

Ice cream maker scoops up lifetime achievement award

By Erika Engle

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, May 04, 2015

Their products are in your cupboards and refrigerator and maybe even in your tummy right now.

The Hawaii Food Manufacturers Association will gather next month to honor stellar achievement within the industry, such as the Governor's Lifetime Achievement Award that will be presented to Roselani Ice Cream.

"Part of the ... award is, how have they helped the industry? How have they contributed," said Byron Goo, HFMA president, and president of The Tea Chest. "I think they're a great example."

The top award is presented to a company, organization or individual that has an established history of distinguished service, has made a lasting contribution to Hawaii's food manufacturing industry and has exhibited leadership, providing inspiration to others in the industry.

Roselani Ice Cream uses vanilla beans, macadamia nuts and Kona coffee from Hawaii island, mango sauce from "a local jelly maker up the street," and other local ingredients to make many of its flavors, said Cathy Nobriga Kim, a third-generation executive with the company and vice president of the frozen products division that makes Roselani Ice Cream for the retail market and the food service industry.

"This award is such a great honor. We're privileged to be recognized on a statewide level," she said.

Roselani branched out to other islands starting with Oahu's Star Markets, "then other chains ... and independent mom-and-pops," and it has been available statewide since 2000. The company that gets its product to stores outside of Maui is Eight-Point Distributors Inc., she said.

Kim also is grateful that her father, David "Buddy" Nobriga, who launched the Roselani brand in the 1970s, is alive to see the industry recognition.

Maui Soda & Ice's first ice cream, known as Dairymen's, was developed in 1932 for local ice cream parlors by Kim's grandfather Manuel Nobriga. He initially was hired in 1922 to deliver ice via horse-drawn wagon. After giving up the horse's reins, he took the reins of Maui Soda & Ice in the 1940s. When he retired in 1971, Kim's father started running the company. Her brother and other family members hold key executive positions within the company, which

had been established at Kahului Harbor in 1888 but relocated to its Wailuku site in 1900 when harbor-area business were burned down to combat the plague.

The Governor's Award got the endorsement of then-Gov. Neil Abercrombie when Goo asked him whether they could use the title. "He said, 'You know what? I'm in,'" Goo said. Abercrombie's father had been a food broker, Goo said, and he liked the idea of how it perpetuated the industry.

Three entities — the City and County of Honolulu, Kamehameha Schools and Enterprise Honolulu — conducted studies independent from one another and learned that Hawaii's top manufacturing industry is food manufacturing.

HFMA asked the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism to drill down a bit, and they quantified the impact of Hawaii's food manufacturing industry at \$900 million in annual revenue, 6,200 jobs and a payroll of \$161 million a year, Goo said.

Finalists for the other HFMA 2015 TASTE Awards in eight categories will have to wait until the June gala to find out whether they won.

The awards dinner June 6 at the Pomaika'i Ballrooms at Dole Cannery also will include a "Battle of the Chefs" pitting defending champion James Aptakin of Mac24/7 and the Hilton Waikiki Beach Hotel against Benjie Cabutaje, sous-chef at the Westin Moana Surfrider Hotel, and Wade Ueoka, chef-owner of MW Restaurant.

Hawaii-made rum, vodka and wine also will be served, followed by a formal dinner program and awards ceremony.

Individual tickets at \$125, and sponsorships for the event starting at \$1,500, still are available, with additional information available on the HFMA website or by calling 422-4362. Proceeds will benefit the Culinary Institute of the Pacific at Kapiolani Community College.

On the Net:

» foodsofhawaii.com

» roselani.com

Reach Erika Engle at 529-4303, erika@staradvertiser.com or on Twitter as [@erikaengle](https://twitter.com/erikaengle).