

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Akaku: Maui County Community Television is proud to present to the Department this DCCA Annual Report for FY08. This is a year marked by significant progress in the area of genuine access to community media for our diverse Maui Nui public. We have grown, expanded and improved our most treasured sole source community asset in almost every area and are at the threshold of re-establishing Akaku as one of the best fully local independent community television organizations in the United States.

Our success is based on implementation of PEG as a “best practice” integrated model. What this means is that our roots in the community are deep and wide. For more than fifteen years, we have provided our people meaningful participatory access to government, education and each other by giving them the skills, the forum and the confidence to exercise their fundamental right to free expression. The operative word here is, “access” – non-discriminatory access to the tools, the skills and ideas that nurture a diverse and vibrant electronic democracy created by and for the people of Maui Nui.

This year, in the area of Communications Tools we have expanded our facilities, our workspace and upgraded much of our equipment. We opened a new media lab next door to our main offices, outfitted our studio with state of the art HD capable cameras and rebuilt our control room. We added a production van with microwave capability, upgraded our equipment at County Council, on Molokai and in our education department. We added new cameras to our facility for producer check out, made significant upgrades in editing software, playback and DVD duplication, and are in the midst of installing a sophisticated video server system that will increase efficiency and workflow. We have built out our low power community radio station which is Maui’s only all Hawaiian music radio and have made great strides in website development including video streaming of our channels now in beta test.

In the area of Communications Skills and Training, our education department numbers are up by more than fifty percent compared to the previous year. By expanding our media lab space for the public and improving our curricula and education staff, our education initiatives have really taken off. In addition to youth camps and outreach to rural areas like Hana, Molokai and Lanai we have initiated a series of Producer Nights and Media Salons which encourage members of our community to gather in our video lounge to listen to experts, exchange ideas, learn new techniques and increase their media literacy IQ.

Our Programming is also vastly improved with more and more residents dropping off video for air on a variety of topics. In large part due to our outreach and training, we are seeing a marked rise in the quality as well as quantity of submissions.

We have initiated a regularly scheduled daily community-based short form news and public affairs video magazine which is attracting good public participation and we

continue to improve our on air look with better production values, strong graphics, interstitials and catchy Channel ID 's

We are making more frequent use of live television for special events, press conferences and announcements, opened up our studios for walk in open mike opportunities and have integrated new media such as "skype" and "ichat" into broadcasts. One such broadcast included a chat with a Maui legislator (Integrated Government Access Model) live from Boston, and another with a well-known journalist live from Washington, D.C. to our studio full of youth correspondents.

We have also conducted several successful live streaming events on our website which has become increasingly more robust. We streamed gavel-to-gavel court hearings concerning the Hawaii Super ferry case, which attracted hundreds, if not thousands of viewers across the state garnering critical acclaim for Akaku in the press. Portions of this coverage were re-broadcast by mainstream Honolulu media outlets. This simultaneous multicast included live cable casting on our Akaku channels, live video streaming on our website with live blogging and live low power radio broadcast on Maui.

We continue to develop our new media capability with concepts like Video On Demand and multi channel video streaming in beta test. This is an area where we would appreciate DCCA regulatory assistance in encouraging franchise holder Time Warner Cable to be more cooperative in supplying reliable guaranteed bandwidth and access to fiber transmission at reasonable or no cost. This area will require regulatory scrutiny and review as the franchise renewal process moves forward and/or if there is a transfer of ownership by the current cable operator.

In the area of outreach, we have been very aggressive in bringing people together to participate in our Akaku ohana as well as use our station, cameras, editing equipment and educational offerings to participate more fully in the public life of our community.

We have developed strong and enduring partnerships with teachers and schools in remote, underserved communities, embarked on projects with the Maui Economic Development Board, Native Hawaiians, our revered kupuna, non-profits, civic groups, youth organizations, Maui Drug Court and many other individuals and groups of all stripes and sizes.

We have conducted educational workshops in far flung areas of our County like Hana and Lanai, and reached out to under-represented communities like prisoners, homeless and people trying to come back from substance abuse. We have received support from the Hawaii People 's Fund to help jump start A Free Speech Hawaii Coalition, begun a meaningful dialogue and idea sharing with Hawaii 's three other PEG Access entities, and successfully engaged hundreds of citizens to participate meaningfully in public forums.

In addition, we have ongoing hands on materials and activities on our website (akaku.org) that are designed to engage and inform, issue press releases and

informational emails, and publish a quarterly newsletter, "REEL AKAKU" which we mail to our constituents.

Our efforts have not gone unnoticed as we often receive positive feedback from the Maui public in the form of accolades, letters to the editor, or donations of money, equipment or volunteer service. As a matter of fact, Akaku recently received kudos in the Maui Press for "continuing to provide Maui with a solid, dynamic media alternative"

The biggest negative to report in FY08 does not originate at Akaku or in Maui Nui but has its source in the unwise Request for Proposal (RFP) process that continues to move forward in Oahu under the auspices of the State Procurement Office and the DCCA. Not only is this thoroughly discredited process without precedent anywhere in the United States, it has been significantly disruptive of Akaku's long standing mission to Empower all the voices of Maui Nui through Access to Media.

Akaku has no intention of departing from that mission now or anytime soon and we welcome the Department's guidance and assistance in helping us to continue to achieve it to the absolute best of our abilities. Please enjoy the report.

Very Truly Yours,

Jay April
President and CEO
Akaku: Maui County Community Television