



MidWeek

This column by Senator Michelle Kidani was published in the MidWeek WEST VOICE section on Wednesday, January 2, 2019.

Legislative session on the horizon

The 2019 session of the Legislature will convene at the State Capitol in just two weeks. I continue to serve as Vice President of the Hawaii State Senate, Chair of the critically important Committee on Education, and will serve as Vice Chair of the Higher Education Committee and as a member of the Committee on Ways and Means – the Senate budget committee – led by my colleague from Mililani/Wahiawa, Senator Donovan Dela Cruz.

The coming session will focus on formulating the state's spending plan for the two-year period that begins on July 1, 2019. Over the last several months, we have been visiting several state agencies and reviewing the effectiveness of their programs. In the next two weeks we will be conducting hearings on specific budget proposals leading up to our official start of business.

All Hawaii residents are welcome at the State Capitol any time, of course, but our first day of business is a special opportunity to visit and personally meet legislators and staff. Please join us on Wednesday, January 16, for the formal session at 10 a.m., followed by entertainment and informal visits to various offices. My office is in room 228 on the Ewa side of the second floor. I look forward to seeing you!

New facilities now open for business

As 2018 drew to a close, we celebrated the completion and grand opening of three important projects. The new Waipio EMS ambulance station was dedicated last month. Mahalo to Mayor Caldwell and the first responders who will use this state-of-the-art facility for the benefit of our surrounding communities!



The long-awaited Waipio EMS station is now open for business!

Continued next page . . .

The noticeable improvements to the Kipapa Stream (Roosevelt) Bridge along Kamehameha Highway are now finished. The bridge now meets current safety and structural standards for the heavy traffic that crosses this vital link between our Waikele, Waipio and Mililani neighborhoods.



Safer and sturdier . . . Safety and structural upgrades now complete.



I also attended the grand opening for the newest building at the University of Hawaii West Oahu campus last month. UHWO is higher education home to a significant number of students from west Oahu communities, and so we consider it “our” UH campus. This new facility for which I secured funding four years ago provides numerous classrooms and laboratories for students planning careers in the allied health professions and will also allow administrative offices to move “home” from temporary off-campus space. I am hopeful that a new degree program in Physical Therapy will soon be included.

A new year brings new opportunities

Nearly 300 UHWO students celebrated the holidays as new graduates following fall semester commencement ceremonies last month. They heard some good counsel from graduation speaker Keith Hayashi, who recounted his career as an educator, noting that from the time he was a first-grade teacher through to his current job as Principal at Waipahu High School, he has always been guided by a desire to make a difference in people’s lives. He advised the graduates to use their skills and knowledge to make a positive difference in their communities. ***“Reach out and make the changes you are inspired to do,” he said. And he shared advice from Mahatma Gandhi: “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”***

Those are good thoughts to keep in mind as we begin 2019, count our blessings, and commit to even better days ahead. For those who are able, please consider ways you can contribute to stronger communities to the benefit of all of us.

Hau`oli Makahiki Hou!

***The Year of the Boar officially begins
on February 5, 2019.***

Gung Hee Fat Choy!

