

Lights On, Doors Open

OAHU VETERANS CENTER



The Oahu Veterans Center
PHOTO COURTESY CONSTRUCTORS HAWAII

Constructors Hawaii builds center's new 3,200-square-foot meeting hall

BY BRETT ALEXANDER-ESTES

Jenny Chanko and the Oahu Veterans Center were in a bind. "The Oahu Veterans Center is home to the Oahu Veterans Council, and this council uses this space to meet and disseminate information to its network," says Chanko, who is the center's executive director. The center, she says, supports the Wounded Warrior Project, the PRRP Program at Tripler, and JROTC scholarships for local seniors graduating and enrolling in ROTC programs, as well as many other organizations and causes.



Jenny Chanko

"It costs over \$20,000 every month to do this," Chanko says, explaining that the center is a nonprofit. "For us to sustain ourselves and our veterans programs, I need to ensure that I have enough party and meeting rentals to keep

our lights on, our doors open and our programs running." Chanko and the council found that the center's one meeting hall did not offer enough space to generate sufficient revenue. The center was originally envisioned with two large meeting and banquet halls. So to expand the center's revenue options, Chanko says the council decided to "construct our second large hall to complete the original vision of the center." The new hall had to accommodate over 200 people. Other specifications included a moveable partition that could split the room into sections, wireless microphone capability, a kitchenette and a large furniture storage area.

A New Match for Makai Hall

The \$1,690,000 contract for the new meeting hall addition was awarded to Constructors Hawaii Inc., who broke ground on the project on Jan. 20.

"The new 3,200-square-foot meeting hall ties into the existing Makai Hall," says Travis Higa, Constructors Hawaii project manager for the meeting hall addition. The new second hall, says Chanko, needed to match the existing footprint of the first.



Travis Higa

The meeting hall addition, says Higa, consisted of a "monolithic slab, CMU walls, and prefabricated wood trusses. The ceiling follows the 4:12 pitch of the trusses and consists of acoustic ceiling panels and faux four-by-six wood rafters. There is also an operable panel partition with glazing above the partition header to separate the room for two parties."

Coordinating a Campus

"The project also enhanced sections of the existing campus," Higa says. Enhancements included a new women's restroom, driveway, solar-powered parking lights for the revitalized grass parking area, landscaping and parking lot rehabilitation.

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SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS

With so many groups using the facility, Chanko says she needed to be able to coordinate upcoming events with the ongoing construction. Every week, she says, Constructors Hawaii provided a three-week schedule "so I could anticipate what would be happening at the center, and could adapt in case there was some kind of conflict."

"On the day the parking lot would be closed for re-paving, we were also to have a huge Vet Aid Day here at the center, hosted by Rick Hammada and the Veterans Movement Foundation," Chanko says. "Having the parking lot closed for that day just wouldn't be possible, and Constructors Hawaii was able to work with me to identify a different day to have the work done."

"The building was completed ... on time and under our projected budget."

—George E. Sullivan

A Happy Delivery

Exactly seven months later, on July 7, the center's new addition was finished. When Chanko walked in, she saw that Constructors Hawaii had delivered just what the center needed.

"With this additional space I can host larger meetings, or multiple meetings, due to the moveable partition wall,"



Interior of the new meeting hall

PHOTO COURTESY CONSTRUCTORS HAWAII

she says. "I can also host large parties, with a maximum capacity of 280."

Moreover, says Chanko, the addition combines good looks with utility. "The new hall is absolutely beautiful," she says. "The interior of the space feels airy and full of light, but doesn't feel too big that the space will be hard to fill."

The new addition also met another very important requirement. "The space needed to match our original



Interior of the new meeting hall

PHOTO COURTESY CONSTRUCTORS HAWAII

construction, to look like it has always been here. This was probably the hardest task to do," says Chanko. "Constructors Hawaii did a beautiful job."

Constructors' flexibility was another plus. "They were accommodating to myself, my renters, and my veterans," Chanko says. "Not only did they do an amazing job on our new building, they also provided me with an excellent experience while doing it."

George E. Sullivan, chairman of the Oahu Veterans Center board of directors, agrees. "The relationship was exceptional throughout the contract," he says. The building, Sullivan says, was completed on time and "under our projected budget."

For his part, Higa is grateful for "a great project team" that included Heath Construction Services, Ferraro Choi and Associates Ltd. and the Oahu Veterans Center. "Our teamwork allowed for a smooth project that completed over one month ahead of schedule," Higa says. "We would also like to thank all of our subcontractors and suppliers for all of their hard work."

Chanko's hard work is over, too. "Now I can not only continue to provide services to my wonderful veterans," she says, "but I can also service our community." 🏠

MAHALO

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