



Capitol Connection

Volume 6, Issue 1

February 2, 2007

WELCOME TO 2007!

The 2007 legislative session has begun, and the next three weeks are the busiest of the year.

I am excited about my new assignment as the Chair of the **Senate Committee on Health**. There are many challenges ahead and complex issues that need our attention in the next few years.

I look forward to working with all of you this session as we chart a course for a healthier Hawaii. Your comments and input are always appreciated!

Thank you for your support!

David Y. Ige
State Senator
16th District

A Fresh Start for '07

Food, entertainment, and the opportunity to meet one's senator make the **Hawaii State Legislature Opening Day** one of Honolulu's most memorable attractions each year.

January 17th, 2007, on a brisk Wednesday morning, the **Twenty-Fourth Legislative Session** opened with speeches and entertainment. From as early as 8:30 AM, a large crowd formed in the rotunda. On the second floor, Senators and their staff hustled.

Down in the Senate Chamber, Senators and honored guests, including **Governor Linda Lingle** and **former Governor Ben Cayetano** and his wife, mingled below the nautilus moon chandelier, while others found their way to their designated seats. Once the clock struck ten, the music and festivities began. Newly elected **Senate President Colleen Hanabusa** kicked off Opening Day with a moving speech on Hawaii's economic growth, describing her upbringing in Waianae as an illustration of how many islanders are living simple lives, as others are moving into luxury apartments being built downtown. Following

speeches by majority and minority leaders, onlookers were serenaded by popular local recording artists, "**Na Leo Pilimehana**", and entertained by the **Kamehameha Schools Children's Chorus**.



The Senate Chambers prior to the Opening Day ceremonies.



Senator Ige with State Department of Health Officials

Once the formal ceremony concluded a little after noon, the hundreds of guests that gathered on the Senate Floor and in the Gallery headed for the elevators and stairs to meet and greet their legislators. Lines formed outside the Senators' doors, transforming the typically calm and quiet Capitol into a festive epicenter. Guests of all ages and backgrounds congregated and conversed as

they eagerly waited in corridors and hallways.

Among the guests who visited Senator Ige were representatives from various health organizations and associations, administrators from the University of Hawaii, people from various state agencies, and personal friends and family members. Interested citizens and advocates came to voice their thoughts and opinions on various issues as other onlookers observed the festivities. Senators and constituents alike commented on how this will be a busy year for Senator Ige as the Health Committee Chair.

The Opening Day visitors continued to pour in. Around 3:00PM, the day of hustle and bustle ended quietly, just as it started, leaving Senator Ige and his staff with a sense of inspiration and motivation for the upcoming Legislative session.

See more photos from Opening Day at DavidIge.org!

Calling All Artists!

Due to the overwhelmingly positive response we have received in previous years, I am quite excited to announce the official startup of the **Capitol Artist Program for 2007!** Since my office first started the program over ten years ago, we have had the pleasure of selecting and displaying students' artwork at the State Capitol, and people have been impressed and touched by the creativity and talent of students in the 16th district.



WHO?

...CAN BECOME A CAPITOL ARTIST?

Everyone in the 16th District—Pearl City and Aiea—is welcome to participate. I am honored to feature artwork by student artists of all levels, from pre-kindergarten to high school. Displays have included banners, papier-mâché creations, photos, as well as watercolors, pencil and ink sketches, oil and acrylic paintings.



WHAT?

ART + TECHNOLOGY= ?

A new and exciting feature of the **Capitol Artist Program** is the opportunity to have your displayed artwork on my personal website, **DavidIge.org**. Drawing on the wonders of technology, I want to give Capitol Artists the opportunity to share their artistic talents with the greater community.



HOW?

...TO GET INVOLVED!

The best way to start is by contacting an art instructor or principal at your (or your child's!) school to generate interest! All we ask is that the artwork is completed and firmly mounted to insure sturdiness.

Throughout the month of February, I am hosting original artwork and sculptures by students from **Aiea Intermediate School** and **Aiea High School**. Guided by their instructors, **Mr. Roy Chang** and **Ms. Wendy Larrow**, the students have created wonderfully insightful portraits, paintings, and drawings of how they interpret our world. I invite everyone to stop by before the end of the month to experience the artwork first-hand in my office and in the Senate Chamber.

As always, my office staff is available for inquiries about the **Capitol Artist Program**. Interested in finding out more about this exciting opportunity? If so, please call my office at **586-6230**, or e-mail me at **sendige@capitol.hawaii.gov**. Don't forget to visit us at the State Capitol, and also have a look at the 2005-7 Capitol Artists' work in the Gallery section of my website to view the talent our district has to offer!

The Neighborhood Connection

• Waimano Ridge Task Force •

On the evening of Wednesday, January 10th, roughly twenty community members gathered to voice their opinion regarding the Waimano Ridge property overlooking Pearl City. The **Waimano Ridge Task Force**, co-chaired by **Senator David Ige** and **Laurence Lau**, Deputy Director for Environmental Health, held this town meeting from 7:00 – 8:30 PM at the Pearl City Cultural Center. In an intense exchange of ideas, community members raised issues and concerns surrounding proposals for the Waimano Ridge property.

Tenant Updates

The meeting commenced with an update on the Waimano Ridge property and tenants. According to Lau, the Department of Health has requested funds for a new water system, demolition of buildings that are fire and safety hazards, and for a permanent facility manager position.

In response to previous inquiries by area residents, Lau also reported that all remaining tenants on the Waimano Ridge property are affiliated with state agencies; no non-profit nor private agencies remain.



Co-chairs Larry Lau & Senator Ige

State Laboratories Division?

The meeting proceeded with a comprehensive and informational presentation about the State Lab, detailing its primary purposes of promoting public health. The lab is an integral part of the State's frontline defense against unwanted illness, agents and viruses.

Dr. Christian Whelen, Chief of the State Laboratories Division also provided an insider's perspective as to what facilities exist atop Waimano Ridge. Whelen's comments focused on three points—laboratory credentials and certifications, improvement and refinement of laboratory capabilities and work capacity, and community support and safety.

SEVERAL REASONS FOR INCREASING THE SAFETY LEVEL OF THE STATE LABORATORY AT WAIMANO?

- 1 Rapid response to disease outbreaks in our community, especially from travelers to our islands
- 2 Continued testing to maintain health and environmental standards for our State.
- 3 Gaining independence from mainland testing labs, which place priority on testing samples from their own communities.

Heated Debate: BSL3?

The main concern of the evening focused on increased safety measures for the State Lab and its employees. Lau said that State Health officials would like to upgrade its current facilities to a **Bio-Safety Level 3 (BSL3)** from its current Level 2 (BSL2) status. Upgrades would ensure the public's safety by addressing such issues as the lab's air stream and the disposal of its waste. Lau explained that increasing the safety level of the State Lab would allow scientists to perform tests locally, rather than send Hawaii's samples to mainland labs. This advantage saves our state tremendous time and money in its efforts to analyze dangerous agents that are found in our community. Although the State Department of Health would like to pursue certification for a higher safety designation for the State Lab, Lau assured the group that no action would be taken until the Department receives the community's approval.

While there are still an array of kinks to work out in the Waimano Ridge and State Laboratories Division, Senator Ige was very pleased to see strong interest and participation from local school principals and community members. It is always refreshing to see community members getting involved in the civic process and Senator Ige and his staff will continue to find resolutions that can keep the community safe and healthy.

For more information about the **Waimano Ridge Task Force**, visit the official website at **WaimanoRidge.org** for meeting materials and the latest update on this project.

Be Our Guest!

"MENTALLY
AWAKE,

MORALLY
STRAIGHT,

PHYSICALLY
STRONG"

On **January 26, 2007**, a beautiful Aloha Friday, a very unlikely guest — **Rashid Zhussupov**, paid our office a visit from the Republic of Kazakhstan. Rashid is currently attending Aiea High School as an exchange student through the **Future Leader Exchange (FLEX) Program**.

Originally from a small town, Rashid was quite surprised on his first day at Aiea High School last August. As he recalls, the students were all very warm and friendly, making him feel right at home. Rashid also contributes his acclimation to Aiea High to the many extracurricular activities that he participates in.

"Mentally awake, Morally straight, Physically strong," is the motto by which Rashid lives his everyday life.

At the young age of sixteen, Rashid already has large ambitions to become a future diplomat of Kazakhstan. During his tour of the Capitol, he asked many questions about the steps one must take to enter the world of diplomacy. With vigor and determination, Rashid detailed his future ambitions to study International Relations at a Kazak University upon turning 18. Rashid shared his dream to follow his older brother's footsteps by pursuing a Bachelor's degree in International Relations at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

With a hard work ethic, limitless desire to learn, and a genuine intent to serve people, Rashid is well on his way to becoming the next diplomat, and perhaps President of Kazakhstan.



SENATOR IGE & RASHID ON THE
SENATE FLOOR



RASHID ZHUSSUPOV,
JUNIOR AMBASSADOR FOR A DAY

The Identity Theft Crisis



ARE YOU AT RISK?

Wondering how likely you are to have your credit card number stolen?

Well, according to a comprehensive survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice, identity theft affects millions of households in the U.S each year and costs an estimated \$6.4 billion per year in damages. Hawaii has not been spared from this threat and we need to take appropriate preventative measures. To keep our communities safe from identity theft, I want to encourage everyone to attend this year's first town hall meeting on **February 28, 2007, 7:00-8:30 PM**, at **Waimalu Elementary School Cafeteria**.

Returning guest speaker **Detective Miles Jung** and officers of the Honolulu Police Department will give an hour-long presentation about the basics of identity theft, as well as ways we can protect ourselves from becoming victims of financial tragedy.

Office of Senator David Y. Ige

- Representing Aiea, Aiea Heights, Momilani, Newtown, Pacific Palisades, Pearl City, Upper Pearlridge, Waiiau and Waimalu

STATE CAPITOL
415 South Beretania Street, Room 215
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

PHONE: 808-586-6230

FAX: 808-586-6231

E-MAIL: sendige@capitol.hawaii.gov

WEB: www.davidige.org

Connected to the Internet?

READ AND SEE MORE ONLINE AT
DAVIDIGE.ORG!