

Oracle CEO to experiment on his Hawaiian island

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Oracle CEO Larry Ellison gives a keynote address at Oracle OpenWorld in San Francisco, Tuesday, Oct. 2, 2012. Ellison says he plans to turn the Hawaiian island that he recently bought into a laboratory for experimenting with more environmentally sound ways of living. Ellison says he hopes to convert sea water into fresh water on the 141-mile-square (365-square-kilometer) mile island of Lanai. He also wants more electric cars on the island and hopes to increase its fruit exports to Japan and other markets. (AP Photo/Eric Risberg)

(AP)—Oracle CEO Larry Ellison envisions his recently acquired Hawaiian island becoming a "little laboratory" for experimenting with more environmentally sound ways to live.

Ellison's ambitions include converting [sea water](#) into fresh water on the 141-square-mile (365-square-kilometer) island of Lanai. He also wants to see more [electric cars](#) on the island located near Maui, and hopes to increase its fruit exports to Japan and other markets.

Ellison, one of the world's wealthiest men, made the remarks Tuesday in San Francisco in an interview with the financial news channel CNBC.

The interview focused mostly on [Oracle Corp.](#), a business-[software maker](#) that Ellison has been running for 35 years. He also touched upon several other topics, including his friendship with the late [Steve Jobs](#) and his interest in buying the Los Angeles Lakers, if the professional basketball team were ever for sale.

Oracle's success has minted Ellison an estimated fortune of \$41 billion. He bought 98 percent of Lanai from [billionaire](#) David Murdock in June for an undisclosed price. The Maui News reported that Murdock, the CEO of Castle & Cooke Inc., was seeking \$500 million to \$600 million for his Lanai holdings.

Ellison hadn't publicly shared his vision for Lanai until Tuesday's interview. The silence had left Lanai's roughly 3,200 residents wondering whether their lives would be disrupted under Ellison's ownership.

In Tuesday's interview, Ellison said he intends to "support the local people."

Ellison's Lanai holdings include two resorts, two golf courses and assorted commercial and residential buildings. Three utilities on the island also are under Ellison's control

Lanai is just one piece of Ellison's sprawling real-estate portfolio. He

also owns estates or mansions in San Francisco, Lake Tahoe and southern California, as well as in Newport, Rhode Island and Japan. He told CNBC Tuesday that he plans to convert some of the homes into art museums and traced his interest in fancy homes to his childhood dream of being an architect.

Tuesday's interview also gave Ellison an opportunity to reminisce about Jobs, the co-founder of Apple Inc., who died nearly a year ago after a long battle with cancer. The two were so close that Jobs took the photos when Ellison married his fourth wife, romance novelist Melanie Craft, in 2003. Ellison hailed Jobs as an irreplaceable friend and technology visionary who he called the Thomas Edison and Pablo Picasso of his era.

Ellison also said he would be interested in buying the Los Angeles Lakers if long-time owner Jerry Buss were ever to sell one of the National Basketball Association's most successful franchises. Buss has given no indication that he is ready to relinquish control of the Lakers, though Anschutz Entertainment Group recently announced plans to sell its minority stake in the team.

Ellison called the Lakers his favorite NBA team. He also said he is a fan of the Golden State Warriors and the Chicago Bulls. He tried to buy the Warriors in 2010 only to be outbid by Silicon Valley venture capitalist Joe Lacob and Hollywood movie producer Peter Guber.

Oracle, which makes database software and applications that automate administrative tasks, has been on a shopping spree that has seen the company spend more than \$50 billion buying dozens of companies over the past seven years. Ellison told CNBC that Oracle probably won't be making any big acquisitions during the next two years as the Redwood Shores, California company fine tunes its software products so they can be sold as a service over high-speed Internet connections—a concept

known as "cloud computing."

Ellison talked to [CNBC](#) shortly before he delivered the keynote address at Oracle's annual customer conference in San Francisco.

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