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Contact: policy@hawaiianhomesteads.org

Homestead Hawaiians Purchase Apartments on Fee Property to Maintain Affordability

Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii — A Hawaiian homestead nonprofit governed by enrolled members of the *Sovereign Council of Hawaiian Homestead Associations (SCHHA)* has purchased a 6-unit apartment property in downtown Lihue, Kauai. The purchase by the Homestead Community Development Corporation (HCDC) closed on January 14, 2022 marking a first, in fee property ownership and rental housing management by the nonprofit.

“It’s a milestone for sure,” said **Robin Puanani Danner**, SCHHA chair and HCDC CEO. “We mahalo Jim Gair the seller of the property for his commitment to affordable housing, and for his aloha to the goals of our homestead communities. This is so much more than a real estate transaction. It represents the first time fee property is owned by a Homestead Beneficiary Association defined by the federal government, anywhere in the Hawaiian Islands.”



The acquisition of the *Halenani Street Apartments*, located at 4277 Halenani St, in Lihue, was financed through **First Hawaiian Bank (FHB)**, through a conventional commercial real-estate loan and an affordable housing investment instrument provided by the regional nonprofit, the **Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC)**.



“Financing is vital to solving Hawaii’s affordable housing challenges, especially on neighbor islands and rural areas of the state,” said **Kara Chow**, HCDC Deputy Director. “RCAC along with Larry Dressler at First Hawaiian Bank, were incredible on this transaction. We are local owners of a rental project serving low to moderate income residents on the island of Kauai because of their partnership with HCDC.”

HCDC was founded in 2009 by SCHHA leaders to focus on affordable housing and economic development statewide, on all islands. Over its 13 year history, HCDC has built homes for low to moderate income families, built economic-boosting projects including community and youth facilities, an open air marketplace and certified kitchen, all connected to creating jobs. Until the *Halenani Street Apartments* project, all of HCDC’s projects were located on Hawaiian Home Lands.

“This is the first off-tribal lands property to be owned by the SCHHA through our homestead nonprofit,” remarked **Kipukai Kualii**, the SCHHA Policy Committee Chair. “Hawaii will always be our home - acquiring this property keeps it in local control and makes sure the rental units stay within HUD prescribed affordable rates for Kauai residents. Solving affordable housing in our state, is our kuleana too, we intend to implement affordable housing rental projects in every county across the state - this is just our first!”

A blessing of the *Halenani Street Apartments* is planned for March 26, 2022, on the 151st birthday of Prince Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana’ole, champion of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, the federal law creating tribal lands in Hawaii, with a federal codified definition of Homestead Beneficiary Associations, like the SCHHA.

“It’s a fitting date for this property blessing, as the SCHHA and the waitlist homestead association come together to embrace our kuleana in creating more and more affordable rental housing across the state,” said **Liberta Albao**, a board member of the waitlist Association of Hawaiians for Homestead Lands (AHHL) that is the dedicated advisory board.



SCHHA also thanks **Mark Tanaka** and **Ashley Carvalho** at Kauai Realty and **Juanita Hallstrom** at RCAC, for working with SCHHA and HCDC in completing this historic acquisition for native Hawaiians.

For more information about the *Halenani Street Apartments*, contact HCDC at info@hawaiianhomesteads.org.

SCHHA, founded in 1987 is a statewide homestead association registered with the U.S. Department of Interior and is the most representative policy voice and expert on 203,000 acres of tribal lands set-a-side for native Hawaiians for homes, farms, ranches and mercantile business under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920. In 2009, SCHHA founded a tribal housing authority nonprofit, the Homestead Community Development Corporation (HCDC) to advance affordable housing, economic opportunities and capacity building on or near Hawaiian Home Lands. Similarly in 2019, SCHHA founded the nonprofit Hawaiian Lending & Investments (HLI), a community development financial institution and HUD counseling agency to assist families access capital to grow generational assets on or near Hawaiian Home Lands.

Founded in 1987, SCHHA is the oldest and largest coalition of Hawaiian Homestead Associations and native Hawaiians exercising sovereignty on the trust lands enacted by Congress under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920