needed to pursue careers in the increasingly important U.S. semiconductor industry. The hope is that CHIP will inspire students and help build a highly skilled workforce that can support and sustain a thriving semiconductor industry in Hawaii." — Dr. Jeffrey Weldon, Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering

Learn more at sites.google.com/hawaii.edu/chip/home



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As a member of the Board of the Council of Engineering and Scientific Specialty Boards (CESB), AACE International offers a range of certification levels from technician to professional to expertise level including CCT, CCP, CEP, EVP and PSP Certification Programs.

The local section, AACE Hawaii, was originally established in 1973. It achieved both the Platinum and Gold Award for seven consecutive years 2014-2023. Our local area continues to achieve CCP, CEP, CST and PSP certifications. For more information, please visit <http://web.aacei.org/certification> and our local website www.aacehawaii.com.



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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

**Speaker: William Chapman, DPhil,
University of Hawaii**

Professor of Architecture, Director, Historic
Preservation Program

**Topic: Exploring London, Oxford and
London Museums**

William Chapman has recently returned to
Hawaii from his sabbatical from the School of
Architecture. He was past Dean of the School of
Architecture and now is Director of the Historical
Preservation Program. His talk will center on his
recent trip to London, his return to his Oxford
Alma mater and his visit to London's Museums,
the British Museum, Greenwich and others.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 PROGRAM: TBA



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Nominations for the Engineer of the Year
and Young Engineer of the Year candidates
are being accepted. Nomination forms are
available by contacting Pac Chung or Kurt

Kunimune of HSPE. The awardees will be
presented at the Engineer's Week Banquet in
February of 2027. Please contact Pac Chung or
Kurt Kunimune at pchung@bowersandkubota.com
or kkunimune@bowersandkubota.com
for nomination forms or with any questions.
Nominations will be due by Friday, December
18, 2026. Mahalo!



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PREVIOUS BOD MEETING

August 12, 2026

UPCOMING EVENTS

- SEAHO Scholarship Application Deadline –
September 4, 2026. Contact info@seaoh.org
for more information.
- SEAHO 2026 Annual Convention –
September 25-26, 2026, Aulani. Contact
Grant at grant@mkellc.com for more
information.
- Simpson Strong-Tie Seminar – October 6
and 7, 2026
- AISC Seminar – October 8, 2026, 8am at
Dave & Buster's Ala Moana
- PBX Hawaii – October 21, 2026, Neil
Blaisdell Center
- SEAHO Scholarship Golf Tournament –
Rescheduled to December 2026. Details to
come.

MEMBERSHIP

The following new membership applications
were accepted:

- Ehsan Nikbakht Jarghouyeh, Associate –
KAI Hawaii
- Heidi Naumov, Student
- Kaiya Endo, Student

NEXT BOD MEETING

September 8, 2026. For information, contact
SEAHO President Eric Tomishima at eric@iestructural.com.



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ITE HAWAII SEPTEMBER SECTION MEETING

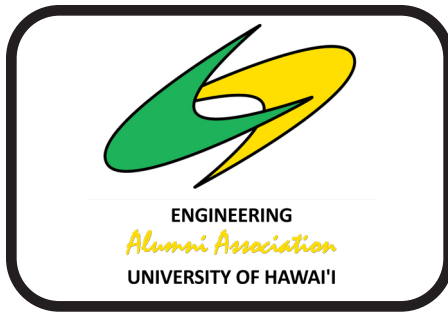
Wyatt Brown from HDR's Bend, Oregon
office presented on the impacts of increasing
vehicle hood heights affecting driver's ability to
detect pedestrians at intersections. The paper
was awarded the Outstanding Technical Paper
Award and was presented at this year's ITE
Western District Annual Meeting. Thank you to
all those who attended and thank you to Wyatt
for presenting!

ITE WESTERN DISTRICT ANNUAL MEETING AWARDS

Congratulations to our very own Cathy Leong
for winning the 2026 ITE Western District
Lifetime Achievement Award! The Western
District Lifetime Achievement Award is the
District's highest recognition of professional
accomplishment and outstanding services in
the interest of Western District. It is designed
to honor members of Western District who, as
active or retired members in good standing of
the ITE Western District, have accomplished
significant achievements over a period of at
least 20 years.

Congratulations to HDOT for winning the
2026 Western District Transportation Project of
the Year! HDOT's award-winning presentation,
presented by Robin Shishido and Colby Stanton
at the 2026 ITE Western District Conference,
covered proposed traffic management plans
during tsunami warnings for all islands, with
the intention to reduce evacuation times and
improve safety during tsunami events.

If you would like to be added to our mailing
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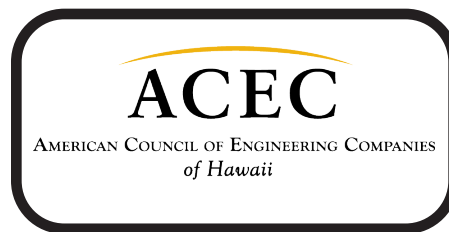
SAVE THE DATE

The Engineering Alumni Association of the University of Hawaii (EAAUH) will be holding its 16th Annual Holmescoming on Monday, October 19, 2026 from 5:00 - 8:30 PM at Stan Sheriff Center, UH Mānoa. More details and registration info coming soon.

Join our mailing list to be notified when registration is live. <https://forms.gle/eEkGrmVRzzU3MVMG8>



ACEC Hawaii will have a booth this year at PBX Hawaii! Come find us!



ACEC Hawaii

Website: www.acechawaii.org

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SAVE THE DATE: AIA -ACECH-GCA FERGUSON JOINT EVENT ON 9/10

Mark your calendars! Join us for the next AIA - ACECH - GCA Pau Hana, hosted by Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery, for an evening of networking with professionals from across Hawaii's AEC community.

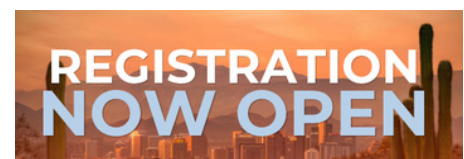
Date: September 10, 2026

Time: 5:00pm - 8:30pm

Location: Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery

925 Kokea St, Honolulu, HI 96817

Stay tuned for registration and additional event details at <https://acechawaii.org/aia-acech-gca-ferguson-joint-event/>



REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR ACEC 2026 FALL CONFERENCE

ACEC members, mark your calendars! The 2026 ACEC Fall Conference is coming to Phoenix, Arizona, October 25–28. Connect with engineering professionals from across the country, gain fresh insights on the issues shaping our industry, and bring valuable ideas and connections back to Hawaii's engineering community.

Register now at <https://www.acec.org/education-events/events/fall-conference/>

VISIT ACEC HAWAII'S BOOTH AT PBX HAWAII ON OCTOBER 21, 2026 AT BLAISDELL CENTER!

ACECH will be at this year's PBX Hawaii as an Industry Partner!

Be sure to purchase your Early-Bird tickets at pbxhawaii.com and stop by the ACECH booth to talk story with some of our Board members. Learn more about what ACECH has been working on, what's ahead for the new term, and how we're continuing to support Hawaii's engineering community.

We look forward to seeing you at PBX Hawaii!



As part of this year's ACECH 2026 Engineering Excellence Awards Silent Auction, members had the opportunity to bid on a spot in the Public vs. Private School Golf Outing at Oahu Country Club. The two teams recently faced off on the course for some friendly competition.



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ASME-HAWAII NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Our next meeting is tentatively scheduled for either late September or early October. Please contact us for any updates.

ASME & IEEE JOINT TOUR - TILECO, INC. CONCRETE BLOCK PLANT

On Friday, August 14, 2026, the ASME Hawaii Section and IEEE Hawaii members and guests of the local engineering community toured the Tileco, Inc. concrete block plant in Campell Industrial Park. This event provided the members with a glimpse into how this durable, non-combustible and structurally sound unit is made and how the many architectural features are used by designers in their projects. The 10-member tour lasted several hours and ended around noon with lunch graciously provided by the staff.

The tour began around 10:00am in the conference room where guests watched a presentation about the history of the company beginning in 1967, when its founder, Richard Sakamoto started the company; how son, Dennis Sakamoto, took over as President took the small office building, storage yard and plant, expanded and grew it to over 14 acres throughout the years, and how the various production areas are modernized by precision and automation in today's block manufacturing plant. Today, Leanne Ogata is President and COO, making her the third generation to take over the five-decade old family business.

Following the presentation, the plant safety officer provided a safety brief to the guests. Attendees wore long pants, covered shoes while PPE such as hard hats, vests, eye and hearing protection was provided by the staff. After the brief, the group proceeded outside to the yard and started the tour.

With head worn microphones and speakers on the vest, Leanne Ogata – President & COO, and Dawn Tauanuu – Production & Technical Representative, narrated the tour while safety personnel made sure the group stayed together while coordinating traffic around the plant. Plant systems toured include the aggregate crushing machines where material is sourced from Pacific Aggregate's Nanakuli quarry; the sand washing area where water is reused and not wasted; Block Plant #3, the largest plant where the aggregate is mixed with -cement, water, color and additives, and placed into standard and custom molds where they are vibration compacted into the block shapes; the block grinding area and cooling water are used to remove 1/32 of an inch from the block, creating



Group photo L-R: Nick, Derek, Kyle, Brianne, Dawn, Keil, Mihir, Lisa, Abel, Todd, Raymond, Kay, and Leanne.

a smooth surface and exposing the beautiful aggregate used in architectural design features; and finally the quality control area where blocks are inspected and palletized. The tour didn't include visiting the propane kilns which cure the blocks for several hours, while moisture content control is automated to precise specifications. In short, Tileco has the production capability and capacity to manufacture standard and custom block for Hawaii's construction industry. Other items provided include masonry accessories, anti-graffiti and water-repellent sealants. Lastly, Tileco products meet LEED® requirements for sustainable materials. The tour ended with lunch and a question-and-answer session and further discussions on sustainability and LEED®.

ASME Hawaii and IEEE Hawaii would like to thank Leanne Ogata, Dawn Tauanuu, Kay Kaneshiro, Lisa Amaral and staff for the educational guided tour and wish you the best as you approach six decades of providing quality CMU block to Hawaii's construction industry.



Safety Brief



Processed aggregate pile



Recycled Block



Sand washing



Block Grinding

MORE PHOTOS CONT'D ON NEXT PAGE



Block molds



Color pigmentation area



Vibration and compaction hydraulic



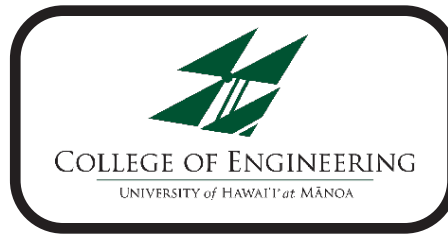
Blocks ready for kiln



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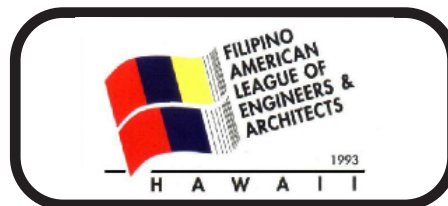
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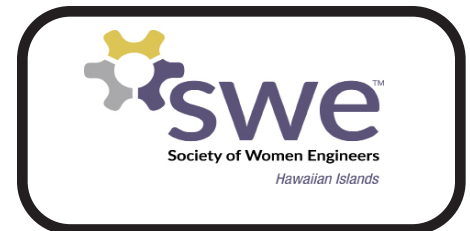
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EXPLORE UPCOMING EVENTS ON OUR CALENDAR BELOW.



SEPTEMBER 2026



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 IEEE Hawaii September ExCom	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 SEAOH BOD Meeting	9 IEEE Hawaii YP September ExCom	10 ACECH-AIA-GCA Ferguson Pau Hana	11 eaH Meeting #1	12
13	14	15 IEEE Hawaii WIE Financial Literacy Workshop with WestPac	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 eaH Meeting #2 SEAOH 2026 ANNUAL CONVENTION	26
27	28	29	30			

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