



## Industry Focus

### Making Buildings More Energy Efficient

There are many ways to accomplish the state's goals of becoming energy independent. One of the developments that would be interesting to take a closer look at is the process through which buildings are becoming more energy efficient. There are certain requirements for a building to become green. The Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) certification, an independently operated certification system, developed by the U.S. Green Building Council, provides the framework needed for practical and measurable green building design, construction, operations and maintenance. While there is an increased interest in making buildings greener, according to **Alvin Yoshimori** of GYA Design in Maui, it is very expensive to maintain. Many home owners cannot afford this expense, which is most likely why the majority of LEED-certified projects in Hawai'i are commercial buildings.



*The Hawai'i Preparatory Academy (HPA) Energy Lab in Kamuela, Hawai'i Island, was the first school in Hawai'i to receive Platinum level LEED certification.*

*Image source: Matthew Millman Photography*

The majority of LEED-certified buildings in the state of Hawai'i are on O'ahu (a total of 35<sup>1</sup>), including the Punahou School Omidyar K-1 Neighborhood Project and the Pearl Harbor Child Development Center. The Big Island follows with a total of 9 buildings, the most well-known being the Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park Visitor Emergency Operations Center. All locations mentioned qualify as Platinum, the highest LEED certification. Maui on the other hand, has a total of three structures and Kaua'i only two. This perhaps is an indication that there is a need for more green buildings on neighboring islands.

For those interested in working in this field, there are a number of different occupations involved in the process of making buildings more green. LEED accreditation is very important in order to be a part of today's competitive professional environment. As **Karen Shishido** of Trinity Management Group told us, these professionals consult with design teams in architect or design firms and with other sustainability consultants in order to make sure each building meets green standards.

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<sup>1</sup> LEED Certified Buildings in Hawai'i.

<http://greenbuildingwire.com/LEED-certified-building-HI>

