



MidWeek

This column by Senator Michelle Kidani was published in the MidWeek **WEST VOICE** section on Wednesday, March 15, 2017.

Planning ahead

Tourism Day at the Capitol is an opportunity for lawmakers to learn more about the current scope of the visitor industry and the way Hawaii businesses and state agencies are serving the needs of the 8 million plus people who come to enjoy the islands each year. One of the display and information tables was set up by students from the Waipahu High School Hospitality and Tourism Academy.

The Academy was launched almost 25 years ago as recognition of the importance of the visitor industry to our state. It offers students opportunities to learn about hospitality and tourism, hands-on jobs and internship experiences, and professional growth guidance to prepare them to enter the industry workforce.

Their display at the Capitol is a reminder of how the eleven WHS Academies have been designed to meet students' career goals.

From the Waipahu High School Academy of Hospitality and Tourism, left to right, Zaira Cruz, Karah Tagle, Rosalie Ver, Matthew Calulot and Academy Advisor Todd Nakayama.



Major tourism development is well underway in West Oahu, focused mainly in the Ko Olina Resort area. Late last year, details were beginning to circulate about a new Atlantis Resort being planned on three parcels of land adjacent to Disney's Aulani property. The developer for the Atlantis project is China Oceanwide Holdings, and the announcement of their planning process was big news on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange in December.



Envisioning new paradigms—meeting with educators

Anticipating this major Chinese development here on Oahu, and knowing that the numbers of visitors travelling from China to worldwide destinations are on the increase, I have initiated discussions with a number of stakeholders with an interest in preparing our residents for the workforce in the years ahead.

Recently, I met with academic leaders from UH West Oahu, Leeward Community

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College and the Department of Education to make sure that they remain focused on the need to prepare our young people for future employment opportunities.

The Chinese project served as a catalyst for the workforce development discussion – let’s think about Chinese language instruction for students and the community and classes in contemporary Chinese culture. But to the broader question, our schools in West Oahu need to be thinking about ways to meet the needs of as many as 30,000 visitors who may eventually fill all those resort hotel rooms and luxury residences in the area on any given day.

Cooling Kalei`opu`u

We are so pleased to note that a contract has been awarded to Elite Pacific Construction, Inc., to “cool the classrooms” at three schools – including our own Kalei`opu`u Elementary in Village Park. This is part of Governor’s Ige’s air conditioning initiative. Principal Pat Anbe says air con equipment will be installed for campus portables along with photovoltaic solar panels and batteries to generate and store power for the cooling units. Contractors and school administrators will be working on a schedule for the work to minimize any disturbances during the construction.



Congratulations to the Taniokas!

Our Waipahu neighbors – Mel and Lynn Tanioka – have been inducted into the Junior Achievement Hawaii Business Hall of Fame! Tanioka’s is known island-wide as a successful, outstanding seafood and catering business. But beyond their landmark stores in Waipahu and Waipio, the Tanioka’s Charity Foundation sponsors fundraising events including their yearly golf tournament and charity dinners to support numerous organizations. Among these are the Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children, American Cancer Society, Hawaii Law Enforcement Agency, March of Dimes, Boy Scouts of America, Junior Golf, River of Life and many others.

Mahalo for your caring community spirit!