

StarKist and Longline Service tell fishery management of their challenges

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No funds from govt or borrowed from Church, Stigmata Dad says

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Aoaoga faapitoa mo Leoleo atunu'u mai sui fa'apitoa o le Pasefika

Le Lali



TAOA has added a Hula Fitness class to their program to better help their focus on health and happiness. About 50 Senior citizens are seen during their Hula fitness class yesterday morning, before starting work carving, weaving, tapa designing, etc. Hula fitness class is opened to the public at the TAOA compound in Pago Pago, from Monday to Thursday, at 7:30am to 8:30am. [photo: Ese Malala]



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TUESDAY, MARCH 28 2017

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TAOA seniors start the day with a Hula Fitness class

By Leiloa Ese Malala
Samoa News Staff Writer

Exercise is important at any age, but as you get older, regularly exercising has a powerful effect; and to that thought, the Director of Territorial Administration on Aging (TAOA) Evelyn Lili'o-Satele has included a Hula Fitness class to the TAOA program. "One of our focuses is health and happiness so we have added the hula fitness because we want to build up activities to offer to our seniors..." she told Samoa News in an interview.

The TAOA director added, "Also physical education is a must in our program — we want to promote health to lower blood pressure, and any incidents of diabetes."

The Hula fitness started two weeks ago, and it is held at the TAOA compound in Pago Pago. When the seniors get to work they start their day by joining Vatau Galea'i, who is their instructor for the hula exercise.

"When Evelyn asked me to come teach hula to the seniors, I was happy she asked me, because I do want to help. I've performed and taught hula for many years, so I was ready to teach it again especially as a workout for the seniors," Galeai told Samoa News.

According to DOH Official, starting or maintaining a regular exercise routine can

(Continued on page 3)



Lt. Gov. Lemanu Peleti Mauga (far left) cuts the ribbon to officially open yesterday morning the Transnational Crime Network center in American Samoa that is overseen by the Department of Public Safety. Looking on are Samoa Police Commissioner Fuiavailili Egon Keil (middle) and American Samoa Police Commissioner Le'i Sonny Thompson (far right). [photo: AF]

Local Pacific Transnational Crime Network unit opens

SHARING INTELLIGENCE, SHARING INFORMATION... ACROSS PACIFIC BORDERS

by Fili Sagapolutele
Samoa News Correspondent

As the newest member of the Pacific Transnational Crime Network (PTCN), American Samoa has now joined the TCN unit, with a system-network center housed at the one-story building next to the DPS

facility and the local unit was dedicated yesterday.

The dedication followed about an hour after the official opening yesterday of the PTCN training and workshop hosted by American Samoa.

DEDICATION

At the dedication, Lt. Gov. Lemanu Peleti Mauga cut the ribbon to officially

open the American Samoa TCN unit, which is headed by DPS Sgt. Jackie Lagai and assisted by DPS Det. Gau'i Seanoa. All of the TCNs, including American Samoa, are funded by the Australian Federal Police, which has provided for the local unit, new computers, desks, and fixtures.

(Continued on page 2)



Local Pacific..

Continued from page 1

Before cutting the ribbon, Lemanu said “This is the beginning of collaboration and coordination with Pacific islands,” as Samoa Police Commissioner Fuiavailiili E. Keil and DPS Commissioner Le’i S. Thompson looked on, along with others including Phil Eagle of the Australia Federal Police.

Fuiavailiili explained that the PTCN as well as the TCN system was relocated to Apia, Samoa, where it’s now headquartered, in 2007, from Fiji where it was established in 2002.

American Samoa joined the PTCN late last year bringing a total of 16 member countries and the new TCN unit set up in Pago Pago now brings a total of 24 units with others operating in Pacific countries such as Australia, Samoa, New Zealand and Fiji. While most countries have one TCU unit, there are some countries with more than one.

Fuiavailiili, the PTCN chairman, said, “we’re looking to expand the network” to Guam, French Polynesia and New Caledonia. And he thanked the Australian government for their contribution.

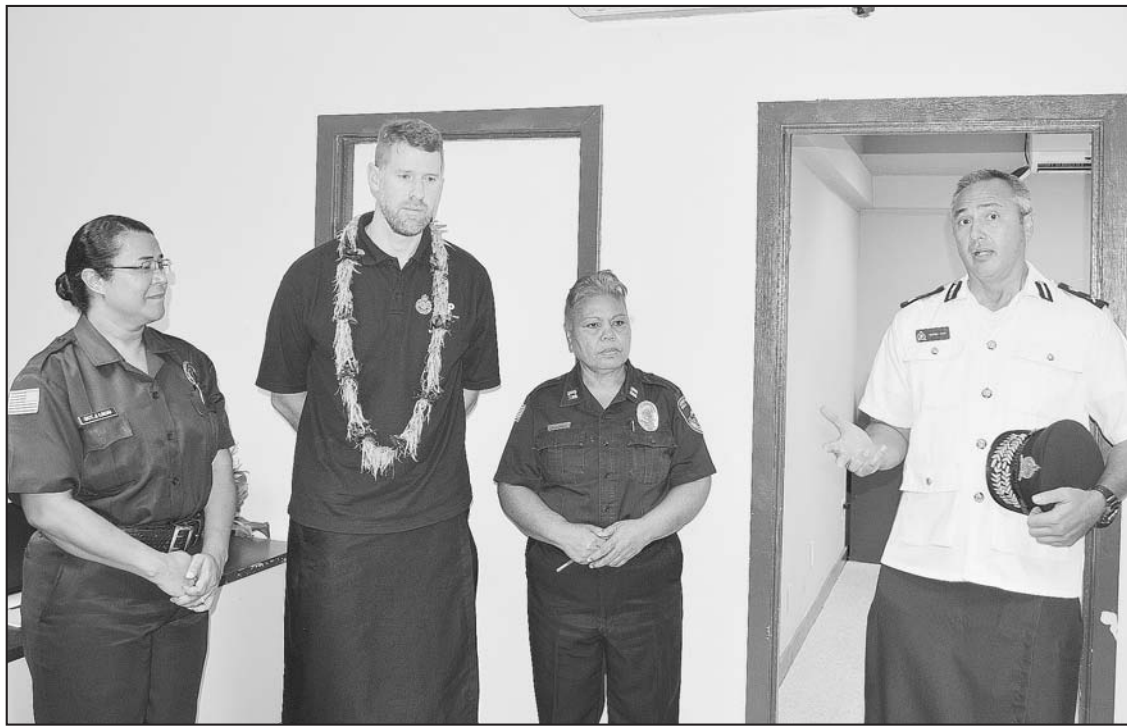
“To me personally, I think it’s a great system because we need to share intelligence, share information,” he said of the TCN system and noted that with the system connecting American Samoa and Samoa, “We can really talk about issues between our borders. But not just us, we’re looking at the welfare of the whole Pacific.”

“Coordination and sharing of information is what’s critical in this network,” he said and points out that PTCN works together with the US Homeland Security Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

He then officially welcomed American Samoa to the network, which is a “great tool to build law enforcement relationships and hopefully keep the Pacific safe for all of us and our families as well.”

WORKSHOP

A weeklong workshop involving law enforcement agencies from within the Pacific island nations started



[l-r] DPS Sgt. Jackie Lagai, Australian Federal Police official Phil Eagles, DPS Capt. Tina Simanu, and Samoa Police Commissioner Fuiavailiili Egon Keil giving a brief explanation of the Transnational Crime Network system for American Samoa overseen by the DPS. [photo: AF]

yesterday, and with the opening of the TCN unit in the territory kick starts American Samoa’s participation in Pacific safety.

According to Le’i’s prepared speech for the workshop, objectives of the local TCN unit are in part:

- Proactive transnational criminal intelligence collection, analysis, target development and dissemination.
- Lead efforts to detect, dismantle and disrupt transnational organized crime impacting on domestic borders and the Pacific as a whole.
- Liaise with various local government departments and agencies in relation to border control issues and investigations.

In his speech, Le’i welcomed participants from the Pacific to the territory “to help build and strengthen our capabilities to successfully curb the threat of cyber-crimes, human trafficking, and others while exchanging best practices to intelligence gathering and leveraging resources among counterparts in island nations to better strengthen our intel collection capabilities.”

As police commissioner, Le’i said he can “attest to the critical relationship our stakeholders from Pacific Nations Crime Network (PNCN) plays in minimalizing human trafficking, cyber-crimes, and reducing the threats to our national security.”

“As the front-line defense for our respective governments and island nations, we have a moral and professional obligation to foster a transparent network and culture of being proactive in detecting, disrupting, and preventing transnational crimes such as: drug trafficking, child sex tourism, cybercrime, fraud, illegal fishing, money laundering, illegal logging and people trafficking,” he said.

Le’i offered a recommendation to expand this initiative, which is supported by the Australian Federal Police (AFP), the New Zealand Police (NZP) and US Homeland Security through the Joint Interagency Task Force – West (JIATF-W), “to invest in our human capital through field training and identifying rising threats to our Pacific Islands national security.”

Additionally, it will allow multiple law enforcement agencies — primarily Police, Customs and Immigration officers “to exchange best practices among professional peers and colleagues.”

In his remarks, Fuiavailiili said the workshop and training “is very critical” to law enforcement in the region. “So whatever kind of training that you’re going to get, please listen up, as you’re given this information from people that actually sees a lot of things that probably you haven’t seen here in American Samoa,” he told participants.

“I’m a very proactive commissioner. I don’t sit around, I like things done,” he said, adding that he is a former Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) officer, “so I’m very progressive, I’m proactive and it’s good to hear that you’ve got a commissioner (Le’i) that’s proactive as well.”

Fuiavailiili said that with American Samoa joining PTNC, “We can all come together as partners to do really good things here in the Pacific.”

And he is happy to see PTNC in American Samoa. “For too long the two Samoa law enforcements haven’t come together as a unit to fight transnational crimes,” he said. He said he is looking forward to the working relationship with Le’i.

In his remarks, Lemanu reminded law enforcement officers that the public put their trust in them. He also said that law enforcement officers put their lives in danger and in harms way and “we owe you a thank you for what you do.”

He said the importance of yesterday’s gathering is “collaboration amongst ourselves. No one person, or no one island, or no one nation can stay by its self. That’s what we believe.”

“The collaboration among the islands, the different governments, leadership, the commissioners and the law enforcers, is what needs to be done within the Pacific Rim,” he said and urged all law enforcement in the Pacific to “work together, coordinate and share our resources because we all do the same job — caring for our people.”



Samoa Police Commissioner Fuiavailiili Egon Keil speaking yesterday morning at the opening of the weeklong training and workshop of the Pacific Transnational Crime Network (PTCN) hosted by American Samoa. Fuiavailiili is also the PTCN chairman. [photo: AF]

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MEMBERS MEETING NOTICE:
The Chamber of Commerce Board invites its members and the business community to its Member’s Meeting

Venue: DDW Café, Utulei
Date: Wednesday March 29th 2017
Time: 5.30pm – 7.00pm

Sponsor: Bluesky

Refreshments provided & social networking to follow meeting.



Director of Territorial Administration of Aging Evelyn Lili'o-Satele with Hula Fitness instructor Vatau Galeai and the band, which plays for the Hula fitness class. The hula class is from Monday to Thursday, at 7:30am to 8:30am. [photo: Ese Malala]

▶ TAOA seniors start the day with a Hula...

Continued from page 1

be a challenge at any age, and it doesn't get any easier as you get older. You may feel discouraged by health problems, aches and pains, or concerns about injuries or falls or maybe just think that exercise is boring but exercising regularly has a great effect.

She said that becoming more active can energize your mood, relieve stress, help you manage symptoms of illness and pain, and improve your overall sense of well-being. And it doesn't have to be strenuous workouts or going to the gym, it's just about adding movements and activities to your life even in small ways.

Hula Fitness instructor Galea'i added by saying, "Hula fitness is inspired by the dances of the Pacific Islands, which is easy to follow for all ages and fitness levels. But getting active is not just about adding years to your life; it's about adding life to your years."

The senior citizens are from 50 years old and up.

Some of the senior citizens told Samoa News that they are thankful for this opportunity to exercise. Given only 30 minutes to workout, most of the seniors enjoy it so much they want to keep exercising for at least more than an hour. A male

senior citizen says he now looks forward to coming to work to exercise because it makes him do his work better throughout the day.

Another female senior citizen said, "I get more energy from our hula class and I feel like I am young again."

Lili'o-Satele said an average of 50 seniors participate in the hula fitness class in the morning at 7:30a.m. "We have different groups of seniors that join us for the hula class, some are not workers — so it is open to everyone because we want to keep them moving and active."

The TAOA director noted that originally it was supposed to be only Mondays and Thursdays, but the senior citizens have enjoyed it a lot and they have extended it to Monday to Thursdays.

A TAOA employee said, "This is a wonderful thing for the seniors, because not only does it keep them moving, but it has opened up more opportunities for jobs to other seniors like the band. Our hula fitness has given some of the seniors the chance to play instruments and sing for our hula fitness class."

The TAOA Director also said, "I am anxious to have a part-time nurse to do the vitals and show the benefits of

exercise."

The employment program TAOA has to offer is for them to work for 4 years and it prepares them to work in an unsubsidized position in the community.

There are many seniors with so much talent, so the program is opened for them to work and use their talents in weaving, carving, cooking, entertaining guests and visitors, Lili'o-Satele told Samoa News.

Late last year TAOA opened a handicraft shop for them to showcase and sell what they have made.

TAOA is open to the public, and Lili'o-Satele invites all to come and visit and learn from amazing talented seniors, who still have the culture and the faaSamoa lifestyle instilled in them or even to join the hula fitness class.

"We always look at our children as our future but we must look at our seniors at our past to see where they've been, why we are here and who we are today," she said.

TAOA has many programs to offer for seniors and is aiming to have a larger center to accommodate many other seniors out there, the TAOA director said.



Some of the senior citizens of TAOA enjoying doing the hula as their fitness workout yesterday morning at the TAOA compound in Pago Pago. One of TAOA's focus is health to help promote the importance of living healthy and staying active. [photo: Ese Malala]



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Lauli'i Elementary School new tsunami indoor siren damaged

(BASED ON A PRESS RELEASE) — A special bulletin from the American Samoa Department of Homeland Security — TEMCO was issued yesterday, at 11 a.m., Monday, March 27, 2017, asking residents and those who frequent the area of Lauli'i Elementary to report any information pertaining to the damage and missing siren parts to the police or to the ASDHS.

The special bulletin states that on Friday, March 25, 2017 at 12:45 p.m., damage and missing parts were observed at one of the new island wide tsunami indoor sirens installed at the Lauli'i Elementary School.

Damage occurred when the siren system's "TRANSCIVER" — which is now missing — was forcibly removed. The new indoor sirens are an addition to the outdoor sirens to better our tsunami warning system, especially at schools near the coast and in the tsunami zones like Lauli'i Elementary. This system will also assist the school to evacuate in the event of a tsunami and ultimately saving lives.

This missing part is crucial to the siren system and it is mounted on the roof with cable connections to the rest of the system within the principal's office. The transceiver will enable the siren system to receive and transmit information between the siren location and our office in Tafuna; without it, the siren system is useless.

The transceiver is about 5 inches circumference and an inch thick, white colored, glassy disc.

A reminder to the public that damage to and the unauthorized removal of government property is a crime and punishable by law.

Residents and those who frequent the area of Lauli'i Elementary are asked to report any information pertaining to the damage and missing siren part to the Police (633-1111) or to the American Samoa Department of Homeland Security (699-0420).

O se fa'aaliga taua fa'apitoa leni mai le Matagaluega o le Puipuiga o le Saogalemu Faa-Lotoifale — le Homeland Security ma le Ofisa o le TEMCO, auina mai i le itula e 11:00 i le taeao nei, le Aso Gafua, aso 27 o Mati 2017.

O le Aso Farai, Mati 25, 2017 i le 12:45 i le aoauli na lipotia mai ai le fa'aleagaina ma le ave'eseina ai o se totoga (Transceiver) e taua i masini fa'ailo fou nei ua fa'atulagaina mo le a'oga tulaga muamua i Lauli'i. Na mafua le fa'aleagaina ina ua ave'eseina fa'amalosi lea totoga mai lona.



Ua fa'ailoa mai le olaga sapaia e le fanau a'oga i Matafao Elementary i Faga'alu lo latou fiafia e a'oa'oina fa'atasi ma soifua fa'atasi ma o latou uso ma tuafafine o lo'o i ai mana'oga fa'apitoa. Ua fa'ailoa lea i le latou taulotoina o le latou manulauti i le sauniga fa'apitoa sa tatala ai le vaiaso atoa e fa'ataua ai le SPED i totonu o le latou a'oga i le polokalama sa fa'atautaia i le taeao ananafi.

[ata: Leua Aiono Frost]

TBAS projecting a loss of "a little less than a million dollars" for calendar year 2017

by Fili Sagapolutele
Samoa News Correspondent

Although the Territorial Bank of American Samoa is projecting a loss of "a little less than a million dollars" for calendar year 2017, the government owned commercial financial institution has not touched the seed money of \$10 million provided by the government to launch the commercial bank, according to testimonies by TBAS officials before a House committee late last week.

The hearing gave lawmakers a chance to get an update from TBAS chief executive officer Philip Ware and chief operations officer Makerita T. Polu on the bank's operations. Ware told the committee that the bank is still awaiting Federal Reserve approval of its transit routing number. (See last Friday's edition for more on routing number.)

Rep. Meauta L. Mageo raised several questions, which revealed where the bank stands since it opened for business on Oct. 3, last year.

Since it opened for business, Polu said TBAS has total deposits of \$1.5 million and nearly \$600,000 in loans. TBAS also still has the \$10 million from ASG for seed money to kick start the bank's operation.

Samoa News points out that the \$10 million seed amount — which is a portion of the bond sale proceeds — is part of the local law, which established the government owned bank.

Mageo asked about a TBAS projected loss for this year 2017, and Ware replied, a "little less than a million dollars."

Asked what TBAS plans to use to "close that gap", Ware replied, "We have started purchasing loans and making investments, which I think will curb that within the next two months." (It should be noted that the interest rate for loans were not asked for or stated during the hearing.)

Ware also told the committee that the bank has a strategic plan for its operation, but "we keep revising the plan because of our transit routing number" that is yet to be approved by the Federal Reserve.

Responding to committee questions Ware revealed three Congressional members — in both the US House and the US Senate, who are all Republicans — along with their staff have been very helpful, and stand ready to assist TBAS — and this includes efforts to get a routing number. The three are: Congresswoman Aumua

Amata, US Rep. Rob Bishop, who is chairman of the US Committee on Natural Resources, with oversight of the US territories; and US Sen. Orrin G. Hatch. Both Bishop and Hatch are from Utah, which is Ware's home state.

BANK LOANS

Responding to questions on loan programs, Polu explained that TBAS launched last November the Christmas or holiday loan program for the Christmas holiday for the minimum amount of \$300, with the highest at \$2,500.

And the holiday loan program ended in early January this year and the bank plans to launch it again towards the end of this year, she said.

Also in January this year, the bank launched another loan program, which doesn't have a ceiling amount or maximum loan amount. Polu said a person seeking a loan brings in the request and a review of the application is carried on to determine an amount to be approved.

She said the bank has already set criteria for the loan program and this includes the person's income.

MANU'A SERVICE

House Vice Speaker Fetu Fetui Jr. told the TBAS officials that Manu'a has "been left out on almost everything that goes on" in American Samoa and he would like to see a bank operating on Ta'u or Ofu or both. Fetui is one of the three House members from Manu'a.

"We are very aware with the situation with banking services... in Manu'a. And it is our intent to address those as soon as we can," Ware told the committee and noted that once the routing number is set up "it is my intent to identify a mechanism to deliver banking service to the people of Manu'a."

He added, "Whether that be a ATM or whether that be a teller, or what ever that may be, we will do the math at that time and figure out how to take care of the people there. You have my commitment on that." Fetui responded that he would personally take Ware for a tour of the Manu'a islands.

"I really want to see this service in Manu'a," the Manu'a faipule commented.

BANK OF HAWAII

Fetui asked as to whether Bank of Hawaii is helping TBAS, to which Ware said "no". While he doesn't like to say negative things about other banks, Ware told the committee "when

(Continued on page 5)

PHOTO CAP CORRECTION:

A photo on page 5 of yesterday's edition misidentified one of the individuals in a group photo as District of Columbia Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton. It should instead be former US Virgin Islands Congresswoman Donna Marie Christensen.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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O se va'aiga i le vasega o faia'oga uma lava o lo'o galulue i latou e a'oa'oina le fanau fa'apitoa i totonu o le Aoga tulaga muamua i Matafao i Faga'alu. Fa'afetai mo lo outou onosa'i, ae maise o la outou pitola'au tau'ave i aso ta'itasi i potu a'oga. [ata: Leua Aiono Frost]

▶ TBAS projecting a loss...

Continued from page 4

we approached this project, we counted on the help from two banks — the bank that the government uses, Zions Bank [of Utah] and Bank of Hawaii.

“And when it came right down to getting them to help us, both of them turned us down,” he said, noting that during a recent meeting in Washington D.C. that included the governor, the Federal Reserve noted that it was “very surprised, that there are so many customers that are coming to our bank when

we don't have FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation) insurance and we don't have a transit routing number.”

NEW SERVICES

Besides offering loan programs, Ware informed the committee that it was more than a week ago that TBAS started offering, “deposit boxes” and “has been received favorably.”

“We also have online banking, although that will be limited also [but] you're able to go online and check your bal-

ance, and make a loan payment. So we keep adding things,” he said, and noted that without a routing number TBAS is not able at this time to offer business accounts.

“Business accounts... require too many money transfers and we can't do transfers until we get the routing number. However, we've had a lot of inquiries because businesses want to move their accounts to us,” Ware said, adding that this is the same situation with government accounts.

(Samoa News notes that the law establishing TBAS requires all government accounts to be

held at TBAS.)

“We're doing everything we possibly can without a transit routing number to bring services to the people of American Samoa,” the TBAS CEO said and gave the committee a verbal commitment to getting TBAS moving forward.

“I will commit to you, that I am not in this for the money because I have no money involved in this myself. I am in this to try to do a service to the people of American Samoa. So you have my commitment that I will do that,” he said.

Last month the Lolo Administration sent to the Fono, leg-

islation authorizing TBAS to provide Trust Services, and Ware is hopeful that lawmakers will approve the measure. (See Samoa News edition Feb. 23 for details on the bill.)

Although trust services are “not a big money maker,” Ware said TBAS would be able to provide this type of service in the territory.

The House will hold a hearing at a later time on the trust services bill, while the Senate hearing scheduled for yesterday was canceled because Ware left Friday night for an important meeting on the mainland dealing with TBAS.



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CALL into origin energy gas showroom at tafuna industrial park 699-9740





The Republican Party of American Samoa hosted a family fun day at Utulei Beach over the weekend where close to 40 people turned out. RPAS is getting ready to head to San Diego in May for the Republican National Committee Spring meeting. [Courtesy photo]

StarKist and Longline Service tell fishery management of their challenges

by Fili Sagapolutele

Samoa News Correspondent

Although no specific details were released, StarKist Samoa official Taotasi Archie Soliai told a fishery management meeting in Honolulu that negotiations are ongoing with the government for land to build the cannery's cold storage facility in Satala and that negotiations are expected to continue again early this week.

Early this year, StarKist Co. officials from headquarters in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania were on island to meet with ASG officials. Negotiations, which included Taotasi, for land space at the shipyard didn't reach an agreement, but are continuing.

Taotasi along with Christina Lutu-Sanchez of Longline Service Inc. presented a briefing on the territory's canneries and fishing industry, last Thursday, during day-three of the final day of the 169th Meeting of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council in Honolulu. Taotasi and Lutu-Sanchez along with Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources are American Samoa's members on the Council.

For StarKist Samoa, "business is continuing although the challenges have basically not changed," Taotasi said, and noted that in 2016, the cannery had four weeks of unplanned

closures "most of which are attributed to supply and not being able to have supplies."

"We're looking forward to 2017, being better, but again the challenges continue and remain," he said, adding that one of those challenges is the need for additional storage space.

"Although I'm not privy to discuss the negotiations with local government with respect to negotiation on that space, I am happy to say that the negotiations are continuing and look forward to continuing" hopefully as early as this week, he said.

Taotasi called Council members attention to the U.S Government Accountability Office report issued last December to the U.S Congress dealing with minimum wage in American Samoa. (That report gave an extensive review on the canneries, which have been the background of the territory's economy for many years.)

He said the GAO report states in part that "while American Samoa may show some signs of economic stabilization in comparison to previous time periods, they do note that the overall economy continues to rest upon a highly unstable foundation."

The StarKist official said some factors "really affecting the industry" in the territory are minimum wage; foreign governments subsidizing their industries — such as their fishing boats in the Eastern Hemisphere; uncertainties around federal policies — another challenge that continues to threaten the industry; as well as variations on raw material and costs."

On the fishing industry, Lutu-Sanchez said, the longline and purse seiner that operate out of the territory are also facing its own challenges, including closure last December of the

second cannery plant, Samoa Tuna Processors Inc. as well as the loss of fishing grounds.

With the closure of STP, laying off some 700 workers, "that's less income to spend by consumers on island," she said, adding that with the loss of access to traditional fishing grounds in the region and even the loss of STP, some of the U.S flagged purse seiner vessels based in American Samoa are now delivering their catch elsewhere.

"And that is lost economic benefit to our island because — they [purse seiners] don't buy fuel, they don't buy their supplies — so that's less income, less new money coming in to the island," she said.

During testimony two weeks ago before a U.S House subcommittee hearing, American Tunaboat Association executive director Brian Hallman told congressional members that the majority of ATA's 40 purse seiners are based in American Samoa. Additionally, the fleet contributed between \$50 million and \$60 million to the local economy — through the purchase of fuel, oil, deck supplies/other local supplies, maintenance/repairs, hotels, restaurants, staff payroll, etc. (See Samoa News edition Mar. 17 for details.)

Aside from the purse seine fleet, Lutu-Sanchez told the Council meeting that American Samoa also has the longliners, a U.S fishery, which is faced with many challenges, including access to fishing grounds. She also noted the latest setback on fishing grounds, when the federal court last week invalidated the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) 2016 rule reducing the large vessel protected area from 50 to 12 miles. The NMFS action was to help the longline fleet.

And even though the Council and NMFS have "helped to try

to give some relief to the longliners, the American Samoa Longline Fishery report presented at the Council meeting shows that the longline fleet continues to "diminish, down to 17 longlines operating in 2016 with much less catch. We don't want this U.S fishery to disappear," she said.

The fishing season for the longliners has just started, she said and noted that from December to March, there is not much happening to the fleet. And the court's decision on the 2016 LVPA rule "is going to be a shocker because you cannot have access to those areas," she said.

"Access is key, it's really important for the [cannery] plant to have supply of fish, and our U.S fleet [based in the territory] is the sole source of US albacore to StarKist," the Longline Service official said, adding that another challenge faced by the longliner fisheries is a lack of docking space at the main harbor.

Lutu-Sanchez said that every time a container vessel or cruise ship is in port, longline vessels are relocated elsewhere, including to the Malaloa Marina dock, which is "not built to accommodate longliners."

She says it's really important to continue to pursue ASG to build a longline dock in Pago Pago for the longline fleet and "we are again thankful to the Council" for help in building a longline dock. (Based on information released at the meeting, the Council has provided over \$100,000 to ASG, through the Port Administration to help build a longline dock.)

"Any other challenges faced by the longline fleet are minor compared to these two major issues — access to fishing grounds and available space at the [main] dock," Lutu-Sanchez said.

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UCEDD Director, Tafa Tua-Tupuola, (second from left), retired U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin (middle), Congresswoman Aumua Amata (fourth from left), and others at Wednesday night's Association for University Center on Disabilities (AUCD) Gala4All Event in Washington D.C. [photo: Congresswoman Aumua]

Samoan cultural presentation closes University Center on Disabilities Gala4All Event

WASHINGTON D.C. — Wednesday evening at the Association for University Center on Disabilities (AUCD) Gala4All Event in Washington DC, a Samoan cultural presentation closed the annual event for the evening.

U.S. Congresswoman Aumua Amata Coleman Rade-wagen presented the traditional to'oto'o and fue to U.S. Senator Tom Harkin (Retired) for his 40 years in Congress as an active advocate for people with disabilities.

Director Tafa Tua-Tupuola of University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), a member of AUCD, extended the Gala4All invitation to Congresswoman Aumua Amata, who has a sister with Down syndrome, welcomed the invitation.

Senator Harkin of Iowa introduced the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) a civil rights law and the 1990 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) a special education law that impact the lives of people with disabilities not just in the U.S. but also in the U.S. Territories.

In a speech to the Senator, Tafa highlighted that the history of the ADA and IDEA and the stories collected over the years from the disability community and family members not only protected citizens of the U.S. but reached as far south of the equator to American Samoa.

Senator Harkin with humility accepted the presentation from the Congresswoman and extended congratulatory remarks on her reelection and expressed to the UCEDD

Director "I guess you're right. You'll never know when you're working late nights putting a piece of legislation such as the ADA and IDEA and all the other legislations for the people, you don't think it'll go anywhere beyond the continental of the United States."

The senator has a brother who is deaf, and who had a great influence on his advocacy role in Congress.

Sen. Harkin spoke and also did sign language at the National Democratic Convention.

The UCEDD Director, Tafa Tua-Tupuola, also presented a Samoan tanoa and siapo to the AUCD Executive Director Andy Imperato as a symbol of welcoming AUCD presence in American Samoa last month, and on leadership including the territories at the table in national advisory councils. Imperato was in the territory last month to visit the work of the UCEDD at ASCC and in the community.

While in town he presented on Disability Rights and Public Policy to the AS Bar Association, participated at the AS Legal Aid Board meeting, and attended the 5th Pacific Regional Disability Conference in Apia, Samoa.

Imparato was responsible for nominating Tafa Tua-Tupuola to the Federal Communication Commission – Disability Advisory Council for two terms and is a person with a disability who served as Senior Legal Counsel for Sen. Harkin.

Imparato is hoping to bring more advocates from the Pacific islands to participate in the upcoming Harkin International Disability Employment

Summit in November held in Washington DC.

Also present that evening was U.S Senator Bob Casey of

Pennsylvania and former FCC Commissioner Chairman Tom Wheeler.

The to'oto'o and fue will be

displayed at the Drake University-Harkin Institute on Public Policy and Citizen Engagement.

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Congresswoman Amata and House Speaker Ryan discuss the need for healthcare reform in the U.S. territories in the U.S. Capitol building on Wednesday. [courtesy photo]

American Samoa not affected by federal health care vote

Washington, D.C. – Friday, “Although House leadership has pulled the bill for now it would not have affected American Samoa in the first place,” said Congresswoman Aumua Amata.

“Because this is a reconciliation bill, only those provisions included in the 2010 Affordable Care Act can be considered in this bill. The reason reconciliation is being used, is to make it easier to pass in the Senate where it would only require 51 votes instead of the usual 60.

The good news is that there is a three step process and the territories will be considered in step three,” continued the Congresswoman.

Congresswoman Amata and House Speaker Ryan discuss the need for healthcare reform in the U.S. territories in the U.S. Capitol building on Wednesday.

In order to secure affordable and quality healthcare for the territories, Congresswoman Amata has introduced legislation to be considered in the third

phase of reform, which will make long overdue changes to how the territories are funded.

“In short my language would make it so the territories are funded the same as the states when it comes to Medicaid,” stated Amata.

“Although step three will be considered at a later time, I wanted to introduce it now so we can get the discussion started. To that end, I have already spoken to Speaker Ryan who assures me that my proposal will be taken up in the third phase, and I look forward to working with him and the committee chairmen when that happens.

“Congress is scheduled to have several district work periods coming up, and during that time, I will be hosting town-hall meetings to update our people about my efforts in Washington to improve their healthcare, and other the work we are doing on their behalf,” concluded Amata.



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No funds from govt or borrowed from Church, Stigmata Dad says

by Joyetter Feagaimaali'i-Luamanu
Samoa News Reporter

Apia, SAMOA — Former Reverend Opapo Soana'i Oeti has set the record straight dismissing rumors circulating that funds used for their trip to Rome were from the government of Samoa. However, he explained that \$10,000 was a gift from the Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi and his family, and it's not taxpayers' money.

This was made known in an open letter signed by Opapo, who is the father of the stigmata girl, Toaipuapuaga 'Toa' Patrick who claims to be carrying the marks of Jesus when he was crucified. Toa who was a Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS) member has since converted to Catholic, and she is currently in Rome with her family. They are due to return home next month.

The trip to Rome, which Opapo is referring to, came following a call from the Vatican for Toa to come to Rome so the Catholic Church could investigate her well being and state of mind. Her son, husband and her father, Opapo, escorted Toa who was pregnant at the time.

Since then — as reported last week — Opapo has since been stripped of his pastoral title within the CCCS, a decision by the CCCS Elders Committee.

In a letter obtained by Samoa News, Opapo explained how their trip to Rome was funded. He pointed out aside from the \$10K from the PM, there was other financial assistance from local companies, NGOs, their families and the CCCS in Si'ufaga Falelatai, the church for which he once was a pastor.

Opapo also made it clear that their family did not "borrow" money from the CCCS. "Our family is not like that, we don't want to borrow money from the church — that is wrong and those funds are the sweat and hard work of church members."

He said if the media seeks to reaffirm what he is saying then ask the Prime Minister directly, he knows who donated money for the cause. He said their family until this day is trying to pay off \$10K to the travel agency for their return airfares.

According to Opapo, the fare had already been paid off, however due to the delay of Toa and her family returning to Samoa the return tickets have expired and his family and church are tasked with paying for these airfares.

Another rumor he wished to touch on was the birth of his granddaughter in Rome as if

that was the purpose of the trip. Opapo explained that one of the messages from God through Toa was that they leave for Rome on an exact date and that she's to give birth in Rome.

"Go to Rome and wait to respond to the Vatican, leave on the month I gave specifically to allow another to a given womb," this is the message from God, according to Opapo. He further explained that the birth of his granddaughter in Rome is a reminder of the Stigmata's first appearance in the South Pacific, as it's never happened before.



NO FUNDS FOR ROME TRIP CAME FROM GOVT OR BORROWED FROM CHURCH, STIGMATA DAD SAYS: This was made known in an open letter signed by Opapo, who is the father of the stigmata girl, Toaipuapuaga 'Toa' Patrick (pictured above) Former Reverend Opapo Soana'i Oeti. [Photo: Samoa Observer Apia]

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American Airlines buys stake in China Southern Airlines



In this Saturday, Nov. 19, 2016 photo, workers loading in-flight catering into a passenger airplane, owned by China Southern Airlines, parked on the tarmac at the Beijing Capital International Airport. American Airlines has agreed to pay \$200 million for a stake in China Southern Airlines, the biggest of China's three major state-owned carriers, in a bid for a bigger share of the country's growing travel market. (AP Photo/Andy Wong)

BEIJING (AP) — American Airlines has agreed to pay \$200 million for a stake in China Southern Airlines, the biggest of China's three major state-owned carriers, in a bid for a bigger share of the country's growing travel market.

American and China Southern will expand commercial cooperation, possibly in sales, airport facilities and code-sharing, the Chinese airline said in an announcement Tuesday through the Hong Kong stock exchange. It said the deal represents 2.76 percent of China Southern's shares and requires regulatory approval.

Foreign carriers are forging steadily closer ties with Chinese airlines to gain a bigger share of China's air travel market, which is growing strongly while travel in Europe and North America is leveling off. In exchange, Chinese carriers get access to experience and management skills.

China is forecast to pass North America over the next two decades as the biggest air travel market.

China's economic growth is slowing but tourism spending is rising as communist leaders encourage growth of service businesses in an effort to reduce reliance on heavy industry.

Chinese spending on air travel rose 10.6 percent in 2015, compared with 1.7 percent in the United States, according to the International Air Travel Association.

Two years ago, Delta Airlines paid \$450 million for 3.55 percent of China Eastern Airlines. The third major U.S. carrier, United Airlines, has a partnership with Air China, the third major Chinese government-owned airline. Hong Kong-based Cathay Pacific Airlines owns 18 percent of Air China.

Regulators in both China and the United States are reluctant to

allow large foreign ownership stakes or management control of their airlines.

China Southern, headquartered in Guangzhou, near Hong Kong, is China's biggest carrier by passenger volume but is known for sometimes haphazard service, with flights delayed or canceled with little notice.

China Southern says it operates more than 2,000 flights a day to 224 destinations in 40 countries and regions in Asia, Europe, North America and Africa. It says it carried 115 million passengers in 2016.

The partnership with American Airlines "is expected to provide continuous impetus for the company's long-term growth," said China Southern's announcement.

American, headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas, says it operates 6,700 flights a day to nearly 350 destinations in more than 50 countries.

Powerful cyclone slams into Australia

TOWNSVILLE, Australia (AP) — A powerful cyclone slammed into Australia's tropical northeast coast on Tuesday, tearing down fences, snapping trees and knocking out power to tens of thousands of houses, officials said.

The destructive eyewall of Cyclone Debbie, a Category 4 storm packing winds up to 260 kilometers per hour (160 miles per hour), made landfall near Airlie Beach, a resort town in Queensland state, the Australian Bureau of Meteorology said in a statement.

The town is a jumping-off point for the Whitsunday Islands, a popular tourist destination that has been pummeled by fierce winds that damaged roofs and knocked down palm trees.

One man was injured after a wall collapsed in Proserpine, a town south of Airlie Beach, Queensland Police Commissioner Ian Stewart said. The man was taken to a hospital, and his condition was not immediately known.

Officials warned that the slow-moving storm was likely to hover over the region for several hours before weakening as it moved inland. Stewart said the cyclone's glacial pace had created a "battering ram effect," with some areas enduring the howling winds and drenching rains for a punishingly long time.

Communities along more than 300 kilometers (200 miles) of coastline were expected to be impacted, he said.

"I suspect before the day is out, we will see a lot of structural damage in the cyclone's path," Stewart said.

John Collins, a member of the Whitsundays government council, was sheltering from the storm with his wife and four daughters inside their house in

Proserpine. He could see that four of his neighbors' sheds had been destroyed and every house within eyesight — including his own — had lost their fences. At least four trees had been smashed to pieces.

"It sounds like you got a jumbo jet sitting on the roof of your house," Collins said by telephone of the wind roaring outside. "It really is so loud. It's incredible."

Collins' wife and two of their daughters were so scared they were hiding under blankets. Meanwhile, one of his other daughters — whom he described as "a real weather nerd" — was enthralled with the storm, and was diligently listening to the radio for updates on its path. The family's power had been out since Tuesday morning, and they were resigned to several more hours of waiting until it was safe to emerge from their house.

"It's just going on and on and on," he said. Thousands of people evacuated low-lying areas in the storm's path on Monday. Hundreds of schools were closed on Tuesday and more than 50,000 households were without power by mid-afternoon.

"Conditions have deteriorated rapidly," Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said in an address to Parliament. "Take care and stay safe. Be prepared to shelter in place until Wednesday."

Whitsundays Regional Council Mayor Andrew Willcox said authorities had received 98 requests for help and had responded to most of them.

The storm also poses a serious threat to the farming region's crops. The area produces a wide range of fruits and vegetables, including tomatoes, mangoes and peppers.



In this image made from video, tree debris lies on the street as wind gusts in Bowen, eastern Australia, Tuesday, March 28, 2017. A powerful cyclone lashed islands, damaged roofs and cut power on Tuesday as it edged toward Australia's tropical northeast coast, officials said. (AuBC via AP)

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FILE - In this Saturday, Feb. 11, 2017, file photo, demonstrators gather to counter an anti-Planned Parenthood rally in Kent, Wash. Even with the Republican failure to repeal Barack Obama's health care law, Democratic lawmakers in some states are pressing ahead with efforts to protect birth control access, Planned Parenthood funding and abortion coverage in case they are jeopardized in the future. (Grant Hindsley/seattlepi.com via AP, File)

Lawmakers seek to protect birth-control access

CARSON CITY, Nevada (AP) — Even with the Republican failure to repeal Barack Obama's health care law, Democratic lawmakers in some states are pressing ahead with efforts to protect birth control access, Planned Parenthood funding and abortion coverage in case they are jeopardized in the future.

Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives withdrew a bill last week that would have repealed Obama's Affordable Care Act. It would have halted federal funding for Planned Parenthood and curtailed the ability of many low-income women to obtain affordable birth control.

Despite that setback for the GOP, several Republicans said Congress might revisit health care in the future, and anti-abortion leaders have stressed they will not abandon their campaign to defund Planned Parenthood. The group is the No. 1 abortion provider in the U.S. but also offers extensive birth control and health-screening services. In Nevada, state lawmakers and health advocates say they will continue to promote bills that would allow women to access 12-month supplies of birth control and require all health insurers to cover contraceptives at no extra charge, regardless of religious objections.

Another Nevada proposal seeks to provide alternative funding to help organizations such as Planned Parenthood. Some government-run clinics that rely on federal grants and are on the brink of closure also would benefit.

"Nevadans need these protections regardless of what's

happening in Congress," said Elisa Cafferata, president of Nevada Advocates for Planned Parenthood Affiliates. "Family planning and preventative health care are still very much threatened." Democratic state Sen. Julia Ratti said it was important to establish protections in state law "so that, regardless of what future federal provisions come through, we know we're doing the right thing in Nevada."

It's unclear whether Gov. Brian Sandoval, a Republican, will sign or veto the bills if they reach his desk.

Majority Democrats in the Maryland Legislature, with backing from some Republicans, plan to continue work on a bill that would maintain family planning services provided by Planned Parenthood if the group ever lost federal funding. The measure, which has cleared the House of Delegates and is now pending in the Senate, would direct \$2 million from Maryland's Medicaid budget to family planning, as well as \$700,000 from the state's general fund.

The bill's chief sponsor, state Delegate Shane Pendergrass, said Maryland would be unwise to assume that congressional Republicans were finished with efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act. "Could this come back in six months? Maybe," she said. "Do we want to make sure we're prepared if something happens? You bet we do."

In Oregon, Democratic state Rep. Jeff Barker said deliberations would continue on a bill he is sponsoring that would require health insurers to cover a full range of services, drugs and products related to reproductive

health, including contraceptives, with no co-pay or deductible. It also would ban any government interference in a woman's choice to have an abortion.

"It will be contentious, but I believe it will pass," Barker said. "We want to be sure that women have all their reproductive health needs taken care of."

The bill, which is awaiting referral to a House committee, could be up for a floor vote sometime next month. "Our plan is to still move it forward," said House Speaker Tina Kotek, a Democrat. "It's really important to a lot of people on this particular area of health care."

Kotek also expressed no interest in tweaking the bill's language to the liking of Providence Health Plans, a Catholic-sponsored organization currently covering 260,000 Oregonians. Last week, Providence threatened to pull out of the Oregon insurance market if the abortion proposal passes.

At the national level, Planned Parenthood celebrated the collapse of the GOP health care overhaul effort, yet acknowledged that it will remain a target of the anti-abortion movement and its allies. "We know this is the beginning, not the end," said Planned Parenthood's president, Cecile Richards.

Federal law already prohibits federal money from being used to pay for most abortions, but the now-abandoned GOP health overhaul would have cut off more than \$400 million in Medicaid reimbursements and other federal funding to Planned Parenthood for non-abortion services. That includes birth control provided to about 2 million women annually.

In The High Court of American Samoa

HCDR No. 12-17

ALEKILAO SIAKI, *Petitioner,*
v. TALALUPE VUI,
Respondent

NOTICE OF PUBLICATION/ FA'AALIGA O FA'ASALALAUGA FA'ALAU'ITELE

TO: TALALUPE VUI

YOU ARE HEREBY GIVEN NOTICE that a Petitioner for Divorce has been filed before the High Court of American Samoa on or about March 7, 2017 seeking the dissolution of your marriage to petitioner ALEKILAO SIAKI. A full copy of the Petition for Divorce may be obtained from the law firm of Tauiliili-Langkilde Law, P.O. Box 99-8081, Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799. You are required to serve an Answer to the Petition on Petitioner's attorney, Gwen Tauiliili-Langkilde of Tauiliili-Langkilde Law, whose contact details are provided above, no later than two (2) months and ten (10) days after the date of the first publication of this Notice. You must also serve a copy of your Answer to the Clerk of the High Court, whose address is P.O. Box 309, Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799.

If you fail to do so, a judgment by default will be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Petition for Divorce.

O LE FAAALIGA E TU'UINA ATU ia te oe, le ua ta'ua i luga, ua iai se talosaga ua failaina i le Fa'amasinoga Mauauga o Amerika Samoa i le aso 7 o Mati 2017 e tatalaina ai le lua fa'aipoipoga ma ALEKILAO SIAKI. E mafai ona e susu atu i le Ofisa Loia o Tauiliili-Langkilde Law i Tafuna, P.O. Box 99-8081, Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799, e tau aoina atu ai se kopi o le talosaga ua failaina i le Fa'amasinoga Mauauga e pei ona ta'ua i luga. Ua poloa'ina nei oe ina ia tau aoina se tali i lenei mataupu ia Gwen Tauiliili, loia o le itu tagi, i lona ofisa loia o Tauiliili-Langkilde Law i Tafuna, P.O. Box 99-8081, Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799, i masina e lua (2) ma aso e sefulu (10), mai le ulua'i aso sa fa'asalalauina ai lenei fa'asalalauga. E tatau foi ona e tau aoina mai se kopi o lau tali i le Failautusi o le Fa'amasinoga Mauauga, P.O. Box 309, Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799. O lou le utagia mai, ma e tuuina mai se tali i lenei fa'asilasilaga, o le a fai ai loa e le Fa'amasinoga se faaiuga i lenei mataupu mo se fesoasoani e pei ona talosagaina e le itu tagi.

Dated: March 13, 2017

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council announces the following public meetings on sheries management in offshore waters of Hawai'i, American Samoa, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Pacific Remote Island Areas. For more information and complete agendas, go to www.wpcouncil.org or contact the Council by email at info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov, by fax at (808) 522-8226 or by phone at (808) 522-8220.

Protected Species Advisory Committee

March 30-31 (Th-F) 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Council office, 1164 Bishop St., #1400, Honolulu

Major agenda item: Review of the draft 2016 Stock Assessment and Fisheries Evaluation (SAFE) annual report, sheries and protected species management updates, and research priorities.

Social Science Planning Committee

April 3 (M) 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Council office, 1164 Bishop St., #1400, Honolulu & teleconference

Major agenda item: Review of the draft 2016 SAFE annual report.

Marine Planning and Climate Change (MPCC) Committee

April 5-6 (W-Th) 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Council office, 1164 Bishop St., #1400, Honolulu

Major agenda items: Island and agency updates, 2015 and draft 2016 SAFE annual reports, community outreach, MPCC action plan, research priorities, 2017-2018 membership and of cer nominations.

Archipelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plans (FEPs) Plan Team

April 18-19 (T-W) 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Council office, 1164 Bishop St., #1400, Honolulu

Major agenda items: 2016 SAFE annual reports, action items for the 170th Council meeting, community snap-shot tool, monitoring and research priorities.

Fishery Data Collection and Research Committee - Technical Committee

April 20-21 (Th-F) 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Council office, 1164 Bishop St., #1400, Honolulu

Major agenda items: Fishery dependent data collection improvement efforts, Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) and Regional Implementation Plan writing workshop.

Special Accommodations: The host sites are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Kitty M. Simonds, (808) 522-8220 (voice) or (808) 522-8226 (fax), at least ve days prior to the meeting date.

South Korea holds memorial for 9 missing ferry victims

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea on Tuesday held a memorial ceremony for the nine passengers still missing from the 2014 ferry disaster that killed 304 passengers near the ship's wreckage that was raised last week.

Relatives of the missing victims cried as representatives of Catholic and Protestant churches and Buddhists delivered prayers wishing for the remains of the nine to be recovered.

The service was held on a boat near a heavy lift transport vessel that is holding the corroding, 6,800-ton Sewol.

Relatives threw into the sea yellow roses, a color that has become the symbol of their suffering, and watched from afar as crews on the transport vessel continued to empty the ferry of water and fuel.

If the operations go as planned and weather conditions are favorable, the transport vessel will begin carrying the ferry to a port in Mokpo on Thursday, according to South Korea's Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries.

The bodies of 295 passengers — most of them students on a high school trip — were

recovered after the sinking, which triggered an outpouring of national grief and soul-searching over long-ignored public safety and regulatory failures.

Popular outrage over what was seen as a botched rescue job by the government contributed to the recent ouster of Park Geun-hye as president.

Relatives of the missing hope their remains will be found inside the ferry.

"The ship has come up, but not the nine people inside it," Lee Geum-hee, the mother of a missing school girl, told a television crew.

"Please don't forget there are people inside the dirty, rusty and smelly wreckage ... Please do the best and let us bring them back home"

Once the ferry reaches Mokpo, investigators will spend about a month cleaning the ship and evaluating it for safety.

They will then begin to search for the remains of the victims and look for clues that could further illuminate the cause of the sinking, which has been blamed on overloaded cargo, improper storage and other negligence.



Relatives of the missing victims and clergymen attend religious services on a boat near the sunken ferry Sewol on a semi-submersible transport vessel in waters off Jindo, South Korea, Tuesday, March 28, 2017. South Korea has held a memorial ceremony at sea for the nine passengers still missing from the 2014 ferry disaster that killed 304 passengers near the ship's wreckage that was raised from the waters last week. (Yonhap via AP)

City leaders defy White House threat on "sanctuary" policies



FILE - In this Monday, March 27, 2017, file photo, President Donald Trump holds up a pen he used to sign one of various bills in the Roosevelt Room of the White House in Washington. Ignoring fresh threats from the White House, city leaders across the U.S. are vowing to intensify their fight against Trump's promised crackdown on so-called "sanctuary cities" despite the financial risks. (AP Photo/Andrew Harnik, File)

NEW YORK (AP) — Ignoring fresh threats from the White House, city leaders across the U.S. are vowing to intensify their fight against President Donald Trump's promised crackdown on so-called "sanctuary cities" despite the financial risks.

"We are going to become this administration's worst nightmare," New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito said Monday during a gathering of municipal officials from urban centers such as San Francisco, Seattle, Denver, Chicago and Philadelphia.

As is the case in several sanctuary cities, they promised to continue blocking cooperation between city police departments and federal immigration authorities. They also vowed to prevent federal agents from accessing their schools and school records, and they openly contemplated employing cities' rarely-used oversight and subpoena powers to investigate

federal immigration practices.

The defiance that filled the New York City conference clashed with pointed warnings from the White House's West Wing, where Attorney General Jeff Sessions issued a dire warning to urban leaders who embrace policies that help protect immigrants in the country illegally from deportation.

Such policies, Sessions said, "endanger the lives of every American" and violate federal law. He said the Trump White House could withhold or "claw back" funding from any city that "willfully violates" immigration law.

Sessions said the Justice Department would require cities seeking some of the \$4.1 billion available in grant money to verify they are in compliance with a section of federal law that allows information sharing with immigration officials.

"I strongly urge our nation's states and cities and counties to consider carefully the harm they are doing to their citizens by refusing to enforce our immigration laws, and to rethink these policies," he charged.

The debate highlighted the nation's increasingly polarized view of immigration.

Trump won the presidency by appealing to white working-class voters in a campaign that regularly highlighted violent crimes committed by immigrants in the country illegally. Sessions drew from the same playbook at the White House podium on Monday, citing two recent murders committed by immigrants released by local authorities even though they were wanted by federal agents.

City leaders insisted such examples are the exception, not the rule. Philadelphia City Council member Helen Gym

said immigrants in the country illegally are part of the "fabric of America."

"It's not like immigrants are dangerous. They're actually the ones in the most danger," Gym said, citing labor and housing practices that discriminate against immigrants.

Indeed, city officials on Monday shared stories of immigrants in their communities seized by federal immigration agents at their children's schools and at courthouses as they appeared as victims of other crimes. Gym said some landlords have used Trump's hardline immigration rhetoric to expel immigrant tenants.

There are an estimated 11 million immigrants living in the country illegally. There is no evidence that crime rates among immigrants are higher than native-born Americans.

Trump has made illegal immigration a priority.

He issued an executive order in January that directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to publish a weekly list of "criminal actions committed by aliens." The administration last week reported more than 200 cases of immigrants recently released from local jails before federal agents could intervene.

Lourdes Rosado, who leads the New York attorney general's civil rights bureau, insists that municipalities have legal standing to resist what she described as immigration overreach by the new White House.

"Sessions makes it sound as if we're breaking the law. But the point is, it's voluntary whether or not to cooperate," Rosado said, acknowledging that states and cities may have to resolve the issue in court. "Will they come after you? Maybe."

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Trump takes aim at Obama's efforts to curb global warming



IN THE COMMUNITY

(Photos:Leua)



WASHINGTON (AP) — Moving forward with a campaign pledge to unravel former President Barack Obama's sweeping plan to curb global warming, President Donald Trump will sign an executive order Tuesday that will suspend, rescind or flag for review more than a half-dozen measures in an effort to boost domestic energy production in the form of fossil fuels. As part of the roll-back, Trump will initiate a review of the Clean Power Plan, which restricts greenhouse gas emissions at coal-fired power plants. The regulation, which was the former president's signature effort to curb carbon emissions, has been the subject of long-running legal challenges by Republican-led states and those who profit from burning oil, coal and gas.

Trump, who has called global warming a "hoax" invented by the Chinese, has repeatedly criticized the power-plant rule and others as an attack on American workers and the struggling U.S. coal industry. The contents of the order were outlined to reporters in a sometimes tense briefing with a senior White House official, whom aides insisted speak without attribution, despite President Trump's criticism of the use of unnamed sources.

The official at one point appeared to break with mainstream climate science, denying familiarity with widely publicized concerns about the potential adverse economic impacts of climate change, such as rising sea levels and more extreme weather.

In addition to pulling back from the Clean Power Plan, the administration will also lift a 14-month-old moratorium on new coal leases on federal lands.

The Obama administration had imposed a three-year moratorium on new federal coal leases in January 2016, arguing that the \$1 billion-a-year program must be modernized to ensure a fair financial return to taxpayers and address climate change.

Trump accused his predecessor of waging a "war on coal" and boasted in a speech to Congress that he has made "a historic effort to massively reduce job-crushing regulations," including some that threaten "the future and livelihoods of our great coal miners."

The order will also chip away at other regulations, including scrapping language on the "social cost" of greenhouse gases. It will initiate a review of efforts to reduce the emission of

methane in oil and natural gas production as well as a Bureau of Land Management hydraulic fracturing rule, to determine whether those reflect the president's policy priorities.

It will also rescind Obama-era executive orders and memoranda, including one that addressed climate change and national security and one that sought to prepare the country for the impacts of climate change.

The administration is still in discussion about whether it intends to withdraw from the Paris Agreement on climate change. But the moves to be announced Tuesday will undoubtedly make it more difficult for the U.S. to achieve its goals.

Trump's Environmental Protection Agency chief, Scott Pruitt, alarmed environmental groups and scientists earlier this month when he said he does not believe carbon dioxide is a primary contributor to global warming. The statement is at odds with mainstream scientific consensus and Pruitt's own agency.

The overwhelming majority of peer-reviewed studies and climate scientists agree the planet is warming, mostly due to man-made sources, including carbon dioxide, methane, halocarbons and nitrogen oxide.

The official who briefed reporters said the president does believe in man-made climate change.

The power-plant rule Trump is set to address in his order has been on hold since last year as a federal appeals court considers a challenge by coal-friendly states and more than 100 companies who call the plan an unconstitutional power grab.

Opponents say the plan will kill coal-mining jobs and drive up electricity costs. The Obama administration, some Democratic-led states and environmental groups countered that it will spur thousands of clean-energy jobs and help the U.S. meet ambitious goals to reduce carbon pollution set by the international agreement signed in Paris.

Trump's order on coal-fired power plants follows an executive order he signed last month mandating a review of an Obama-era rule aimed at protecting small streams and wetlands from development and pollution. The order instructs the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers to review a rule that redefined "waters of the United States" protected under the Clean Water Act to include smaller creeks and wetlands.





FILE - In this March 16, 2017 file photo, President Donald Trump sits with House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wis. on Capitol Hill in Washington. Congressional Republicans on Monday, March 27, 2017, pointed fingers and assigned blame after their epic failure on health care and a weekend digesting the outcome. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci, File)

Finger-pointing on Hill as GOP assesses health bill loss

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congressional Republicans on Monday pointed fingers and assigned blame after their epic failure on health care and a weekend digesting the outcome.

The divisions, coming on top of House Republicans' inability to deliver on a priority they all share — repealing and replacing “Obamacare” — raised serious questions about whether they will be able to achieve their other legislative goals for the year or even pass must-do spending legislation in time to avert a government shutdown at midnight April 28.

The hard-right House Freedom Caucus, which withheld a bloc of votes from the White House-backed health care legislation, came in for most of the criticism from fellow lawmakers.

“Clearly moving forward, we’re going to have to look at where a governing majority comes from. That’s going to require some answers from the Freedom Caucus,” said GOP Rep. Ryan Costello of Pennsylvania.

Like a number of other more moderate-leaning Republicans, Costello said he would have voted “no” on the bill in the end, partly because it kept moving to the right as House leaders and the White House made concessions to the Freedom Caucus without ever succeeding in locking in their support. President Donald Trump and House Speaker Paul Ryan decided to pull the bill from the House floor on Friday after it became clear it was bound to fail.

“They’re going to have to know when it’s time to get to the ‘yes,’” Costello said.

Freedom Caucus members bridled at the criticism, insisting they had done Trump and fellow Republicans a favor by blocking a piece of legislation that polled poorly and embraced the basic structures of Obamacare without significantly reducing premiums.

The Freedom Caucus spokeswoman, Alyssa Farah, said over Twitter that blaming the group ignored the opposition coming from moderate-leaning Republicans. And Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio, a Freedom Caucus leader, accused GOP leaders of a rushed and secretive process in promoting their legislation, which would have eliminated the Obamacare mandate for people to carry insurance or face fines, and shrunk a Medicaid expansion, but relied on tax credits similar to those in President Barack Obama’s law to help consumers purchase insurance.

“They rolled it out after it was hidden away. When they rolled it out, they said it’s a binary choice, take it or leave it,” Jordan said on MSNBC. “Normally when you have hearings on a piece of legislation that impacts this much of our overall economy, you would bring in some witnesses and hear from some witnesses about what’s going to happen if this legislation actually

becomes law. We had none of that.”

Trump took on the caucus late Monday on Twitter, writing: “The Republican House Freedom Caucus was able to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. After so many bad years they were ready for a win!”

The divisions extended to whether Republicans should immediately try again to make good on seven years of promises to repeal and replace the health care law or cut their losses for now and move on to overhauling the tax code, a priority Trump seems more excited about. Senate Republicans, who had hoped to act next on the health legislation despite divisions of their own, voiced displeasure with the failure by their House counterparts.

“It’s disappointing. We’ve got to fulfill our promises,” said Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C. “Hopefully the temperatures have gone down just a little bit and we can get to an outcome. We don’t have the option of inaction. We own it and we’ve got to fix it.”

House Ways and Means Chairman Kevin Brady said he’s encouraging the Senate to advance its “repeal and replacement plans” on health care. But the No. 2 Senate Republican, John Cornyn of Texas, said there would not be another attempt to advance Republican-only health care legislation. “I don’t think we can give up,” he said, “but it’s clear it needs to be done on a bipartisan basis.”

For Republicans who want to show voters they can govern after gaining control of the White House and both chambers of Congress, the outcome on health care suggests the opposite. The one bright spot for the GOP is Trump’s nomination of conservative appeals court Judge Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court, which will be considered on the Senate floor the week of April 3.

The disunity comes as Congress is fast approaching a deadline to pass government-wide spending legislation or face a shutdown. Given that lawmakers have a two-week recess in the middle of April, there is little time to negotiate an agreement. In the past such spending deadlines have been occasions for brinkmanship, including in 2013 when conservatives forced a 16-day partial government shutdown in a failed attempt to defund Obamacare.

The tentative game plan this time around to wrap up more than \$1 trillion in unfinished spending bills is to draft a bipartisan omnibus measure that would fund the government through Sept. 30. Its outlines remain fuzzy and subject to change according to the whims of GOP leaders, but the working thesis is to craft legislation that could pass by a bipartisan vote without a filibuster by Senate Democrats.

Multiple violations found days before fatal blaze killed 3

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Building inspectors found multiple fire code violations at a Northern California building just three days before a blaze erupted, killing three of the low-income residents.

During a Friday inspection, officials found the building lacked fire extinguishers, smoke detectors in every apartment and a working fire sprinkler system, among other violations, documents released by the city of Oakland show. Inspectors ordered the owner to immediately service the fire alarm and fire sprinkler systems.

In Monday’s pre-dawn darkness, resident Michael Jones said he was awakened by screams of “fire,” bolted out of bed and instinctively pounded on the doors of his elderly neighbors and ushered them to safety — walkers and all.

Jones, 43, then found Princess, the “house” pit bull, cowering in the backyard, and the two ran out the front door as glass shattered from the heat.

A few hours later, he and the dog stood across the street, staring at the smoldering wooden structure that housed some 80 recovering drug addicts and former homeless people, many of whom complained that they had not heard alarms, felt sprinklers or found fire extinguishers as they fled the substandard living conditions.

The owner, Keith Kim, did not return telephone calls from The Associated Press.

The blaze gutted the building and killed three people and injured four others. One resident remained missing Monday.

The Alameda County coroner identified one of the victims as 64-year-old Edwam Anderson, of Oakland.

Oakland Fire Battalion Chief Erik Logan said some people were hanging from windows and others were in fire escapes when firefighters arrived.

The fire broke out in the

rundown neighborhood nearly three months after a warehouse called the Ghost Ship caught fire and killed 36 people attending an unlicensed concert about five miles (eight kilometers) away.

The fires have raised questions about the use of some buildings in the city for residences amid a shortage of affordable housing in the San Francisco Bay Area.

“At least the rats are gone,” said Angela Taylor, 62, clutching her purse, the only possession she managed to get out of a room she paid \$550 a month to live in. “It’s the wrong purse, but it’s better than nothing. A lady needs her purse.”

In 2010, Oakland allowed the owner of the 40-unit building to convert the structure into transitional housing for recovering drug addicts, people struggling with homelessness and others, records show.

Since then, it has been the subject of several building department citations and investigations. City records show building officials verified complaints filed by the nonprofit organization that rents most of the building about deferred maintenance.

Kim was sent a notice of violation on March 2 over complaints of large amounts of trash and debris, building materials and furniture behind the property. The building department also has an open investigation into complaints of “no working heat throughout the building, electrical issues and a large pest infestation,” city records show.

City officials have been criticized for failing to inspect the Ghost Ship warehouse and the mayor conceded that city agencies need to improve communications after records showed police responding to a number of complaints there in the months before the Dec. 2 blaze.



Firefighters battle an early morning apartment fire Monday, March 27, 2017, in Oakland, Calif. (AP Photo/Ben Margot)

South African anti-apartheid leader Ahmed Kathrada dies, 87

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Anti-apartheid activist Ahmed Kathrada, who spent 26 years in jail - many of them alongside Nelson Mandela - for acts of sabotage against South Africa's previous white minority government, died in Johannesburg on Tuesday morning. He was 87 years old.

Kathrada died after being admitted to hospital with blood clotting in his brain earlier in March.

"Kathy was an inspiration to millions in different parts of the world," Neeshan Balton, the chief executive of the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, said in a statement. "This is great loss to the ANC (the African National Congress, South Africa's ruling party), the broader liberation movement and South Africa as a whole."

Tributes poured in for Kathrada, who was released from prison in October 1989 at the age of 60.

"Comrade Kathy was a gentle, humane and humble soul. He was a determined revolutionary who gave his entire life to the liberation struggle in our country," said Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom.

Kathrada was born on August 21, 1929, to Indian immigrant



FILE - In this Dec. 15, 2013 file photo, anti-apartheid activist and close friend of Nelson Mandela, Ahmed Kathrada, right, is escorted after speaking at the funeral service for the former South African president, Nelson Mandela, in Qunu, South Africa. Kathrada died Tuesday, March 28, 2017, after a short illness at the age of 87. (AP Photo/Odd Andersen, Pool, File)

parents in a small town in north-western South Africa.

He was arrested on the outskirts of Johannesburg in July, 1963 when the police swooped on Liliesleaf Farm in the suburb of Rivonia, where he was meeting with and others "banned" by the apartheid government.

Their arrest led to the

Rivonia trial in which eight accused, including Mandela, were sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labor.

After his release from prison, Kathrada was a member of parliament and he married anti-apartheid activist Barbara Hogan, who herself had been sentenced to 10 years in jail for high treason against the apart-

heid government in 1982.

Recently Kathrada was a vocal critic of scandal-plagued President Jacob Zuma and the African National Congress government.

In April last year Kathrada called on Zuma to resign after South Africa's highest court found that Zuma had violated his oath of office by refusing to

pay back public money spent on upgrading his rural home.

"I know that if I were in the president's shoes, I would step down with immediate effect," he said. "I believe that is what would help the country to find its way out of a path that it never imagined it would be on, but one that it must move out of soon."



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Meat	Scrambled Eggs	Scrambled Eggs	Oatmeal	Turkey Sausage Patty w/ Gravy Mix	Cocoa Rice
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Milk	1% Low Fat Milk	1% Low Fat Milk	1% Low Fat Milk	1% Low Fat Milk	1% Low Fat Milk

Peanut Butter

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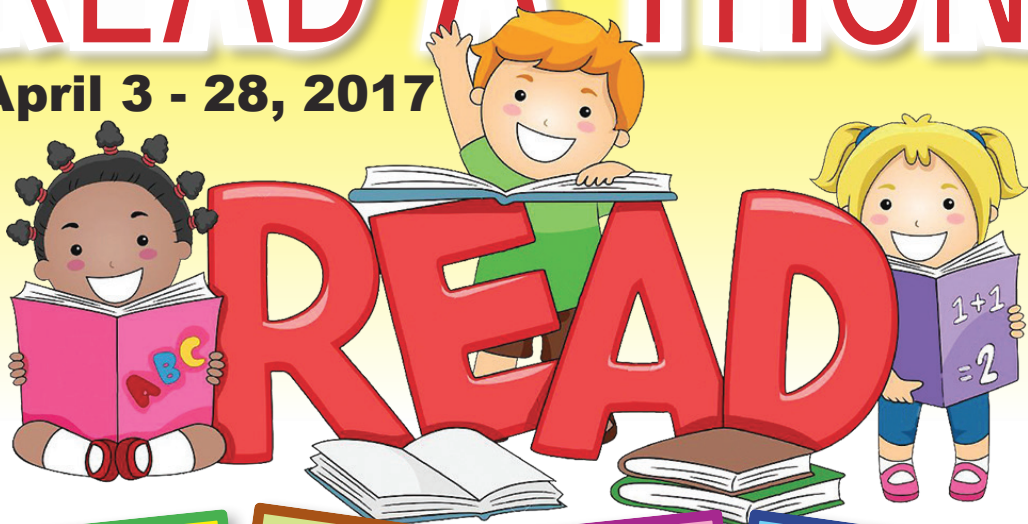
LUNCH

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Grain	Brown & White Rice	Brown & White Rice	+Dinner Roll	Brown & White Rice	*Dinner Roll
Meat	Chicken Nuggets	Chili w/ Hot Dog	Turkey Ham Spaghetti w/ Meat Sauce	Beef Chop Suey w/ Mixed Veggies	Macaroni & Cheese
Fruit /Veggie	Fruit Mixed	Ripe Banana	Papaya	Ripe Banana	Papaya
Milk	Steamed Broccoli	Cucumber Salad	Steamed Pumpkin	Green Banana	Cucumber Sticks
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Judge won't release Mexican man jailed near Seattle

SEATTLE (AP) — A federal judge upheld a decision not to release a Mexican man arrested near Seattle, despite his participation in a program designed to protect those brought to the U.S. illegally as children.

In the decision Friday, U.S. District Judge Ricardo S. Martinez said "many questions remain regarding the appropriateness of the government's conduct" in the arrest of 24-year-old Daniel Ramirez Medina. But the judge said he should challenge his detention in immigration court, a separate legal system run by the U.S. Justice Department.

The order upheld a previous decision by U.S. Magistrate Judge James P. Donohue.

Immigration agents arrested Ramirez Feb. 10 at a suburban apartment complex where they

had gone to arrest his father, a previously deported felon. Agents said Ramirez acknowledged affiliating with gangs.

Ramirez, who is being held at a federal detention center in Tacoma, denies the claims. He has no criminal record and twice passed background checks to participate in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which allows people brought to the U.S. illegally as children to stay in the country and work.

Federal authorities said the arrest of Ramirez was routine.

However, it was one of several arrests that have left immigration activists fearing an erosion of protections under the DACA program.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents in Portland, Oregon, on Sunday arrested Francisco J. Rodriguez Dominguez, a DACA participant who was brought to the U.S. from Morelia, in Mexico's Michoacan state, at age 5.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon said in a written statement that last December, he entered a diversion program following a drunken driving arrest, and that he had attended all his court dates and required meetings.

"Despite Francisco's best efforts to make good on his mistake, ICE has taken the position that even a misdemeanor DUI eligible for diversion is enough to end DACA status," Andrea Williams, executive director of Causa Oregon, an Oregon immigrant rights organization, said in the statement. "This policy is tearing apart his family, our communities, and does nothing to keep us safer."

On Monday, the federal agency said Rodriguez Dominguez was targeted because of his DUI and he would be released on bond pending deportation proceedings before an immigration judge.

About 750,000 immigrants have enrolled in the DACA program since President Barack Obama instituted it in 2012.

Ramirez's lawyers have sought to keep his case out of federal immigration court, which they say is ill-equipped to handle his claims that his arrest violated his constitutional rights to due process and to be free from unreasonable seizure.

They have not challenged the deportation proceedings initiated by the government but have sought his release on constitutional grounds.

The judge noted that the Department of Homeland Security has the authority to detain people who are in the U.S. illegally during their deportation proceedings. That means Ramirez would not be entitled to release even if the court found his rights were violated, Martinez said.



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