

Former first lady Betty Ford dies at 93

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ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — Betty Ford, the former first lady whose triumph over drug and alcohol addiction became a beacon of hope for addicts and the inspiration for her Betty Ford Center in California, died at age 93, a family friend said late

Friday.

Her death Friday was confirmed to The Associated Press by Marty Allen, chairman emeritus of the Ford Foundation. Family spokeswoman Barbara Lewandowski said later that the former first lady died at the Eisenhower Medical Center in Rancho Mirage. Other details of her death were not immediately available.

“She was a wonderful wife and mother; a great friend; and a courageous First Lady,” former President George H.W. Bush said in a statement on Friday. “No one confronted life’s struggles with more fortitude or honesty, and as a result, we all learned from the challenges she faced.”

While her husband served as president, Ford’s comments weren’t the kind of

genteel, innocuous talk expected from a first lady, and a Republican one no less. Her unscripted comments sparked tempests in the press and dismayed President Gerald Ford’s advisers, who were trying to soothe the national psyche after Watergate. But to the scandal-scarred, Vietnam-weary, hippie-rattled nation, Mrs. Ford’s openness was refreshing.



Dennis Fujimoto/The Garden Island

Conrad Murashige of Shioi Construction chats with Kaua’i Mayor Bernard Carvalho Jr.; Dennis Esaki, representing Gov. Neil Abercrombie, chats with Marion Penthallow, the Kaua’i Housing Development Corp.’s first president; and state Rep. Derek Kawakami chats with Gary Mackler of the county Housing Agency during the groundbreaking of Pa’anau Village, Phase II, Thursday in Koloa.

Pa’anau

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features planned for the project are Energy Star appliances and lighting fixtures, solar hot water heating, solar parking lot lighting, water conserving plumbing including toilets and showerheads, building oriented so each will take advantage of natural ventilation, low volatile organic compound paints and sealants, a photovoltaic system for the community center and a recycling area for tenant-generated cardboard

and other materials.

Other features of the housing development include granite counter tops, a washer and dryer in each unit, ceiling fans in every room and storage closets on the lanai.

Occupancy is limited to households at or below 60 percent of the Kaua’i median household income limits, the county release states.

The limits are \$35,580 for one-person households, \$40,620 for two-people families, \$45,720 for families of three, \$50,760 for four people, \$54,840 for five people and \$58,920 for six

people.

The 50-unit rental complex will have a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments with three ground level units designed for mobility- and sensory-impaired tenants. The remaining first floor apartments are adaptable for the mobility-impaired. Rents will be \$650, \$750 and \$850 per month.

Even as ground was broken on the latest affordable housing project, some applications have been accepted and KHDC has started the process of taking names of income-qualified prospec-

tive tenants, said Pamela Brown, the event coordinator.

Applications will be formally accepted in early 2012, and if there are more than 50 applications, a lottery will be held to determine who the charter residents will be. An announcement will be made once the dates for applications are confirmed, the county release states.

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KIUC

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Tacbian added that the board is “grateful for the support our members have shown, and we remain committed to the principals outlined in our board resolution passed in April, which mandates continued long-term outreach efforts, while considering agricultural, cultural, recreational and environmental interests in our evaluation of hydropower’s potential on Kaua’i.

“We look forward to engaging in a process to determine the blueprint for how responsible hydropower development can be determined for Kaua’i,” he said.

Kaua’i taro farmer Adam Asquith, who filed the petition to overturn the board’s decision, argued against FFP’s use of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission process.

Asquith, a hydropower supporter, has said it is a mistake to unnecessarily place the sustainability of Kaua’i’s waterways in the hands of a federal agency rather than the state’s, which is more sensitive to the needs of Hawai’i’s farmers, wildlife and cultural water interests. By engaging FERC, he said, the co-op is inviting legal intervention by state and private organizations against the use of FERC-related projects.

“I wasn’t holding my breath,” Asquith said of the vote results. “I wasn’t really optimistic because of the way the vote was conducted ... It’s the tyranny of the majority. The system doesn’t work when it comes to water. This is the only mechanism we had to address the

issue with the co-op. The larger issue is how we deal with water, which was the emphasis in the beginning. If we continue in this line, we will be shut down in all our attempts at hydro.”

When asked if he plans to participate in the community outreach and stakeholder feedback process under the FERC preliminary permitting process, he said no.

“I don’t believe the FERC process is necessary or productive, so I won’t participate because I don’t want to acknowledge or support that process,” he said. “I’ll just wait for other opportunities to make sure (our) voice is heard.”

Though Asquith said he spent an “enormous” amount of time generating the petition, attending meetings and talking with the community about the issues, the efforts were not in vain because now the community is more informed and engaged.

“This (petition) process made (the board) go back to the state, and they found out licensing with FERC is off the table,” he said. “I can’t believe any (board) member would hold the option open to fight the state ... I think a lot of good came out of it. I think we’re still at the beginning of the conversation. The vote doesn’t reflect my perspective on hydro or hope. I hope we get there in spite of where we’re at right now.”

The state clarified its position in a statement last month, which said the state has concerns that utilizing a federal “licensing” process, under FERC, could interfere with the state’s role in governing water use. State officials have discussed these concerns with KIUC and acknowledge that the utility

to date has made no commitment to seek a federal license.

Election management consultant Merriman River Group certified the results of the vote. MRG has managed the counting and certification of KIUC’s board elections since 2009, the release states. Observers of the ballot count included a representative of the petitioners.

“We look forward to further discussing the role that hydropower and other renewables play in achieving our strategic plan goals of reaching at least 50 percent renewable supplied power for Kaua’i,” KIUC CEO David Bissell said in a statement. “Receiving input from all Kaua’i stakeholders, KIUC members, state and local leaders and those that have concerns about our hydropower evaluation alike, will be an essential component of our continued assessment of hydropower resources on Kaua’i.

“We continue to believe that KIUC’s low cost of capital, tax-exempt and non-profit status provides the best and lowest-cost structure for hydropower development,” he said. “As a member-owned cooperative with a board elected by the members, KIUC’s evaluation criteria will always be based on what is best for Kaua’i without a profit motive interfering with that ultimate responsibility.”

KIUC budgeted \$60,000 for the petition-driven member vote, which is the same amount the co-op budgets for board-member elections, said KIUC spokeswoman Anne Barnes. When asked how much the co-op spent on advertising the board’s position, she

said she did not have the exact number readily available but could provide it on Monday.

A vote on the vote

Meanwhile, Jonathan Jay, a program host at KKCR, is gathering member signatures to overturn the board’s decision on how it conducted the vote.

Community members and organizations have criticized KIUC for not providing its members with fair and balanced information in voter materials. The co-op has strongly advocated in support of its board’s decision, urging members to vote “yes” on the ballot while implying that a “no” vote may mean the end of future hydropower development on Kaua’i.

Jay has argued that the July 8 deadline for members to submit ballots, a deadline set by the board, did not allow enough time for members to educate themselves on the issues prior to voting.

“We are going forward undeterred, collecting signatures and will submit them on Monday,” Jay said.

So far, he has collected 200 of the 250 necessary member signatures to file the petition, which would require a member vote on the member vote.

“KIUC really knows how to throw an election,” he said. “The (current) results would be meaningful, if it was a fair and free election, and that’s why we’re going forward with the petition gathering.”

Those who wish to participate in the petition may download it at islandbreath.org, sign it and drop it off at Small Town Coffee in Kapa’ea, he said.

“What we ask is that the public help us out. Don’t approach the vessels,” King said.

There are other sites in the Pacific and Atlantic oceans and in the Gulf of Mexico where the military has dumped weapons. King said the military made cleaning up the site off Wai’anae a priority because the munitions are so close to shore and because the local community has expressed concern about them.

Spending

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ing, according to a survey by the National Association of State Budget Officers and the National Governors Association.

Hawai’i lawmakers decided on an \$11 billion operating budget for fiscal 2012, which began July 1, including \$5.4 billion from the state’s general fund. That’s up \$800 million total, or about an 8 percent increase over this past year. The general fund portion is up 10 percent.

On average, for fiscal 2012, states’ general fund spending is going up 2.6 percent. In fiscal 2011, that figure grew by 5.2 percent on average, according to the report.

General funds make up about 40 percent of overall state spending, the organization says. In Hawai’i’s case, general funds represent just about half the state’s total budget.

“This spending increase will be the second consecutive year-over-year increase in general fund expenditures following back-to-back declines in general fund spending in fiscal 2009 and fiscal 2010, at 3.8 percent and 6.3 percent, respectively,” according to The Fiscal Survey of States.

All 50 states plan to spend a total of \$668.6 billion from their general funds next year — up from \$651.5 billion in fiscal 2011.

But the report wasn’t totally upbeat.

States still have ‘uphill path to full recovery’

While total spending is up, it’s still \$18.7 billion less than states spent collectively in fiscal 2008 before the recession. Twenty-nine states have budgeted lower general fund spending in fiscal 2012 compared to fiscal 2008. (For Hawai’i, general fund spending was about the same in 2008 as the budgeted 2012 amount.)

“These 29 states highlight that a significant number of states still face an uphill path to full recovery,” the report says. “While general fund spending has risen during fiscal 2011 and governors forecast spending to rise again in fiscal 2012, the combination of a loss of Recovery Act funds and a national economy that is recovering slowly are likely to result in the continuation of challenging fiscal conditions for fiscal 2012 and beyond.”

The report noted that growing Medicaid costs nationwide “represent the single largest portion of total state spending.”

Meanwhile, it says states have made the biggest cuts to public education, higher education, public assistance programs and transportation expenses to balance their budgets.

Solar

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monthly power bills.

“The biggest obstacle that residents face when it comes to adopting clean energy is the upfront cost, and on-bill financing eliminates that,” said Jeff Mikulina, executive director for the Blue Planet Foundation, which supports renewable energy initiatives.

The measure calls for the Public Utilities Commission to investigate the viability of the program, known as on-bill financing. If the commission finds it workable, it could create the program without any further legislation needed.

Hawai’i could become the second state with an on-bill financing program after New York lawmakers

The economic downturn also meant more people sought government aid and health care.

Indeed, in Hawai’i, lawmakers cited growing “fixed costs” for things like welfare expenses as well as health insurance and pension benefits for government employees.

“The challenge before us was that during down economic times, demand for public services skyrocketed, so there is about a \$600 million increase in Medicaid, for example,” Senate Ways and Means Chairman David Ige said after lawmakers agreed on the budget. “The biggest addition really dealt with those safety net services ... and clearly there were increases in fixed costs — debt service, increased public health benefit costs and those kinds of things — which clearly we don’t have an option in funding or not funding.”

Gov. Neil Abercrombie had proposed a budget that was even bigger than the one lawmakers agreed on. They scaled back and rejected many of the revenue measures the governor had wanted.

Hawai’i taxpayers are on the hook for about \$600 million in new tax revenue to help pay for the budget. These include suspending General Excise Tax exemptions for about two dozen businesses, capping how much revenue the counties get from the Transient Accommodations Tax, limiting itemized deductions for high-income earners, and hiking vehicle registration fees.

New taxes, fees totaling \$14B

To pay for their bigger budgets, states proposed a host of tax and fee adjustments for fiscal 2012 that will increase general fund revenue collections by a total of \$13.8 billion, according to the survey. That’s more than twice the \$6.2 billion in tax and fee increases that were enacted by states in fiscal 2011.

But that’s still considerably less than the changes adopted in fiscal 2010 (the height of the recession). That year, states passed \$23.9 billion in tax and fee increases.

“State finances can take many years to fully recover from recessions, as was the case after the 2001 recession,” the study said. “Combining this typical lag time and the slow recovery of the national economy means that state general fund revenue collections remain below their 2008 highs, even after two consecutive annual increases.”

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approved similar legislation last month.

“It’s going to help homeowners get solar panels up on their roofs,” said Senate Energy and Environment Committee Chairman Mike Gabbard, D-Kalaheo-Makakilo.

Solar hot water systems generally cost less than \$2,000 after tax credits and government rebates, but rooftop panels can be much more expensive — around \$10,000 for a typical system, said Hawaiian Electric Co. spokesman Peter Rosegg.

A proposal to immediately create on-bill financing failed in the Legislature earlier this year, but lawmakers revived the measure by calling for a study of the issue and allowing the PUC to implement it if possible.

OBITUARIES

Toni Bailey

Toni Lynn Bailey of Hilo died June 15, 2011, at home at age 55. Born in Arizona, she retired as a food server on Kaua’i.

She is survived by her daughter, Tishanna Bailey Ben of Kaua’i; brothers, William Dean Bailey of Hilo and Jimmy Zeb Bailey of Arizona.

Memorial services will be at 11 a.m., Tuesday, July 12, at Wailoa State Park in Hilo. Services will also be at noon, Friday, July 17, at Po’ipu Beach Park on Kaua’i.

Arrangements are being handled by Borthwick Hawai’i Funeral Home, Hilo.

Ellsworth Kaohi Sr.

Ellsworth Kiekie Kaohi Sr. of Kawaihae, Hawai’i died

June 19, 2011, at age 77. Born Feb. 25, 1934, in Hanapepe, he worked in the visitor industry at the Waikoloa Hilton Hotel.

He is survived by his wife, Joanne; son, Ellsworth Kaohi Jr.; daughters, Roslyn (Steve) Choi and Kimberly Kaohi; brothers, Dudie Kaohi, Clarence Kaohi, William Kaohi of Kaua’i and Ronald Kaohi of Honolulu; sisters, Mercedes Ching and Betty Kaleohano of Kaua’i, Arlene Naholoholo of California; seven grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; numerous nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held Aug. 13 at the Hanapepe Hawaiian Congregational Church in Hanapepe, Kaua’i. Family visitation is at 9:30 a.m. with services at 10:30 a.m.

Arrangements are being handled by A Hui Hou Crematory & Funeral Home of West Hawai’i.

Ordnance

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damage the reef or be too dangerous.

The weapons sit at depths from about 30 to 125 feet. They start about a quarter-mile offshore, while most are concentrated in an area about a mile offshore. They extend about two miles in the north-south direction off Poka’i Bay and the Wai’anae Wastewater Treat-

ment Plant.

Residents should see two large vessels in the area during the next three weeks. One ship will host the robot that will lift the bombs, projectiles and other items out of the water. The other is a barge that houses containers used to destroy the weapons.

The Army is destroying the weapons at sea so it doesn’t have to bring them ashore in Wai’anae, drive them through town and take

them to a disposal site.

Crews are expected to be on the water from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. removing and destroying explosives Monday through Friday. On the weekend, they’ll be picking up and destroying small arms and ammunition.

The Army is asking the public to stay away from the vessels, not pass between the beach and the ships, and observe a safety zone that will be enforced around them.