

Senator Michelle Kidani

(D) Senate District 17– Serving Mililani Mauka, Mililani Town, Waipio Acres and Waipio Gentry



Aloha, friends and neighbors:

Several hundred people - including students, their friends and families and curious area residents - visited the new campus of the University of Hawaii West Oahu at an open house event over the past weekend. What they saw was not only the beautiful new buildings that will be the permanent home for UH West Oahu. They also saw the fulfillment of dreams for this part of the UH system that will offer higher education options for central and leeward Oahu families who have longed for opportunities of this kind closer to home.

During my term as your Senator, I have been a strong advocate for the campus, and it is gratifying to see our approval of funds over the last four years result in what promises to become a vibrant educational center and a point of pride for neighboring communities.

Future growth is assured. Just a few days ago, the State released funds for ongoing projects that will enhance UH West Oahu programs. These include:

- ◆ \$1.25 million for construction of a four-lane roadway that will connect UHWO to Farrington Highway and serve as the main entrance to the campus
- ◆ \$2.5 million to complete the first phase of UHWO site work, including a Kaloι Gulch Greenway, and landscaping and fencing to meet city requirements to protect a photovoltaic panel array
- ◆ \$900,000 for design of a new building for the Academy for Creative Media, the UH film and digital media program now at UH Manoa
- ◆ \$500,000 for design of the Allied Health Building - including classrooms and labs, and a center for a dental hygiene training program that could eventually provide dental hygiene services to Central Oahu, North Shore and Leeward communities

Congratulations to UH West Oahu Chancellor Gene Awakuni, Vice Chancellor Donna Kiyosaki and their dedicated faculty and staff for their hard work to make this new landmark campus a reality.

Me ke aloha,

Michelle



Untying the *maile* . . .

. . . UHWO Chancellor Gene Awakuni



UH West Oahu photos by Eric Manke



Legislative and Community Calendar

Here are some of the legislative business and community events attended over the last few weeks:

- ◆ July 20— Roy Sakuma's Ukulele Foundation Annual Fundraiser
- ◆ July 23 – Meeting with New Hope Leeward Pastor Mike Lwin to discuss future plans for a new facility on a 203 acre parcel off of Kunia Road adjacent to the golf course
- ◆ August 2—Birthday tribute to Na Hoku Award winning recording artist Melveen Leed
- ◆ August 3—Hawaii History Day honors at Mililani High School Welcome Back Assembly
- ◆ August 9—Dedication for Waipahu High School's Academy of Engineering
- ◆ August 11– Dedication and season kickoff, Mililani HS John Kauinana Athletic Field
- ◆ August 16—Unveiling of *Network of Care* Web site at 100th Battalion Clubhouse
- ◆ August 16—Fundraiser and campus tour at UH West Oahu's Kapolei Campus
- ◆ August 17—Farewell and Mahalo Dinner to honor retiring U.S. Senator Daniel K. Akaka
- ◆ August 18—Dedication and Open House—University of Hawaii West Oahu Kapolei Campus
- ◆ August 20—State Department of Health briefing and workshop to determine priorities for the 2013 Legislative session

FOLLOWUP REPORT: *School bus transportation cuts remain unresolved; discussions of all options still ongoing*



The new school year is underway, and families continue to adjust to reduced school bus transportation schedules in many areas. My discussions to explore all options are ongoing. **I continue to meet with the State Department of Education on this issue**, and have also met with the State Procurement Officer to fully understand the process by which the DOE contracts for services. In addition, for our Mililani neighborhoods, I have also met with Castle & Cooke to discuss reviewing their current Mililani Trolley service to see how it might better compliment current City bus service so that students and the general public can make better use of it. **The cuts in service will be addressed in the January legislative session** if not sooner.

FOLLOWUP REPORT: *Queen's to purchase Ewa hospital, easing pressure at Wahiawa General and relieving anxieties in Central and Leeward Oahu*

The abrupt closure of Hawaii Medical Center-West in Ewa and its sister hospital in Liliha late last year was a shock to residents of the immediate area that had repercussions all the way to Mililani, Wahiawa and the North Shore.

Not only were 1,000 healthcare workers out of jobs, but the loss of emergency room and acute care hospital beds put added strain on staffs at Wahiawa General Hospital and Pali Momi Medical Center in Aiea. According to data reported to the State, HMC-West accounted for 37 percent of Oahu's emergency room visits and 37 percent of inpatient services, and hospitals far from our Central Oahu and Leeward communities were hard-pressed to absorb the additional workload.

The Legislature responded quickly to the void, approving funds to augment badly overloaded emergency room staff and services in Wahiawa, while continuing to monitor ambulance response times and working with the State Health and City Emergency Services Departments to assure the well-being of our residents.

Queen's Medical Center last week received approval from the State Health Planning and Development Agency to purchase, renovate and re-open HMC-West, and has pledged to move quickly to do so. While it will be another year before the hospital is fully operational, the positive ending to this crisis is heartening.



Wahiawa General Hospital - relief is on the way

HONORS FOR MILILANI HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMICS AND TROJAN ATHLETICS



Our congratulations to these Mililani High School students who won state-level awards for History Day, which qualified them to compete at the national level in College Park, Maryland over the summer – and to their outstanding teachers who also won national and state recognition. I was pleased to join them at the MHS Welcome Back to School assembly earlier this month.

From left, standing, **Jane Murao**, Hawaii Council for the Humanities Hawaii History Day Coordinator, student **Virginia Gustafson**, **Senator Kidani**, student **Viola Mocz**, **Rep. Marilyn Lee**, **Bob Buss**, Executive Director, Hawaii Council for the Humanities, MHS Principal **Dr. John Brummel**, students **Myla Pereira**, **Alemarie Ceria**, **Carson Turner** and **Nanea I**; front, from left, students **Megan Medeira** and **Alohilani Nonies**, MHS Social Studies teacher **Cynthia Tong**, **National History Teacher of the Year**, and MHS teacher **Amy Perruso**, **Hawaii History Teacher of the Year**.

Melanie Pacpaco and **Jacqueline Fry** (at right) are just two of more than two dozen Mililani High School students who travelled to the Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA) National Leadership Meeting in Orlando, Florida over the past summer.

They were part of a Hawaii delegation of 154 students who competed with their peers from 49 states and Puerto Rico in 32 health-related/medical events. More than 7,000 delegates were in attendance.

Advisor **Candace Chun** reports that 18 MHS students placed in the national Top Ten or made it to the 2nd round of competition in health-related competitive events. The team of **Melanie** and **Jacqueline** won **1st Place Medals** for their Career Health Display out of 85 teams.



Other MHS students who received recognition in a multitude of categories include **Teri Kawasaki**, **Ashley Aczon**, **Jae Yun Lee**, **Lyanne Lu**, **Amanda Berjerana**, **Fejiereich Luz Lopez**, **Mart Joshua Lopez**, **Alvin Orense**, **Brianna Daranciang**, **Kerri Niino**, **Rachel Sakuma**, **Kylee Ann Enoki**, **Toni Mitsumoto**, **Princess Lynne De Dios**, **Myla Pereira**, **Tricie Steen**, **Alohilani Nonies**, **Lauren Young** and **Danica Quevedo**. In addition, Mililani High School received a National Service Project Group Award from the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.



Photo courtesy of the Trojan Times

NEW FIELD AND TRACK WORTH THE WAIT!!

Saturday, August 11, was indeed a day for celebration at Mililani High School. The long-awaited new athletic field and track were officially dedicated – and christened with a season-opening victory for the Trojan football team!

During pre-game warm-ups, I was pleased to join my legislative colleagues and other distinguished guests on the sidelines for the dedication ceremonies.

In the photo at left, **Rep. Marilyn Lee** and I greeted **Sharon Kauinana**, whose late husband **John** was MHS Athletic Director. The field is named to honor **John** as a tribute to his service to the school and our community. Behind them is **Dean Hazama**, Chair of the Mililani Mauka Neighborhood Board and active community leader.

At the Capitol . . . The state of Hawaii's economy still a concern

The State Department of Economic Development & Tourism last week issued its latest assessment of the Hawaii economy, and the news is mixed. The State's tourism industry is booming, and DBEDT has revised its data to predict that just under 8 million visitors will travel to the islands by year's end. About 8,700 Hawaii workers have been hired in hotel and food service jobs since May 2010, and UH economist Carl Bonham believes that we have almost completely recovered jobs lost in this industry during the economic downturn.

But the DBEDT report also characterizes the state's economic recovery this year as "uneven" at best, and has revised its projections of annual growth to 1.5 percent, down from the previous estimate of 2.2 percent.

The most recent report from the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization (UHERO) is more specific about job numbers, pointing out that overall employers added about 2,800 new jobs in Hawaii in July. UHERO says that helps to counter the loss of about 5,400 jobs overall in the previous two months. The State Department of Labor reports that July unemployment remains at 6.4 percent. An estimated 40,950 people who are looking for work still can't find jobs.

As Vice Chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, I remain concerned that we encourage recovery in a truly balanced way. I'm pleased to note that the State has just in the first half of August released about \$109 million in construction funds that will help create jobs for our workers. Another positive in this news is that all of the funds released this month are for our public schools – about \$16.9 million for K-12 schools, and \$92 million for University of Hawaii projects.

The State Council on Revenues – whose projections we must follow in formulating the state spending plan – will meet on September 6, just over two weeks from now. We will be reviewing the Council's report closely as we plan for the 2013 session of the Legislature during which the budget for the next two fiscal years will be crafted.



Photo Gallery . . .



Two of Hawaii's best known musical stars were honored with Senate certificates to recognize their lifetime love of music. **Melvveen Leed** (at left, with MC Kimo Kahoano) celebrated her 69th Birthday with the release of a new jazz CD.



Above right, ukulele virtuoso **Roy Sakuma** and his wife **Kathy** were honored at a fundraising event for their Ukulele Foundation that takes music and ukulele lessons to the far corners of the world.

At right, I was privileged to join several hundred Hawaii citizens last week to say Aloha and Mahalo to **U.S. Senator Daniel K. Akaka**, who is retiring at the end of his current term. All Hawaii is grateful for his service to our country, and we wish him a long, happy and healthy retirement.



Judiciary seeks public input for strategic planning

Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald of the Hawaii State Judiciary is inviting members of the public to provide input on the Hawaii State courts by completing an anonymous online survey. Responses from the public, as well as from attorneys and other stakeholders, will be used to develop a strategic plan for the period through the year 2020.

The strategic planning process is one of the most important initiatives being introduced during Justice Recktenwald's term as head of the State Judiciary. **The goal is to increase the effectiveness of the State courts system in achieving its mission of administering justice in an impartial, efficient and accessible manner in accordance with the law.**

The survey, which takes approximately 15 minutes to complete, is available online at www.statejudiciaryplan2012.org from now until August 31.

