

Prevailing Winds



Volume 4 - Issue 3
March/April 2012

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Practically everyone, I'm sure, thinks the Legislature just meanders along and makes laws according to who yells the loudest. This is hardly the case in the House of Representatives.

We started with a mandate from the speaker that this session, job creation was our number one goal. He also warned us that any tax increases were out of the picture. The basis of his instructions was the condition of the global economy, especially the volatile situation in Europe. And in this country- gas prices, the failure of the Congressional Super Committee and chances of a double dip to our economy.

As for Hawaii, from the reports I read, all indications are that most of the economic sectors in our state are recovering nicely, except for the construction industry.

To assist in this recovery, the governor issued bonds at a remarkably low interest rate. With the bonds at an interest rate below inflation, we are able to catch up on our infrastructure repair and maintenance and other projects that have been ignored for long time.

The House's economic recovery plan is to deploy our capital in a timely manner in order to create a positive effect on our economy. By planning for projects in the third and fourth quarter of 2012, the benefits would continue into the next year. In order to execute this plan, our permitting and procurement system needed to be streamlined. Several bills that have passed the House reflect this strategy.

When streamlining our permitting and procurement process, state and city and county projects will be exempted from environmental and other permitting requirements for a period of two years. They are not exempt from following good environmental processes and practicing responsible stewardship of our land.

A deputy from the Department of Transportation testified that they will follow all best practices for environmental stewardship during any construction projects.

It was interesting to listen to the debate as environmentalists decried the destruction of the beauty of our state and the media condemned our bills as the "dirty eight." Supporters of our plan use the H-3 freeway as the poster child of construction delays and costs over runs. What started as a \$250 million project turned into a final cost of \$1.3 billion. Conservationists claim the environmental review processes do not add additional cost or time to projects. But anecdotally, I can think of many projects that were stalled by "environmental concerns", thereby becoming very costly. I remember the \$1 billion "shovel ready" projects that were touted by the then Governor Lingle, as an economic stimulus endeavor, that did not even have \$700,000 of construction going a year later.

The debate continues and at this point it is difficult to determine which side will prevail. But I support the House position that job creation is critical to our State's economic recovery however, recovery is not assured at this point.

Decisions of this nature cannot be made in haste; I trust our department directors will not make frivolous decisions that may jeopardize our future.

Economic recovery is foremost in my mind, for without it we cannot move forward to tackle the other challenges of our state. In an ideal world, we will create jobs as well as safeguard our environment.

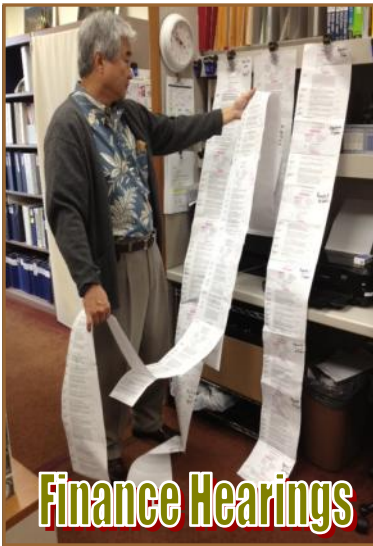


Mahalo and Aloha,

Isaac W. Choy

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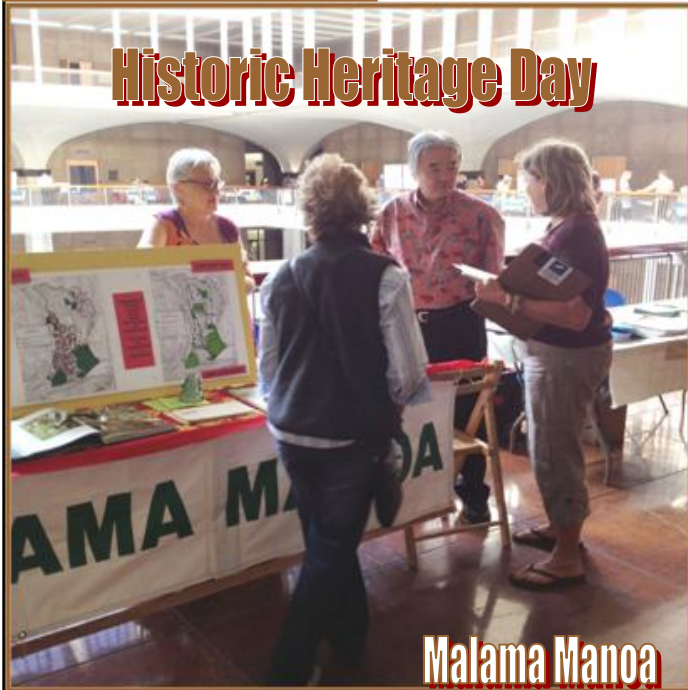
Finance Hearings



Art at the Capitol



Easter Baskets for the Institute of Human Services



Historic Heritage Day

Malama Manoa

Malama Manoa stages '1000-Tree Giveaway'



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SUNDAY, APRIL 29
MANOA VALLEY DISTRICT PARK PAVILION
8 A.M. TO 12 NOON
.....

More than 1,000 trees and plants will be given away, free of charge.

Attendees will be given a choice from dozens of fruit, shade, and endemic trees including kukui nut, mountain apple, Surinam cherry, plumeria, sea grape, hau, monkey pod, papaya and avocado trees; as well as monstera, spider lilies, taro, aloe, valentine vines, ferns, dracaena and grape ivy—and more!

Arborists will be on hand to answer questions and give advice on the care and planting of trees. Boy Scouts from Troop One will assist with loading.

Stay Safe & Connected at Home and in your Community

A FREE EVENT HIGHLIGHTING:



- Home Safety
- Staying Connected to your Community: Getting from Here to There.
- A Resource Fair of non-profit aging service providers.
- Opportunities to talk with elected officials in the area.

Participants will receive a free copy of the booklet, **“Housing Options for Seniors on Oahu.”**

Refreshments will be served.

Sat., April 14, 2012

9:00am to 12noon

**Kuhio Elementary School Cafeteria
2759 S. King Street
Honolulu, HI 96826**

**Check-in and resource fair available at 8:00 a.m.*

Parking Available On Site.

REGISTER: By phone at 1-877-926-8300
or online at: <http://aarp.cvent.com/Hlsafehome>

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