

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Janis Wong, media relations
The Kohala Center
jwong@kohalacenter.org
direct: 808-325-1114, office: 808-887-6411

The Kohala Center receives USDA Rural Cooperative Development Grant

KAMUELA, Hawai‘i—November 1, 2010—The Kohala Center recently received \$222,555 from the USDA Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program to create jobs and help rural businesses.

The Kohala Center is an independent, not-for-profit, community-based center for research, conservation, and education. With this grant funding, The Kohala Center intends to establish Lualima: The Hawai‘i Rural Cooperative Development Center to support prospective or fledgling cooperative ventures on the Islands of Hawai‘i, Lana‘i, Maui, Moloka‘i, and ‘Oahu.

“Through this Rural Cooperative Grant, USDA Rural Development is enabling The Kohala Center to expand its capacity to support rural cooperatives that help expand businesses, retain or create new jobs, and increase economic growth in the communities throughout our Hawaiian Islands,” announced Chris J. Kanazawa, director of the USDA Rural Development Hawai‘i State Office. “This grant to The Kohala Center is a part of USDA’s latest award announcement of \$8.3 million in Rural Cooperative Development Grants to assist with improving economic conditions in rural areas across the nation, by developing new cooperatives and improving the operations of existing cooperatives,” said Kanazawa.

According to the National Cooperative Business Association, the nation’s 30,000 cooperatives account for more than \$650 billion in revenue and more than two million jobs. Through its Rural Development mission area, USDA administers and manages more than 60 housing, business and community infrastructure and facility programs through a network of 6,100 employees located in the nation’s capital and at 500 state and local offices. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers, and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America.

The Ulupono Initiative contributed \$25,000 as a partial match to the \$222,555 grant from USDA.

Ulupono partner Kyle Datta said the organization is honored to partner with the USDA and The Kohala Center in supporting the development of rural cooperatives across the state. “We believe that the economic well-being of our small farmers is critical to build a sustainable agricultural system in the state,” Datta said.

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Formed by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar and his wife Pam, the Ulupono Initiative is a social investment firm dedicated to improving the quality of life for Hawai‘i’s residents through sustainability. The organization invests in local businesses and philanthropic organizations focused on producing more local food and more renewable energy and on reducing waste. Rooted in the belief that a healthy environment and a healthy economy go hand in hand, the Ulupono Initiative invests in innovative Hawai‘i-based organizations in order to catalyze economic and social change.

Ulupono has previously worked with The Kohala Center to support the Hawai‘i Island School Garden Network. This partnership provided direct financial support to 14 school gardens, which serve 1,591 students and produce more than 14,000 pounds of food each year.