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### Maui scrapyard moves forward

By *ILIMA LOOMIS, Staff Writer*

WAILUKU – A second Maui scrapyard is moving closer to opening, and anti-litter groups hope it could speed the cleanup of junked cars piled on island roads.

SOS Metals received a health permit to operate a scrap recycling facility late last year and next will apply for a building permit to construct its facility, said President Don Shadow. He hoped to start accepting cars, appliances and recyclables in June or July. That's a little later than his previous plan to open early this year, but Shadow wasn't worried.

"I think it's a normal amount of time when you're building a new facility," he said.

On that timeline, SOS Metals might have to wait another year to compete for a contract to recycle abandoned vehicles towed off county roads. The current contract with Kitagawa Towing and

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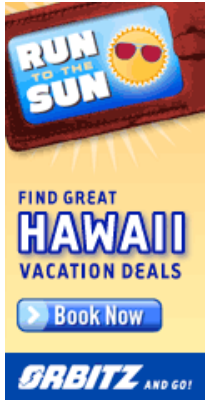
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current contract with Kitagawa Towing and Transport expires in April with an optional one-year extension. If no other company is ready to bid on it, the county likely will take the extension and wait until 2007 to seek new bidders, said county Solid Waste Division Chief Tracy Takamine.

Shadow said that he planned to seek the county contract eventually, although he hoped his business would involve a variety of recyclables, including heavy metals, industrial equipment and white goods, not just junked cars.

"It's going to be for all different kinds of material to be baled up," he said.

County contract holder Mike Kitagawa said he had processed about 1,600 of the 2,000 derelict vehicles being stored in county lots.

"The backlog is just about done," he said.

Both Kitagawa and Shadow previously have said they didn't think the island was big enough to support two scrapyards, but Kitagawa said this week he would welcome the competition.

"As far as I'm concerned I've got my hands full right now," he said. "Another company coming in is OK with me."

He'd overcome several challenges since starting his processing in September, including being told by Young Brothers that the heavy scraps caused too much damage to their containers and he would have to buy his own. Kitagawa has since bought 11 containers and fortified them with steel plates, which he said are doing the job.

Right now, shipping is the critical link to keeping the process going.

"It seems like the containers don't come back to us fast enough," said Kitagawa, who added he is buying four more.

Kitagawa still is awaiting the arrival of a baler from Romania, which he said will help him process cars faster and fit more in each container leaving the island.

Jan Dapitan, executive director of Community Work Day, said there are still plenty of junkers on Maui roads, and that they were leading to other problems through a "broken window syndrome," where one eyesore attracts more litter.

"I think the problem is more than just derelict cars," she said. "We've set up a situation where the derelict cars have also brought up the dumping of appliances and a lot of metals."

She hoped the opening of a new scrapyard would help the situation by providing another outlet for

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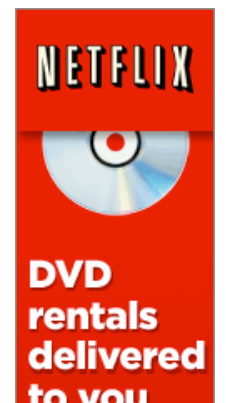
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junkers and introducing competition to lower prices. Community Work Day has been collecting junk cars and appliances but hasn't been able to recycle them because of the high cost and because Kitagawa has been too busy with other jobs.

"I'm very much looking forward to SOS coming on," Dapitan said. "I don't think we'll have to worry that there's enough trash."

She hoped to work with the companies to negotiate a lower rate or waiver of fees for scrap brought in by Community Work Day, which is a nonprofit organization that removes litter from public areas.

"I'm hoping that the aloha spirit will reign in this competitive world," she said.

Shadow said he hoped to offer free recycling of appliances for the first month of operations.

Kitagawa charges \$305 per vehicle and \$60 per appliance in recycling fees. That's a lot more than the \$50 per vehicle charged by now-closed Maui Scrap Metal, but it's the price of doing business legally and cleanly, Kitagawa said.

"The high price is necessary for the opportunity to do the job efficiently, correctly and environmentally," he said.

Maui Scrap Metal closed last year after being cited repeatedly for violations by the state Department of Health. The facility was operating with no health permit and improper zoning, and was found by Fire Department inspectors to be storing goods improperly.

Derelict vehicles began piling up on Maui roads and fields not long after the company closed.

Kitagawa said he had a conversation with the county after public works officials learned he was offering a lower price to a commercial customer than the \$305 per vehicle charged to county taxpayers. Calling the talk a "verbal reprimand," Kitagawa said he now feels he has to offer the same price to all his customers.

Takamine said he simply asked Kitagawa how he could charge a lower rate to private businesses when he had told the county that \$305 per vehicle was what the service cost.

"I don't think we could do anything about it since it's his business," he said. "We just thought it wasn't fair to the county."

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