

Community Newsletter

FROM THE OFFICE OF REPRESENTATIVE JO JORDAN
HOUSE DISTRICT 45 · WAIANAE, MAKAHA, MAKUA · FALL 2011

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ALOHA NEIGHBORS,

The focus on education over the past few months proved to me that the leaders of the schools in our community understand that public education must be retooled to prepare students for their future and not our past. The identification of the Waianae Complex as a Zone of School Innovation as part of Race to the Top is directing resources toward preparing students before they enter kindergarten and keeping students engaged beyond graduation. Instead of playing catch up, our schools will serve as models to lead the way through project-based learning that empowers culture and utilizes technology as a tool for learning. The preliminary results are positive, but we must work together to truly transform our schools and prepare our keiki to succeed now and in the future.

One way that we can create the transformation that we would all like to see is to assist our schools whether you have a child attending or not by participating in community projects that ensure our schools are not being vandalized or even better are receiving the much needed repairs and maintenance. I will be reaching out to you to participate in projects in the next few months.

Another way to create transformation is to start with ourselves. In this newsletter, I wanted to provide an update on infrastructure improvement projects planned for our community. Moreover, I felt that it was important for me to share about some of the recent conferences that I was invited to participate in Hawaii and on the mainland. Understanding that our state has limited resources, I have been cognizant of minimizing the use of state funds for the conferences that were held here in Hawaii and San Antonio, Texas. Still, I felt it important to share what I learned at these conferences and how I plan to utilize this training as your representative.

MAHALO,

Jo JORDAN,
DISTRICT 45 REPRESENTATIVE

Infrastructure improvement projects for our community total over \$15 million

As highlighted in the chart below, the State Department of Transportation (DOT) is planning to complete major repair and maintenance of highway pavement statewide and specifically for resurfacing of Farrington Highway from Kili Drive to the Satellite Tracking Station. The DOT is also proposing to replace two timber bridges (Nos. 3 and 3A) along Farrington Highway in Makaha. The purpose of this project is to replace the wooden bridge structures with new reinforced concrete bridge structures that meet or exceed the current State and Federal design standards. The Department of Planning and Permitting of the City and County of Honolulu conducted a public hearing on the DOT's application for a Special Management Area (SMA) Use Permit for the replacement of the two bridges on September 6. Several community members expressed concerns about the design and proposed construction. At this time, construction is anticipated to begin in 2012 and last approximately 18 months. The total project cost estimate is approximately \$15 million and will come from both state and federal sources.

The DOT was also awarded a \$2.5 million federal grant to repair and reopen Kolekole Pass Road. US Senator Daniel Inouye announced that repairs to Kolekole Pass Road provide for the installing of a bridge over the area as engineers work to fix the road. Our federal leaders expressed to the administration that Kolekole Pass Road is a critical alternative evacuation route from the Waianae Coast.

In addition to repair and maintenance of our roads, flooding has also been a concern in certain areas along the Waianae Coast. The Legislature appropriated \$2 million this year for construction for flood mitigation for Lualualei Flats/Puhawai Stream. The legislature also appropriated \$1 million this year for design and construction for flood mitigation system at Farrington Highway, Lahilahi Street.

Farrington Highway Resurfacing, Kili Drive to Satellite Tracking Station	\$10,920,000
Farrington Highway, Makaha Bridges No. 3 and No. 3A replacement	\$1,700,000
Lualualei Flats/Puhawai Stream construction for flood mitigation	\$2,000,000
Farrington Highway, Lahilahi Street design and construction for flood mitigation system	\$1,000,000
TOTAL	\$15,620,000

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Thanks for doing your part to save the trees.

Opportunities for Working Families in Tight Budget Times

At the request of House Speaker Calvin Say, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) invited me to participate in a leadership forum - Opportunities for Working Families in Tight Budget Times held in Denver, Colorado from June 26-28. NCSL invited 12 states to send small teams to this meeting. Prior to the meeting, I was asked to identify the three important issues that impact low-income working families in the State of Hawaii. The issues I identified include the following: 1) Jobs that pay adequate wages to meet the high cost of living and housing in Hawaii, 2) Shift working families from employees to employers through education and micro-enterprise support, and 3) Address the high cost of health care and local healthy food by developing industry sustainability. At the meeting, I had an opportunity to examine issues related to working families with leading experts in the field. I also had time to work with colleagues on issues important to our state, and return home with an action plan.

One of the first presenters was Ralph Smith of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the US. His topic entitled "A Common Sense Agenda" emphasized that lawmakers not just spend tax dollars, but invest and in their decision making process consider not only how much a program costs, but how much is saved. As an example, Mr. Smith

referenced the Maryland Opportunity Compact, a new contract between the State, private sector and the people of Maryland to create more opportunity, demand more re-

“ Don’t just spend; invest. ”

— Ralph Smith; Executive Vice President, Annie E. Casey Foundation

sponsibility and deliver more results for tax dollars every day. This innovative approach stops excessive spending on last resort programs like prison and foster care and starts investing in success without new government spending. In fact, the goal is to save money and as savings grow, a portion of the funds is re-invested in opportunity-building initiatives and the rest is used to meet other needs. Mr. Smith challenged conference attendees to be creative in considering ways to boost economic success for low- and middle-income working families especially in these tight budget times. He encouraged private charitable organizations to be a partner with government to assist with the resolution of the challenges we face as a State.

Another presenter was Eric Seleznow, State Policy Director of the National Skills Coalition, which is a broad-based coalition working toward a vision of an America that grows its economy by investing in its people so that every worker and every industry has the skills to compete and prosper. Mr. Seleznow addressed economic development (jobs), a topic of great concern as identified in

my community survey as the second most important issue next to education. Mr. Seleznow highlighted what works in supporting economic development/jobs including: 1) partnerships to develop shared long-term workforce solutions for an industry or sector, 2) career pathways that expand access to workforce education and training by better aligning K-12,

adult basic education, job training, and higher education programs to post-secondary educational credentials and new entry points for adult workers and "non-traditional" students to help working students succeed, 3) measurement of progress to understand the outcomes of the workforce training system, and 4) integrated education and training. In sum, Mr. Seleznow emphasized that creating a skilled workforce requires a comprehensive approach shared by workforce agencies, community colleges, economic development and others.

While many other issues were covered including: Asset Building - Saving for Education, to Buy a Home or Start a Business; Tax Credits for Working Families; Maximizing Public Investments in Programs that Work; and NCSL Partnership on Hunger, two presenters shared about social impact bonds, an emerging field that allows public and philanthropic investors to participate in order to

“ The goal is to save money and as savings grow, a portion of the funds is reinvested. ”

deliver better results in public programs. Social impact bonds works by allowing private investors - typically foundations - to pay the costs of a new program in its early years, and the government later repays the investors, often with a bonus, as long as the program meets its goals. If it fails, taxpayers pay nothing. In short, this new strategy focuses on improving the performance of government programs instead of the traditional approach to government funding of social programs that focuses on expending the resources appropriated rather than meeting specific outcomes.

The critical next step is taking all of this information shared by lawmakers from other states, leading experts and practitioners and implementing the strategies that can work best here. Hawaii’s hard working families are looking for solutions that will create/expand jobs to improve our quality of life, while at the same time being fiscally responsible and ensuring that government funding is producing targeted results.



Ralph Smith of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Annual Meeting in Hawaii

The Council of State Governments-WEST (CSG-WEST) held its annual meeting with over 600 attendees in Hawaii this year from July 30 to August 2. CSG-WEST is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that brings Western state legislators from the 13 western states to share best policy practices, cooperate on regional issues and engage in professional development training. The meeting theme, Halawai, meaning "Where Leaders Gather," reflects the need for western state legislators to assemble and seek opportunities to collaborate and share experiences and lessons learned about what works and what doesn't work in serving their constituents.

The opening of the meeting featured a traditional Hawaiian blessing as well as representation from the many different cultures in Hawaii. George Kam, the Ambassador of Aloha shared his insight as a wayfinder in order to provide a sense of Hawaiian place



Traditional Hawaiian blessing.

and culture. His spirit of aloha inspired us toward the goal of uniting to move forward. After this amazing beginning, the Annual Legislative Training Assembly offered a full day of professional development for lawmakers, staff and guests. In the first session entitled Keys to Political Communication, New Jersey-based communications trainer Bill Graham used his experience in theater and television to unlock the secrets of being more likeable, making great first impressions and telling stories that your listeners will never forget. Representative Marcus Oshiro recommended me to serve as a volunteer for this session, which allowed me to not only benefit directly from the training but also help others learn as well. The other session offered that day featured leading experts in Asia-Pacific trade and

economic development from the East-West Center. We were provided with the opportunity to interact with these experts on big-picture economic trends in the Pacific region as well as learn some specific impacts on state and regional economies as Hawaii pre-



Visiting the Arizona memorial.

pare to host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit.

The main speaker the next day was Admiral Patrick Walsh, Commander of the US Pacific Fleet of the United States Navy. The US Pacific Fleet is based at Pearl Harbor and protects and defends the collective maritime interests of the United States and its allies and partners in the Asia-Pacific region. It is a combat-ready and surge-capable fleet that is prepared to respond to any contingency. Admiral Walsh is responsible for the world's largest fleet command encompassing 100 million square miles and approximately 180 ships, nearly 2000 aircraft and 125,000 sailors, marines and civilians. After Admiral Walsh's address, meeting attendees were able to tour Pearl Harbor as this year marks the 70th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Candy Crowley, CNN Chief Political Correspondent and Anchor, was the featured



Candy Crowley of CNN.

speaker on the third day. As one of the nation's foremost political reporters, she provided insights into 21st Century American politics by taking a look at national politics and implications for states, especially the West. This was a great way to allow everyone to consider a bigger view while most of the day featured conference policy forums on fiscal affairs, water and environment, education, and energy and public lands. The third day concluded with an early evening session on women in politics, which provided a time and place to share challenges and opportunities for women in state legislatures.

The final day featured Joel Kotkin, author of the critically acclaimed "The Next Hundred Million: America in 2050." As a leading expert on the evolution of cities, town, and regions across the world, Mr. Kotkin examined what America will look like in 2050 and how we will live and work as the US population increases by one hundred million. On one hand, Mr. Kotkin shared a sobering thought in that the West used to epitomize America and a forward-looking trajectory but it has since lost its way and fallen short of its potential. On the other hand, Mr. Kotkin pointed out that Hawaii is the most diverse population on earth based on intermarriage rates, a key indicator of diversity and leads the nation at 29.4 percent - nearly twice as high as the states with the next highest intermarriage rate, Alaska, Oklahoma and New Mexico based on the 2008 census data. Interestingly, all four states have sizable indigenous populations. This again was a great backdrop to the conference policy forums on future of western legislatures and western economic development. The executive committee also met to hear and discuss new initiatives on collaborative opportunities with the Western Gover-



Attending the CSG-West meeting.

nors' Association and the HOPE/Justice Reinvestment programs.

The meeting concluded with a closing luau at the Royal Hawaiian Coconut Grove and in addition to attending the conference, this annual meeting provided a great opportunity to meet leaders from other states as I assisted with greeting and hosting attendees at the many events and tours during the conference.

NCSL Legislative Summit

I participated in the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Legislative Summit with more than 4,800 attendees in San Antonio, Texas from August 8-11. NCSL is the bipartisan voice of the states serving legislators and staffs of the nation's 50 states, its commonwealths and territories. The NCSL Legislative Summit is the largest and most important meeting of the year for legislators and legislative staff.

One of the main topics at the summit focused on state budgets in light of the sluggish economy. Corina Eckl, NCSL Director of State Services, spoke about the State of State Budgets and shared that the state fiscal crisis has forced lawmakers to make some of the most difficult fiscal decisions of their careers. Ms. Eckl shared that state budgets are recovering, but they are not recovered. Nationally,

year-end balances are stabilizing and modest tax growth is projected for FY 2012, while at the same time, States face ongoing budget challenges. Ms. Eckl also shared highlights from different states including Hawaii and noted that some general excise tax exemptions were removed and our strength for the FY 2012 State Budget Outlook is the strong visitor industry.

Luke Martel of the Fiscal Affairs Program focused on State Strategies to Manage Budget Shortfalls through spending reductions, consolidations and tax and fee changes. He reported that the overall trends for Fiscal Years 2010-2012 indicate the following: 1) Cuts have been heavily concentrated in Medicaid and other health care services, 2) FY 2011-FY 2012 cuts to K-12 have been more severe than in FY 2010, 3) Some states are revising sentencing policy in an attempt to control rising prison costs, 4) Many states have cut aid to local government, 5) States are instituting changes to employee benefit plans, and 6) States have relied significantly on rainy day funds and other one-time sources. Mr. Martel pointed out that Hawaii will be cutting \$75 million to Medicaid by tightening eligibility requirements in FY 2012.

Finally, a panel of presenters from Washington State, New York, and Florida spoke about Return on Investment: Improving Re-



Greeting guests at the closing luau.

sults and Saving Money. From corrections and education to children's programs, evidence-based research, use of data and cost-benefit analysis are emerging as key tools for state legislatures to improve results and save money. Steve Aos, Director of the Washington State Institute for Public Policy summarized his presentation by explaining that to improve key public outcomes and save money, State or Local Government must recognize that it is increasingly possible to use rigorous evidence to identify what works and what doesn't, calculate return on investment information routinely and consistently, and have the information actually used in policy making. Tina Chiu, Director of Technical Assistance at the Vera Institute of Justice shared the Cost-Benefit Analysis used in evaluating whether to raise the age of juvenile jurisdiction from 16 to 18 in North Carolina. The analysis concluded that the taxpayer cost totaled \$70.9 million, but the benefits totaled \$123.1 million for a total net benefit of \$52.3 million. Ms. Chiu reported that the outcome from utilizing cost-benefit analysis includes a better estimation of costs, greater understanding of benefits, better understanding of policy implications, greater level of transparency, and more confidence in the cost-benefit analysis results.

Many more issues were addressed in the 150 policy sessions held during the summit and provided the perfect opportunity for policymakers from across the US to exchange ideas on how to solve the critical challenges facing states like Hawaii.



Left: Hawaii Legislators serve as hosts at the CSG-West meeting.