More than 15 minutes of fame

At least four dozen people in the local food-service industry have turned reality TV appearances into fame — if not fortune — for their restaurants, food trucks and bakeries. They tell us how they got their opportunities, what they did with them and what life has been like since. Coverage starts on Page 14.

From top, Tushar and Ana Dubey with Hokuani Bake Shop; celebrity chef Alan Wong; and the Shrimp Shack, which is owned by Irene Theofanis.
Mark Glick’s mission: 
A clean-energy future

From his offices near the Hawaii State Art Museum, State Energy Office Administrator Mark Glick is leading the state’s effort to clean up its energy act by relying less on fossil fuels. He says we’re on track to meet the goal of 70 percent renewable energy by 2030. **SEE STORY ON PAGE 28**  

Photo by Tina Yuen
Less than two years into the top job at the Hawaii State Energy Office, Mark Glick is confident that Hawaii is well on its way to meeting its clean-energy goals.

Those goals call for the state to get 70 percent of its electricity from renewable energy by 2030 — 40 percent from locally generated sources and 30 percent from energy conservation.

The next big benchmarks under the 2008 Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative come in 2015, when the state is expected to generate 15 percent of its electricity from renewable sources and 15 percent from conservation.

Glick’s latest projections have the state at 16.4 percent for efficiency and 13.7 percent for renewables.

“We believe that there are a number of things we have to do to reach our goals,” Glick told PBN in a wide-ranging interview. “We don’t want to reach a brick wall in renewable-energy development.”

One of the state’s major projects, the planned $1 billion undersea cable that would pipe electricity from Maui and the Big Island to energy-starved Oahu, is about to get more clarity — the state Public Utilities Commission is expected to release guidelines on the development soon.

“State policy on this is clear,” Glick said. “We believe that an Oahu-Maui grid tie is a crucial element to stabilize and reduce rates and create a larger, more robust grid to accommodate the greatest amount of renewable-energy penetration.”

The original plan was to pipe energy from Molokai and Lanai in a 400-megawatt “Big Wind” project. But Molokai’s 200-megawatt wind farm possibilities are now dead and Glick no longer feels that the 200 megawatts of energy from Lanai is an essential component of the state’s clean-energy road map.

He said, however, that making power plants more efficient is an essential part of reaching the state’s clean-energy goals. He said a more cost-efficient substitute for low-sulfur fuel oil is needed in addition to the right mix of a modern grid and storage system to balance frequency and limit disruptions.

“We need to execute what’s on the table and not lose our focus,” he said.

Earlier this month, Hawaiian Electric Co. took a big step in that direction by announcing that it would shut down its Downtown Honolulu oil-fired power plant as well as others on Oahu, Maui and the Big Island as part of its plan to meet future electricity needs.

“The utility has taken a long time to provide details on how this will occur,” Glick said. “It is important that a clear strategy emerges that supports the state’s policies for more-efficient power plants and modernization of the grid. We are looking for those details and haven’t had a chance to fully absorb what has been submitted, but we certainly will be commenting on what we think on HECO’s plans.”

HECO also said that it plans to convert or replace generating units, which 200-megawatt wind farm possibilities are now dead and Glick no longer feels that the 200 megawatts of energy from Lanai is an essential component of the state’s clean-energy road map.
have not been deactivated, to use more cost-effective, cleaner fuels, including renewable biomass or biodiesel and liquefied natural gas.

Glick believes that liquefied natural gas could be an effective complement to the renewable-energy program. He noted that the PUC is looking at how LNG could be integrated into the system.

The State Energy Office has a work force of 36 employees and an annual budget of $5.6 million with the potential for several million dollars more through grants and other sources. But it took a big hit when the state Legislature failed to provide it with additional funding this past legislative session. Senate Bill 17 raised the barrel tax from 15 cents to 27.5 cents for every barrel of petroleum that is imported to Hawaii.

That was disappointing,” Glick said.

He said the Energy Office’s current budget will allow it to meet minimum needs, but it can’t do as much in terms of assisting in the deployment of high-impact solutions and making greener investments in attracting what it calls “impact solutions” and making greener infrastructure development to create a real economic transformation in the state and county buildings through additional energy savings performance contracting with the private sector. The other, called Green Energy Market Securitization, or GEMS, is intended to help Hawaii homeowners install even more solar photovoltaic energy through either $100 million in state bond financing or through payments on a utility bill called “on-bill financing.”

“We will continue to focus on online permitting, investor/developer tools, and pursue innovative energy system development through proof of concept center and provide technical assistance on performance contracting,” Glick said.

The state announced two major initiatives in June. One aims to more than double the energy efficiency in state and county buildings through additional energy savings performance contracting with the private sector. The other, called Green Energy Market Securitization, or GEMS, is intended to help Hawaii homeowners install even more solar photovoltaic energy through either $100 million in state bond financing or through payments on a utility bill called “on-bill financing.”

“We will continue to challenge ourselves not only in green financing or performance contracting, but in other areas such as grid modernization and infrastructure development to create a real economic transformation in Hawaii,” Glick said.

Other local energy stakeholders such as Jeff Mikulina, executive director of the Blue Planet Foundation, say the state is currently in a transition period when it comes to looking at its energy future and that Glick plays an extremely key role.

“He’s attracted a lot of great talent to that office,” Mikulina said. “He has built up that staff and made it a very effective office.”

Mikulina pointed out that a key recent hire has been Traci Ho Kim, who is heading the GEMS program.

State Sen. Mike Gabbard, D-Kapolei-Makakilo-Ewa, chairman of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment, who introduced Senate Bill 17, told PBN that, given that he wasn’t able to convince his colleagues to direct more of the barrel tax to energy and food security this session, he respects how Glick has not thrown up his hands and put the brakes on the State Energy Office’s efforts.

“Instead, he’s taking a positive attitude to continue forging ahead to meet our goals,” Gabbard told PBN in an email. “I was also impressed with the great efforts he put into collaborating with us at the Legislature to establish our Green Infrastructure Financing law, which is quickly becoming the envy of the nation. It was also good to see Mark leading the charge recently at the Clinton Global Initiative Conference in Chicago where he represented the state in announcing our state’s commitment to more than double the value of our energy-savings performance contracts.”

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