

BY LESLIE LANG

**A**lan Hornstein got into the recycling business young, working for his uncles who had a recycling business in Connecticut. Eventually he came to Hawaii to start a recycling program for the phone company GTE.

Twenty-eight years ago he started his own company “with a couple guys and a truck.”

Now, many employees and trucks later, Hornstein is owner and president of Lenox Metals. His company, which operates out of Campbell Industrial Park, is a multi-disciplinary metal recycling firm that works with utilities, government, agriculture, hotels, institutional and construction sectors throughout Hawaii and the Pacific Rim.

Lenox Metals works directly with demolition companies and collects metal from projects that are being torn down. Hornstein’s crews sort the metal, package it and resell it on the open market.

“We sell to buyers that are dealing directly and indirectly with mills that are smelting the metal down into ingot form,” he says. “After smelting the metal down into molds, the mills contract with manufacturing companies who make new consumer end products. Steel beams, wire and cable, pipe, any type of manufacturing material that will be used in the building trade in new construction.”

Hornstein points to the familiar green recycling logo. “It’s a revolving cycle of materials,” he says, “cycling in one direction and being remade in another.”

His work is to salvage material and make that cycle happen. Collecting and conscientiously reclaiming waste, Hornstein says, are issues important to both Hawaii’s economy and its fragile environment.

### A Lifetime Recycler

Mike Leary, owner and CEO of Island Demo, believes this to such an extent that he opened Oahu’s only private transfer station for licensed contractors. He estimates it has kept 700,000 tons out of the landfill.

“I’ve been a recycler all my life, ever since I was collecting aluminum pop-tops off the streets,” he



says. “I’m an ex-Marine heavy equipment operator. Then I worked in L.A. doing interior demolition. Nobody was seeing any value in recycling. You always get metals, copper and aluminum, stuff like that. It was kind of stupid to take it to the landfill when you could take it out and sell it to the scrap guys. So that’s how it started.”

At his transfer station, he says, they separate and pull out all the recyclables possible, such as architectural finds and anything someone can use, like fixtures, I-beams, plumbing fixtures, windows, hardware and fireproof doors.

“Number one,” Leary says, “is that it keeps all that material and trucks off the freeway driving out to the landfill in Nanakuli, so you save on fuel, wear and tear on equipment, time.

“People tell me what they’re looking for and I call them up and tell them when I have it. Metal stairs, a fan, a claw foot tub, whatever. I have a ship in my yard; you want it? Whatever isn’t damaged and someone can use, we pull out. The rest we downsize. We munch it up; consolidate with an excavator. Then we haul it to the landfill much more compacted.

“So when we do haul it,” he says, “we maximize the load, we carry the legal weight limit, and we’re not in a rush. It’s a simple load, from A to B and fewer vehicles on the highway. I think it matters. What we send to the landfill is already processed. It’s clean dumping material.”

“We do it because it’s truly the right thing to do. We do it because we know how and because it makes sense.

“If you’re doing demo, and you take it right to the landfill ...” He lets the sentence hang in the air. “We’re on an island,” he adds. “We should be doing everything we can to recycle everything possible.”

