

UH News

Hawaii Natural Energy Institute to Celebrate First Commercial-Scale Flash Carbonization Unit

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HONOLULU – UH Manoa’s Hawai‘i Natural Energy Institute (HNEI) will hold an open house to celebrate the assembly of the world’s first commercial-scale Flash Carbonization unit on the Manoa campus on Tuesday, July 20, at 1:30 p.m. at the concrete pad located across from the UH Energy House. Flash Carbonization is an innovative technology for production of charcoal from various biomass sources such as wood, agricultural byproducts and green wastes.

The open house will feature a presentation by Dr. Michael J. Antal, Jr., UH Manoa Coral Industries Professor of Renewable Energy Resources, who will discuss how Flash Carbonization was discovered in his lab and what research remains to be accomplished before commercial production of charcoal can commence in Hawai‘i.

“After the Flash Carbonization unit becomes fully operational, it will be capable of handling all of the university’s green wastes and turning them into charcoal, a salable product,” said Antal. “Not only will these waste materials no longer require the expense of being hauled to a dump site, but a valuable commodity will be produced.”

HNEI has applied for a U.S. patent for commercial production, which is currently pending. The first exclusive license for charcoal production through Flash Carbonization was signed last year through the UH Office of Technology Transfer and Economic Development.

Established by the legislature in 1974 to undertake and coordinate research and development of the island’s renewable energy resources, HNEI has become an acknowledged international leader in the energy field, and has broadened its expertise to encompass the development of technologies that will make it possible to tap resources like the ocean, food and minerals for energy.

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