



FROM CRISIS COMES OPPORTUNITY FOR MOLOKA'I

Reprinted from the Moloka'i Times April 2, 2008 - A NEW COURSE FOR MOLOKA'I

With the sudden and unexpected announcement that Moloka'i Properties will end its operations at Moloka'i Ranch, the island's community is faced with some hard questions and even harder decisions.

In a community of roughly 7,500 residents, the loss of Moloka'i Ranch's 120 jobs will leave an estimated twelve percent of the workforce unemployed. The area around Maunaloa will find itself without a movie theater or gas station. And all of those who looked at the Ranch and associated businesses as a source of opportunity will have to look elsewhere.

In all of my many contacts with the island and its people, I have always found a close-knit community ready to come together to deal with whatever challenges it faces. No one on Moloka'i is ever alone, but always finds an extended 'ohana standing by to offer a hand. But a loss like this, a challenge of this magnitude, will call for a view and an approach that may be unprecedented in recent memory.



Sen. English joins the Punana Leo o Moloka'i 'ohana in the annual Aloha Festivals parade.

Among the many questions Moloka'i will ask itself in the coming months, the most difficult may be how the community can protect itself from another such upheaval in the future. The suggestions will be as diverse as the community itself. Some will argue that this is a call to move even closer to the subsistence lifestyle of farming, hunting and fish-

ing that many find rewarding and worthwhile. Others will call for a more diversified economy, with an expanded range of opportunities that will avoid an over-reliance on a single economic driver.

While a final decision on these fundamental questions will have to come from deep within the community, my personal feeling is that making this an either-or proposition ignores the deeper concern. No single approach will support the broad concerns of Moloka'i as a whole, and address the diversity that makes the island the rich community it is.

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A MESSAGE FROM KALANI

The last few weeks has seen some very profound changes for Hawai'i. We still have lots of work before us, yet together we can overcome the rough times ahead. In this issue, we will talk about the closing of Moloka'i Ranch and the end of Aloha Airlines. There are beginnings as well - the establishment of Hale Ku'oko'a, Hana's first sober living home.

On the international front, Congressman Eni F.H. Faleomavaenga (D American Samoa), Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment held historic hearings in Majuro, Marshall Islands on the status of their citizens in the United States, Compact implementation and Nuclear claims. I attended the hearings representing Hawai'i and as an expert on the Pacific Islands. We include a report on that meeting in this issue.

Aloha,



HANA SOBER LIVING HOUSE BRINGS TRANSITIONAL SERVICES TO COMMUNITY

On April 5, 'Ohana Makamae, Inc. (OMI) will open Hale Ku'oko'a, Hana's first "Sober Living Home," offering a safe, healing environment for clients returning from inpatient and detoxification treatment, and helping them make a transition back into the community.

For many hoping to leave behind past burdens and adopt clean and sober lifestyles, a key challenge is making the transition from intensive treatment to living in the community. A center like Hale Ku'oko'a will allow residents to begin to develop the foundation for new lives.

"We are talking about people from our community who are working to overcome past problems and rebuild their lives," says Senator J. Kalani English, who helped 'Ohana Makamae receive funding to support Hale Ku'oko'a. "This is how we build strong communities, through *laulima*, working to help those who are helping themselves. I'm proud to have been a part of this project, and part of this loving, supportive community."

Hale Ku'oko'a will provide housing for up to five men who suffer from chemical dependency or alcoholism, and who are willing to maintain sobriety and live together in a home setting. They will share in meal preparation, chores, and recreational, cultural and community activities that will allow the residents to build the necessary skills to transition to a healthy, sober lifestyle.



'Ohana Makamae began the project almost two years ago, when it asked Hana's local recovery community what it could do to strengthen the community. The reply was that they needed a sober living facility. OMI then set to work finding a suitable home and attracting funding.

The first offer of help came from Susan O'Connor and The Charles Englehard Foundation, who provided initial startup capital to get the project moving. Additional funds or committed grants were provided by The Atherton Foundation, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and the Boeing Corporation.

An additional \$83,315 in funding came through a state Grant-in-Aid, pushed by Senator English. The grant was requested and approved in the 2007 legislative session, and released by the Governor on March 10, 2008.

Ray Henderson of OMI recalls that, "Senator English worked very hard at supporting our 'Sober Living Home' Grant-in-Aid request. He was willing to submit and champion our proposal as his only GIA request for 2007. I believe this was very helpful in securing the funding."

With funds available to begin work, the rest of the community also joined in. Starting in July 2007, the hard work of renovation came with the help of the boys and girls of the Hana High School Building and Trades Program, Ma Ka Hana Ka Ike, coordinated by Rick Rutiz. Local craftsmen worked with the students to completely renovate the home.

"I'm almost afraid to start naming all of the many, people who came out to help," says Henderson. "I don't want to leave anybody out. This has been a miracle of cooperation, and a real Hana community effort."

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Despite the implications of some recent news reports, the decision of Moloka'i Ranch to suspend its operations is not the responsibility of any one group or set of interests. The company's plans may not have served the best long-term interests of the community, and residents may find great benefits in confronting and resolving these challenges today. Yet we cannot ignore that with Moloka'i Ranch gone, Monsanto becomes the island's largest private employer, and that company's operations may be similarly challenged as our state comes to grips with questions over genetically modified crops.

This is the opportunity before us: can Moloka'i and its residents find a strong middle ground between the differences that might otherwise divide us? If we do, we will find ourselves a better and stronger community, more attuned to the issues that mean most to us, and better able to weather the inevitable changes to come. If not, we will be more likely to find ourselves here again, asking why.



CARE FOR CAREGIVERS



Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition discuss the needs of Caregivers with Sen. English. The coalition also acknowledged Sen. English's role as a caregiver for both his grandparents, Murray and Violet English.

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HAWAII SENATOR CRITICIZES FEDS FOR TREATY FAILURE ON MIGRATION ~ MARSHALL ISLANDS

Excerpted from the Marianas Variety, Guam Monday, March 31, 2008. By Giff Johnson

MAJURO — American states are footing a bill for hundreds of millions of dollars for services to migrants from U.S.-affiliated islands in the Pacific — a tab that the federal government is supposed to pick up, but has failed to, a Hawaii state senator told Marshall Islands and U.S. officials in Majuro at the weekend.

Nearly one-third of the 70,000 Marshall Islanders and about 25 percent of the 107,000 Micronesians now live in America, escaping stagnant economies, dismal public schools and limited health care by using visa-free entry privileges under a Compact of Free Association to move to locations as diverse as Kona on the Big Island of Hawaii to rural northwest Arkansas. The increasing out-migration to America — though the actual numbers remain small on a global scale — have sparked increasing debate in the U.S. about how to pay for services provided to newly arrived islanders.



Sen. English discusses the impact of Marshall Islanders in Hawai'i with regional leaders. (L -R) Republic of the Marshall Islands Minister of Foreign Affairs Tony de Brum, President Litokwa Tomeing, Sen. English; Back row, Kosraen Sen. Gibson Siba, Robert Reimer Enterprises CEO Ramsey Reimer and Pacific Islands Development Bank President & CEO Aren Palik.

"The federal government has not honored the Compact of Free Association," said Hawaii state Sen. J. Kalani English at an oversight hearing in Majuro held by U.S. House Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Asia, Pacific and Global Environment Chairman Eni Faleomavaega, D-American Samoa. "Even though they are supposed to be treated as U.S. citizens, federal law says 'Oh no,' so states are forced to pick up the burden. Our estimate is it costs \$91 million a year to provide services to all freely associated states, or FAS, citizens in Hawaii and we only get back \$10 million from the federal government."

Marshall Islands Foreign Minister Tony deBrum complained that different states in the U.S. have different interpretations of islanders' status, causing hardships to accessing jobs and health care. In some states, islanders have full access to federal services, including job training, food stamps, low cost housing and others. "In other states, it is restricted," deBrum said. "There is discrimination against Marshallese, especially where there are large populations such as Arkansas." In some places, "We're treated worse than aliens," he added.

"Given the no-growth scenario projected (in the Federated States of Micronesia), it is reasonable to assume that large numbers of Micronesians will continue to emigrate in search of jobs, and perhaps also to afford their families a standard of health care and education that they will not easily find at home because of the increased financial pressure on government services," said Fr. Francis Hezel, S.J., director of the Micronesian Seminar research institute in Pohnpei, in a recently published paper.

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ALOHA AIRLINES ENDS OPERATIONS, BUT HOPE REMAINS FOR WORKERS

The last flight of Aloha Airlines traveled from Maui to Honolulu on March 31, bringing an end to over 60 years of operation in Hawai'i, and marking the loss of over 1900 jobs. Earlier that day, Bankruptcy Court Judge Lloyd King ruled that Aloha should be permitted to close its inter-island and trans-Pacific passenger service, despite objections from the office of Governor Linda Lingle.

However, on April 1, Senator J. Kalani English was among a group of five Neighbor Island Senators who worked to amend an existing airline loan guarantee bill to offer assistance to Aloha workers who has lost their jobs.

Under the new proposal, any inter-island airline that makes use of the loan guarantee will be required to commit to hiring displaced Aloha employees to fill positions created by expansions in service.

"We are maintaining our focus on the employees," said Senator English. "The loan guarantees may help airlines provide the passenger capacity we need to keep our community moving, but we can also use them as a way to bring some hope to people who have lost their jobs. They've been our main concern all along, and we're not going to give up."



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The U.S. Congress capped at \$30 million what it calls "Compact Impact" aid provided to just three islands, Guam, Hawaii and the Northern Marianas.

But English believes that other states will soon begin demanding reimbursement from this limited fund.

"The Guam Legislature has just passed a resolution asking the U.S. government to reimburse it for \$400 million (for services to FAS citizens)," English said. "Hawaii's congressional delegation is proposing to lift the \$30 million cap and reinstate eligibility for federal programs. It will be very helpful for the states for the federal government to fully implement the treaty. Hawaii is a willing partner but we ask the U.S. federal government to pay its share of the costs."

"Hawaii had a budget surplus the last few years, but now it's disappeared," English said. "The cost to deliver medical services for TB, sexually transmitted infections, and Hansen's disease might be cheaper (by sending) medical teams to the Marshall Islands to do screening (instead of treating people in Hawaii)."



Congressional Hearings - Congressman Eni Faleomavaega and Senator J. Kalani English receive testimony from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tony de Brum in Majuro, Marshall Islands.

health care were extremely limited. "U.S. access was provided to make up for that shortfall," deBrum said, calling the visa-free status a "safety valve" for the islands. "But we're now faced with rules that stand in the way of enjoyment of these full privileges."

Congressman Faleomavaega said it was clear that there was no appreciation of this on the U.S. side. He recommended that the immigration status of freely associated state citizens be changed to that of islanders from American Samoa.

"American Samoa is the only insular area where the people are not U.S. citizens," Faleomavaega said. "They are classified as U.S. nationals' and receive all the benefits of U.S. citizens. Would classification of U.S. national help (the problems faced by freely associated state citizens in the U.S.)?" he asked.

While deBrum said the idea of Marshall Islanders being U.S. nationals "flies in the face of free association" and raised sovereignty issues, English said it was essential to get the U.S. government to define the status of migrating islanders from U.S.-affiliated islands.

"What (Congressman) Eni said is important," English said. "We don't have a definition of what a freely associated state citizen is entitled to."

deBrum, who was involved in negotiation of the first Compact of Free Association in the early 1980s that established the visa-free immigration status, said the original intent of the provision acknowledged the economies of the freely associated states could not provide jobs to their growing populations and that educational opportunities and access to full

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◀ Read original article in its entirety here:

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