



Courtesy Tyler Kuse

Capitol Connection with Gov. David Ige is a regular e-newsletter that provides you with updates from the fifth floor of the State Capitol. As the governor's office works to become paperless, the newsletter will be available on-line and via subscription. Check out the governor's website at governor.hawaii.gov to subscribe to this newsletter. Also, follow the governor on Twitter and Instagram @govhawaii and check www.facebook.com/GovernorIge for daily activities.

From the Governor: An innovative plan to cool our schools

Q. In your State of the State address, you set an ambitious goal of cooling 1,000 public school classrooms — using energy-efficient means and a “green energy” fund — by the end of this year. How did that plan come about?

A. For the sake of our children and teachers, I felt strongly that we needed to ramp up our efforts to cool hot classrooms across the state. At the same time, we knew whatever we did had to save energy and use funds wisely. In a meeting with our state directors and others, we found a creative answer and a good fit in the Green Energy Market Securitization (GEMS) program to implement heat abatement measures and install air conditioning units in classrooms where they're most needed.

Q. Why is this approach important and how do you see it working?

A. GEMS funds are an existing source of money that can be deployed quickly and appropriately to provide relief for our schools. The Department of Education has already launched energy efficiency and heat abatement programs and is exploring many types of cooling strategies to reduce temperatures in the classrooms. With an infusion of the \$100 million GEMS fund loan, the DOE can install heat abatement measures in conjunction with LED lighting and other energy efficiency strategies to lower energy consumption, avoid overloading a school's electrical capacity and save money on the electric bill. Achieving savings can be as simple as making the windows fully operable to take advantage of cooler days, even in rooms with air conditioning.

Q. What key steps are involved in reaching the 1,000 classroom goal?

A. It's taking many people working together to help us meet our goal — from the Department of Education and other state departments to legislators, the Public Utilities Commission, and the many engineering teams who are assessing the individual needs of the hottest schools. We want to make sure we do things the right way while also being aware time is of the essence. (For more details, see the articles on Page 3 of this newsletter.)

Waipahu High teacher wins Milken award

Michael Sana, chairman of Waipahu High School's science department, has received Hawai'i's 2015-16 Milken Educator Award for his leadership in inspiring students. "Mr. Sana's work at Waipahu High has been truly exceptional and raised expectations of what is possible in high school science programs," said Governor Ige.

Sana is the only educator in the state certified by Rutgers University to teach biotechnology. Sana's students have published their research 120 times with the National Institutes of Health and have worked at prestigious labs such as the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. "He sees the potential in you even if you don't believe in it, and he pushes you toward that potential," said one student.



Waipahu High's Michael Sana with Gov. Ige and the First Lady, DOE superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi and Milken's Dr. Jane Foley.

State mobilizes to prevent mosquito-borne illnesses

Gov. David Ige has signed an emergency proclamation as a preventive measure against mosquito-borne illnesses that include dengue fever and Zika. This follows the recent decision by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to open its emergency operations center at Level 1 to prepare for and mitigate the Zika risk.

“There have been no locally acquired Zika cases in the U.S. or Hawai‘i, and we’d like to keep it that way. This is about getting in front of the situation across the state. I will be coordinating planning efforts with the Hawai‘i Emergency Management Agency, all county mayors and Civil Defense coordinators,” said Governor Ige.



News Updates
Governor Ige confers with Mayor Billy Kenoi (left) and Darryl Oliveira, Civil Defense administrator.

On Hawai‘i Island, dengue fever cases continue to be fewer and farther between. However, the battle is not over, and the state continues to focus resources to break the cycle of dengue fever infection and transmission. The emergency proclamation will give the state access to the Major Disaster Fund, the option of waiving certain laws and regulations to expedite the outbreak response if and when needed, as well as pave the way for federal assistance should the state exhaust its resources.

The state previously released the State Health Department from a 5 percent budget restriction (\$250,000) to fund costs incurred while responding to the onset of the dengue outbreak. The state is also releasing the Health Department from another 5 percent restriction (\$250,000) to fund eight vector control positions, one entomologist and one communications position.

\$6.8 million to propel STEM training

Gov. David Ige has announced a statewide initiative to boost the state’s workforce training in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields, thanks to \$6.8 million in grants from USA Funds.

Of this, \$4.6 million was awarded to the University of Hawai‘i to develop more statewide training programs in high-paying, high-demand STEM fields. By 2017, Hawai‘i is projected to need 16,000 more workers annually with such skills.

Another \$2.2 million in USA Funds for Project Lead The Way will help at least 48 Hawai‘i high schools implement programs in computer science, engineering or biomedical science. UH will also establish a STEM Center of Excellence to coordinate statewide workforce needs for local talent.



Windward CC pre-engineering students (from left) Madori Rumpungworn, Cale Mechler, Keith Nakamatsu, Elena Mahelani Barbour and Kalanikapu Copp were part of a UHCC group selected by NASA to build and launch a payload into space — the only community colleges chosen in the nation.

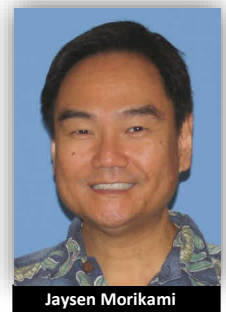
Tax Department offers added help

The state Tax Department has launched a five-phase modernization program to make tax return processing more efficient with upgraded equipment, software and a new phone system for improved customer support.

However, until the modernization program is complete, tax refunds may be delayed as the department continues to deploy new “filters” to detect fraudulent returns. Last year, more than \$32 million in fraudulent filings were found among the 700,000-plus tax returns processed.

On its website, the department says: “We encourage taxpayers who are expecting refunds to file early. By filing early, taxpayers are more likely to receive their refund quicker.”

The department has launched a new Administrative Appeals and Dispute Resolution program to streamline the appeals process for state tax audits.



Jaysen Morikami

Also on board this year is new **Taxpayer Advocate Jaysen Morikami**, an 11-year veteran of the state Tax Department. He will serve as an ombudsman to help taxpayers who:

- Still have unresolved state tax problems after exhausting all appropriate avenues of resolution;
- Believe his or her rights have been abridged;
- Have already used the formal appeals process or established departmental procedures; and
- Are not seeking legal or technical tax advice.

Cooling our Schools: It Takes a Village

When Gov. David Ige committed to cooling 1,000 public school classrooms in his State of the State address, it was clear unprecedented collaboration across public and private sectors would be required. Here's a look at parts of the plan from two of the key players.

Tara Young, executive director, Hawai'i Green Infrastructure Authority

Central to the governor's proposal for cooling the schools is the use of \$100 million of Green Energy Market Securitization (GEMS) funds overseen by the Hawaii Green Infrastructure Authority (HGIA).



"We had already been working with the Department of Education (DOE) and private companies to lay the groundwork for investments like these," says Tara Young, HGIA executive director, "so we were in a good position to move quickly when the governor set out this challenge."

Young, a former investment banker who joined HGIA in October 2015 to re-energize the program, says she and others are working on the complex elements needed to accomplish the governor's goal. These include:

- Passage of an emergency legislative appropriation to authorize the investments and allocate \$30 million of CIP funding as well as funds for initial loan repayment.
- For the DOE, finalizing an implementation plan in the state's hottest schools for heat abatement and efficiency.
- HGIA additionally requires approval from the Public Utilities Commission to fund the energy efficiency investments.

Young says, "This plan allows us to offset some of the long-term cost of cooling classrooms and reduce the state's dependence on non-renewable energy sources—which is the mission of GEMS and the HGIA."

Dann Carlson, assistant superintendent, HIDOE School Facilities and Support Services

The HIDOE's Dann Carlson is used to handling pressure. After all, he was an Air Force fighter pilot and currently oversees everything from campus maintenance, bus and food service to utility payments. But he says he and HIDOE are ready to make good on the governor's goal of cooling 1,000 classrooms, including AC, by the end of the year.



The HIDOE staff and engineering teams are currently working through their list of the 31 hottest schools to determine, classroom by classroom, what combination of cooling and energy-efficient measures would work best.

"The good thing is we're able to combine what the governor wants — 1,000 classrooms with AC — and still carry out our heat abatement plan," he says. "This surge of funding means we can get way down our list of hottest schools faster. What I can guarantee, using GEMS funds, is we're going to go into as many schools as possible to find efficiencies. We'll work with each of the school principals; we have a plan to execute."

To meet the 1,000 classroom goal, HIDOE's main concern is getting funding approval soon, matching each school's energy needs to the right equipment, navigating the procurement process for timely delivery, and installing the equipment by the end of the year. "Every day is very important to us," he emphasizes. "The sooner we can access the funding, the sooner we can get this done."

AUW partnership to help homelessness statewide

When you're homeless or on the verge of being on the streets, where can you turn for help? Although several agencies offer services, there has been no one place in the state to call for emergency aid.

That is about to change, thanks to a new partnership announced recently by Governor Ige. The state Department of Human Services and Aloha United Way are joining forces to provide immediate relief to homeless individuals and families.

The recently finalized \$5 million AYW contract includes short-term rent and utility payment for rapid re-housing and homelessness prevention; establishment of a Housing Coordination Center using AYW's 211 phone system; and development of longer-term strategies to address the needs of specific homeless populations, including

youth under age 18, prisoners recently released, and those with chronic health conditions.

"This plan will help us focus on homelessness prevention and ways to reach more people throughout the state," said the governor. "The bulk of the funds (\$4.6 million) will enable AYW to help 1,390 households over the course of a year to avoid homelessness by getting them into a home or stabilizing their current housing situation."

All of the state funds will be used for direct community assistance with AYW providing \$500,000 in private funding for staffing. State homelessness coordinator Scott Morishige said, "Currently, it's very difficult for someone who is homeless to get help quickly. We hope through AYW and its network, we can better coordinate the services people need."



People in the News

Double Pinning at Washington Place



Brig. Gen. Suzanne Vares-Lum (right) and Brig. Gen. Ken Hara take the oath administered by Maj. Gen. Gary Hara at the Washington Place.

Two outstanding officers of the Hawai'i Army National Guard were promoted in a rare double pinning ceremony at Washington Place in December.

The event honored Brig. Gen. Suzanne Vares-Lum — the first Native Hawaiian woman to achieve that rank in the state's National Guard — and Brig. Gen. Kenneth Hara.

Hara has served as deputy adjutant general for the State of Hawai'i, Department of Defense since Jan. 1, 2015 after three combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Vares-Lum is the mobilization assistant to the director of Strategic Plans and Policy, U.S. Pacific Command at Camp Smith. She has received numerous awards for her service over the years and established and led the Joint Intelligence Center in Balad, Iraq.

Hawai'i a "Gold Star" state for consumers

Hawai'i was among the top three states—along with New Hampshire and Oregon — awarded a "Gold Star" from Truth in Advertising Inc. for having open, accessible information for consumers. The watchdog group gave the state high marks for providing websites where consumers can "protect themselves against false advertising and deceptive marketing."



One database logs complaints filed with the Office of Consumer Protection against companies operating in the state. The second includes complaints filed against individuals and companies with professional and vocational licenses. This includes everyone from dentists and real estate brokers to contractors and plumbers.

To search the databases or to file a complaint against a company or individual, go to the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs site at cca.hawaii.gov/.

Progress across the State

DLNR team honored for Kōke'e restoration

An ambitious Kaua'i project to reforest nearly 1,000 acres of Kōke'e land scorched by wildfires has been recognized by the USDA Forest Service.

The Western Regional Forester's Honor Award is for leadership in a natural environment and recognizes the entire project team led by DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife Kaua'i branch manager Galen Kawakami, supervisor Patrick Porter, forestry program manager Sheri Mann and many others.

The project is an unprecedented attempt to re-forest using native species such as koa — turning a fire disaster into an opportunity to restore the area for future generations.

Governor's emergency extension to help Neighbor Island and O'ahu homelessness

Homeless individuals and families on the Neighbor Islands and O'ahu will benefit from the recent extension of the governor's emergency proclamation.

On Maui, the funds can be used to build "sanctuaries" with modular housing units in Kahului, Wailuku and Lahaina. Hawai'i Island will be helped to start a micro-unit housing project in West Hawai'i. On Kaua'i, the proclamation will create a new temporary shelter to add to the one shelter on the island. On O'ahu, it could help with six long-term housing projects.

New smoking laws aim to improve health

Hawai'i has become the first state in the nation to raise the smoking age from 18 to 21. The law bans anyone under the age of 21 from buying tobacco products or electronic cigarettes. A second measure restricts the use of e-cigarettes in all locations where smoking is illegal.

Although other cities and counties have similar laws, Hawai'i is the first to raise the age limit statewide. "Raising the minimum age will help reduce tobacco use among our youth and increase the likelihood that our keiki will grow up tobacco-free," said Governor Ige.

In Hawai'i, 86 percent of current adult smokers began smoking before age 21. Of these, 34 percent started smoking between 18 to 20 years old, state officials say.

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