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U.S. Embassy Kolonia Commemorates Veterans Day

Embassy of the United States of America, Kolonia

On November 11, the U.S. Embassy Kolonia in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) partnered with the Pohnpei Veterans Association to host a series of activities to commemorate 2020 U.S. Veterans Day. To kick off the activities the Honorable Pohnpei State Governor Reed B. Oliver delivered opening remarks to a 5k Fun Run. During his remarks Governor Oliver extended his appreciation to all veterans who have served in promoting world peace and security.



Kandhi Elieisar, FSM Department of Foreign Affairs spoke on behalf of the FSM Government. During his address he spoke about shared pride that is felt through the service of FSM citizens in the U.S. Armed Forces, including his son Michael who is serving as a Corporal out of Camp Lejeune in South Carolina. Chargé d'affaires Somer Bessire-Briers spoke on behalf of



the U.S. Embassy Kolonia and expressed the U.S. appreciation to all veterans who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. During her remarks, Chargé d'affaires Bessire-Briers noted, "The sons and

daughters of the FSM who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces demonstrate our special relationship and that our two

See "Veterans Day" on page 4

Following the 5k Fun Run, a wreath laying ceremony was held at the Fallen Soldiers Memorial at the Pohnpei International Airport with veterans and their family members. His Excellency Secretary

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In quest for equity in education, First Lady Edwin visits children with special needs in schools & homes

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FSM agrees in principle to US humanitarian flight for initial repatriation of some citizens and diplomats

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

November 16, 2020

FSM—According to a widely circulated Diplomatic Note from the FSM Department of Foreign Affairs the FSM COVID-19 Taskforce approved in principle "the offer by the United States to charter a humanitarian flight to repatriate citizens and diplomatic community members, who are stranded in Guam and beyond on December 5."

The letter says that FSM National Government is prioritizing the repatriation of medical patients and their respective attendants, elected officials, diplomats, and students.

"In a meeting with senior staff today, November 13th, 2020, His Excellency David W. Panuelo emphasized to the FSM COVID-19 Task Force that it is the position of the FSM National Government that the repatriation effort occur, without any hesitation or reservation, so long as the Government's procedural and medical requirements are adhered to in full," the letter said.

It then sets out those requirements. All individuals must acquire a negative COVID-19 test result prior to entry into the Nation's designated pre-quarantine facility

in Guam which is the Santa Fe Hotel. All individuals traveling to Guam for the purpose of entry into the pre-quarantine facility must take strong precautionary measures, such as wearing a mask at all times when in public, and avoiding non-essential activities while in transit. All individuals must follow all pre-quarantine procedures, including all COVID-19 testing requirements, when they are at the pre-quarantine facility.

All drivers and vehicles bringing travelers to the aircraft for the purpose of the FSM's

See "Repatriation" on page 7

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FSM throws out felony charge against Norleen Oliver but orders her to stand trial for misdemeanor charge

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

November 12, 2020

Pohnpei—This evening, the FSM Supreme Court ruled that there was no probable cause to charge Norleen Oliver with felony “Deprivation of Rights” and has thrown that charge out. It has ruled that there is probable cause to charge her with the misdemeanor charge of “Obstructing Administration of Law or other government function.” The Court has scheduled her initial appearance on that charge on November 23.

On October 2, the FSM Department of Justice filed a criminal information at the FSM Supreme Court based on events that occurred on September 18. On that day, Oliver parked her car on a portion of the driveway that is on her family land in an effort to block construction of a road that is scheduled to be continued on to Patricia Edwin’s family land. The criminal information contended that in blocking the driveway she had committed at least two crimes.

“Neither the information nor the accompanying affidavit of probable cause identify the right, privilege, or immunity secured to Edwin by the FSM Constitution or laws, that Oliver allegedly deprived Edwin of,” the ruling says. “None of the rights in the FSM Declaration of Rights would seem to be implicated, not even an FSM citizen’s right to travel, FSM Const. art. IV, § 12 (‘A citizen of the Federated States

of Micronesia may travel and migrate within the Federated States.’) , because that right only protects citizens from any governmental restriction on their movement or migration between FSM states, municipalities, and islands...Nor is the court aware of any statutory right that might be implicated.

“Thus, although Oliver’s actions seem willful, the court cannot find probable cause that she deprived Edwin of any right, privilege, or immunity secured to her by the FSM Constitution or laws. Accordingly, the court hereby dismisses Count I of the information,” it concludes on that charge.

“Count II charges Oliver with violating 11 F.S.M.C. 501, thereby obstructing the administration of law or other-governmental function. Section 501 (1) provides that: “[a] person commits a crime if he or she willfully interferes with, delays, or obstructs a public official in the discharge or attempted discharge of any duty of his or her office,” the ruling says on the second charge.

“Taking as true the government’s allegation that the First Lady is a public official (she often functions as one and her spouse is most certainly one), the government has made out a bare prima facie case that Oliver willfully interfered with, er delayed, or obstructed First Lady Edwin from entering or leaving her private residence, thus impeding her ability to rove about and discharge

whatever duties she may have as the nation’s First Lady,” it concludes on that charge.

The court said that “it is somewhat dismaying that the situation has come to this.” The Justice said that instead of blocking the access road, Oliver could have sought injunctive relief from a court to ensure that the road paving project did not affect the purity and

cleanliness of her source of drinking water but that she did not do so.

FSM prosecutors will have to prove that when Oliver blocked the driveway with her car, Patricia Edwin had absolutely no way to access her land at the top of the road.

The initial appearance will be on November 23 at 11:30 in the morning.

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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

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FSM auditors find substantial progress in properly administering FSM Housing Program for government employees

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

November 15, 2020

FSM—The FSM Office of the National Public Auditor (FSMOPA) has released a follow up performance audit on last year’s audit of the FSM Housing Program for FSM employees hired from outside of Pohnpei. The audit revealed that substantial improvements have been made within the last year but that there are still some steps that need to be taken.

Last year’s audit contained three findings: “Possible non-compliance and lack of documentation to support determination of eligibility”; “Monitoring of the Housing Program could be improved”, and “Inadequacy of regulations for the Housing Program”.

The previous audit found that there were employees that had been locally recruited who were receiving a housing allowance. It found that there were employees who were receiving the allowance who had local spouses or

parents who owned houses within normal commuting distance. Some employees were receiving a housing allowance without valid lease agreements. No inspections or housing facilities were conducted on expiration of lease agreements or termination of occupancy. Housing questionnaires were not filled out by beneficiaries at least once a year as required. Lastly, not all housing furnishings and appliances were tagged or recorded.

FSMOPA then suggested that the President take action to strengthen the capacity of the Office of Personnel in the areas of leadership and management, adequate staff, sufficient budgeting and effective system to monitor and evaluate performance.

After last year’s audit, a new law was enacted that separated the Office of Personnel from the President’s Office. A new staff position was added to the new Office of Personnel. The Personnel Specialist IV/Housing Office was tasked to administer the housing program. Auditors said that the addition of that

office has begun to resolve some of the issues that were previously noted such as those relating to housing program benefits for ‘locally hired’ employees and employees whose pay level was below level 26. However, FSMOPA also noted that a six month performance evaluation of the person in the newly added position did not indicate whether there was any improvement in the issues of maintaining a updated listing/register for all 86 recipients, inspections, completion of housing questionnaires, and other matters.

FSMOPA found that there was substantial implementation of the recommendations on finding one of the previous audit.

On the previous audit’s finding that monitoring of the housing program could be improved the current audit found that the addition of the new position mentioned in the first finding has substantially improved matters in the program. One of the previous recommendations had been substantially implemented. Another

had been fully implemented. Only the recommendation that the Officer of Personnel review and revise the policies, procedures, guidelines and rules to effectively manage the Housing Program was found to not yet have been fully implemented. This finding, however, is on its way toward full implementation with a new Director of the Office of Personnel.

FSMOPA found that the two implementation recommendations it previously made under the finding that the regulations for the Housing program were inadequate had been substantially implemented. But again, under the newly appointed Director steps are being taken to fully implement the recommendations.

Within the last year, some employees who had previously been accustomed to receiving a housing allowance even for homes where they lived that a family member owned were surprised to find that they could no longer get that added benefit to their salary.



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Governor Oliver attends Veterans Day Ceremony

Pohnpei Enginkehlap

November 11, 2020
P o h n p e i — O n Wednesday, November 11, 2020, at 7:00 AM, the Hon. Reed B. Oliver, Governor of Pohnpei State attended the U.S. Veterans of Pohnpei (USVP) Fun Run opening ceremony at the Kolonia Town Gym. Governor Oliver was the keynote speaker

for this all-day event that included a Fun Run/Walk, classes and games for youth, a wreath-laying ceremony at the Pohnpei International Airport’s FSM Veterans Memorial, and a live band, to commemorate and celebrate FSM Veterans of Foreign Wars Day.

In his remarks, Governor Oliver recounted the evolution of the holiday, from Armistice Day on the eleventh hour, of the eleventh day of the eleventh month (11:00 am, 11 November) in 1918 to mark the end of World War I, to the establishment of Veterans Day in the U.S. by President Eisenhower in 1954, and the formation of FSM Veterans of



Foreign Wars Day by FSM Congress through Public Law 13-38 on June 23, 2004. He thanked the Officers of the USVP, President Kavika Edwin Duff, Vice President Strick Richardo, Secretary Richard Porter, Treasurer Merins Hadley Race, and Public Awareness Officer, Johnny Musrasrik for their efforts in organizing this important event.

Governor Oliver expressed his sincere thanks to all “Veterans and family members, who gave their best and sacrificed their lives for the cause of World Peace, Freedom and Security”. He went on to recognize notable Veterans from Pohnpei including His Majesty Wasalalpalap Isipahu, Nahnmwarki

of Madolenihmw, Herbert Hebel, former Pohnpei State Governor, Hon. Marcelo Peterson who was present, Mayor of Kolonia Town Hon. Beterigo Jacob, FSM President’s Chief of Staff and Chief Compact Negotiator, Leo Falcam, Jr., and former Director of the Department of Public Safety, Mr. Benito Cantero among many others. He concluded his remarks and once again expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to participate in this important occasion of FSM Veterans of Foreign Wars Day with everyone “in the name of Peace and Security of everyone around the world.”

Governor Oliver also joined the FSM Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Kandhi Elieisar, U.S. Embassy Kolonia Charge d’Affaires Ms. Somer Bessiere-Briers, Pohnpei State Senator Hon. Helgena Johnson and Gold Star Families to lay wreaths at the Pohnpei International Airports FSM Veterans Memorial.

SBGFC takes corrective action based on audit exceptions found by Pohnpei auditor

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

November 15, 2020

Pohnpei—Pohnpei's Office of the Public Auditor (POPA) recently released its audit of the Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corporation (SBGFC or the corporation). They found that the corporation's financial statements represent fairly the financial position of the corporation as of the end of last fiscal year according to accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. It also found made eight findings regarding control deficiencies in the accounting system and the corporation's own policies and procedures. Since the period of the audit, several of those findings have already been resolved.

The Corporation earned revenues of \$55,214 in the 2019 fiscal year (FY), a \$8,539 or 13 percent decrease as compared to \$63,753 in FY 2018. FY 2019 total operating expense was \$156,396, \$26,097 or 20 percent higher than last year's figure of \$130,299. The corporation's net assets decreased by \$2,774. The loan accounts increased from a net of \$534,389 in FY 2018 to a total net of \$572,086 in FY 2019. Auditors said that one contributing factor to that change is that several accounts were paid off but new loans were approved.

The first of POPA's deficiency findings was that the corporation made a questionable transfer of \$10,000 from the restricted guarantee loan fund into its operating account for a legal consultation fee. It said that in March 2019 the corporation paid the fee in March 2019 but that the then Attorney General learned about the arrangement and advised the corporation to terminate the contract, which it did. In August 2019, the contracted attorney returned \$9,461.24 of the original amount and the corporation deposited the money into its operation account.

POPA recommends that the board should carefully consider actions to consider whether or not they are in conformity with the law and that the Executive Director should return the returned amount to the loan guarantee fund. The auditee's response shows that the corporation has done so and has also sent a request to the Governor and the Speaker of the Legislature requesting

that the restrictions on those funds be lifted.

The corporation concurred with the finding but said in its response that "equally important to note is the collections of outstanding (defaulted) loans". It said they had retained the lawyer in order "to retain a special counsel to legally pursue collect from these borrowers".

POPA's second finding was that there was an unauthorized and questionable consolidation of employee loans. As a result of this finding, the Board of Directors resolved to completely repeal the Incentive Scheme Program to the employees of SBGFC and has begun to take actions to collect outstanding loans by employees. Management says that a result, this type of finding will not be able to occur in the future.

OPA's third finding was that payroll matters were not in accord with policies and procedures. As a result of this finding, on October 6, Executive Director Thomas Pablo rescinded previous practices on regard to payroll issuance including changing the day that payroll checks would be issued in order to reflect hours actually worked rather than hours anticipated to be worked. "Payroll advances on unearned hours are strictly prohibited and shall not be entertained," he memo to all employees said.

POPA found that reconciliations were not performed on a timely basis resulting in numerous adjusting entries after reconciliations were done. "As a result 28 adjusting entries, aggregation \$31,182 were proposed by the auditors. The adjusting entries if not taken up would materially misstate specific accounts of the corporation and (might have) affect(ed) its financial statements.

Again, the Executive Director of SBGFC has issued directives to make sure this audit exception does not occur in the future.

POPA found control deficiencies in the disbursement process. It found 17 instances where invoices or supporting documents were not attached with disbursement vouchers for proper review. There were seven instances where supporting document did not provide indication or proof of payments. There were four instances where explanation

was not provided on documents to justify disbursements, and three instances where disbursements did not show evidence of approval.

Finding six was that there was a lack of proper review and documentation. It said that board meetings were held but minutes were not prepared. There were two instance where minutes of meeting could not be found in the files. There were 17 instances of incomplete loan documentation. A traveler did not submit required supporting documents for non-per diem items but received the remaining 20 percent of the per diem. There were two instances where requests for cessation of allotment were not attached to the payroll check, and an instance where the daily cash collection report was not verified.

Finding seven was that non-capital assets were not properly maintained. The

audit revealed that the corporation's asset register in not kept updated. They found eight assets not properly tagged, three assets that had been disposed of but were still in the asset register. One asset is missing. One asset in the register is not in a working condition. One instance where an asset described in the register is different from the actual asset, and two assets not included in the asset register.

Finding eight was that management had not developed and implemented corrective measures to resolve all prior year audit findings.

Executive Director Thomas Pablo took the outcomes of the audit seriously and issued a memo to employees indicating either reversals of previous policies as they were needed but also instruction on policies to avoid these audit exceptions ever occurring again in an audit of SBGFC.

...Veterans Day

Continued from front page

peoples share a common commitment to the values of democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights".

A moment of silence was observed following the wreath laying ceremony in honor of FSM citizens who have fallen while in combat.

The Compact of Free Association enables Micronesians to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces, which they have done honorably

since World War II. Currently, citizens from the F.S.M and other Pacific islands serve in the U.S. military at a higher per-capita rate than U.S. citizens. Congratulations to following winners for the Veterans Day 5k Fun Run:

1. Ioanis Paulino, Time: 16:34
2. Stevrick Leopold, Time: 17:10
3. Fernanda Aliseda, Time: 17:14
4. Jesse Selkar, Time: 18:39
5. LtCol Erin Richter, Time: 20:19
6. McMillan Benjamin, Time: 20:45
7. Zacky Henly, Time: 20:56
8. Keanan Likor, Time: 20:58
9. Rothman Agrippa, Time: 20:59
10. Dana Leeling, Time: 21:07



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Oliver files opposition to government's motion to dismiss her civil action in the Sokehs road paving matter

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

November 6, 2020

Pohnpei—The attorney for Norleen Oliver today filed its opposition to defendants' motion to dismiss in the civil action case against the FSM Government and officials regarding governmental actions against Oliver when she blocked the driveway leading to Patricia Edwin's home. As covered in the previous issue of The Kaselehlie Press, the government filed a motion to dismiss Oliver's on October 19. As expected, Oliver's opposition to that motion argued its reasons for denying that motion on every point.

All of these matters, the Defendants' motion to dismiss and the Plaintiff's opposition to the motion to dismiss are preliminary matters to any actual trial on the merits of the Plaintiff's causes of action. The Court has yet to rule on either motion and the arguments contained in both the motion to dismiss and the opposition to that motion are merely the defendants' and the plaintiff's points of view and interpretations of case law precedent on the matter. The court will now need to balance the arguments and make a ruling before anything further can be done to bring the matter to a conclusion.

In its opening lines, the opposition motion says that the "factual background" as stated in the Plaintiffs' motion to dismiss is "full of inaccurate facts and therefore should be restated as factual 'allegations' instead of factual background...the Court is kindly requested to note the difference, and treat the Defendants' factual background submission as factual 'allegations'."

It said that the government defendants' claim that the civil action fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted falls flat. Oliver's attorney says that the legal standard is that a claim cannot be dismissed on that argument unless it can be said, "with a certainty, that no relief can be granted under any facts that could be proven by the plaintiff in support of its claims" which she argues cannot be said under the facts of the matter.

Oliver argues that the government defendants' claim that by filing the civil action she is merely "forum shopping", the practice of choosing the most favorable jurisdiction in which a claim might be heard, because the government had already filed criminal charges

against her also falls flat. Though based on the same facts and the same event, the issues to be decided in the two cases are completely different.

Also as expected, Oliver's attorney took issue with the use of the doctrine of collateral estoppel raised in the government's motion to dismiss. "Plaintiff is baffled as to why the Defendants have raised this defense at this time when the criminal matter they rely on is still in its probable cause finding stage. There is actually no ruling from the FSM Court yet as to a finding of probable cause for the two (2) offenses alleged in the criminal information in Criminal Case No. 2020-503. How then can the Defendants use collateral estoppel as a defense at this time?"

At the time that the opposition motion was filed, the Court had not yet ruled on whether there was sufficient cause to enter the prosecution stage of the criminal case which later held that there were not sufficient grounds to charge Oliver of the felony charge filed against her but that she must stand trial for the misdemeanor charge.

The opposition motion says that the government's dismissal argument on the matter of due process violations was based on a misinterpretation of Oliver's affidavit and so should be rejected. Plaintiff had testified under oath that she did park her car where she did in order to stop contractors from going onto the road on her private land to pave it without her permission but not to block access of the road going up to the one residence situated above her land.

The opposition motion argued that, "there are boundaries and jurisdictional issues with respect to enforcement of criminal laws in this country. The FSM AG does not have sweeping and overall authority to enforce the laws of this country." It continued to argue that the FSM Attorney General and his FSM Police Officers had overstepped that boundary in their actions against Oliver.

On the issue of "trespass" Oliver requests the court to note that, "the Defendants' sole defense is that the Plaintiff does not own the property." It says, "For a claim of trespass, title is not a prerequisite. A trespass action is one for violation of possession, not for challenge to title."

The government had claimed that a survey shows an existing road covering

a few parcels of land, none of which was titled to the Plaintiff but provided no documentation of that claim. Oliver claims that 99 percent of the piece of road that was previously paved while she was off island and also without her permission runs on her family's land with only a very small portion crossing over onto Ioanis Rasa's property.

The government defendants claimed that the National Police could not safely carry out their duty to provide "24/7" protection to the President and the First Lady. Oliver argues that when the National Police were called to the scene there was no one there except for her own car. There had been no police officer with the First Lady on that day because, Oliver claimed, "the First Lady was simply going on her way with a private matter."

The opposition motion tells the court that Patricia Edwin is the sole landowner of the land above Oliver's family land and that President Panuelo is not legally married to her and therefore owns no portion of that land. It is not an official residence. "There is no national law offense committed and the taking of the vehicle without a court order or a warrant is a due process violation," it said. Further, by the time police impounded Oliver's vehicle she had already voluntarily moved it.

"A personal dispute between a First Lady and her neighbor does not rise to the level of national offense that warranted government intervention through law enforcement of this national magnitude," Oliver argues. She claims that Edwin was able to drive around Oliver's vehicle and the only impediment was to the contractors who she said were planning to enter the property without the owner's permission. "Under what authority does the government enter private land to modify its landscape without the landowner's permission?" she asked.

Oliver's attorney argued against the government's claim that the road pavement project is a public project. She called the project itself a violation of due process. "Can the government go onto any private person's property and install a public project without permission by the landowners?" she asked.

"The Defendants refuse to admit that the use of government funds to pave a private road is embezzlement," Oliver claims. "The public law appropriating

the funds is for the Sokehs Road Paving Project, not Trisha Edwin's road project. The access road in question serves two families only, the plaintiff and her family and Trisha Edwin, whose land is located up the hill. There are no other families and it is not a public access road or a community access road. Therefore, the funding surely was not meant for the pavement of Trisha Edwin Amor access road." She claims that the Sokehs Road Pavement Project was intended to benefit the community of Sokehs, perhaps by continuing the pavement of the Sokehs Island circumferential road. "The law does not allow public funds to be used for private purposes," she argues.

The government defendants argued in their motion to dismiss that the entire civil action should be thrown out for failure to name an indispensable party, the contractor, in the lawsuit. Oliver argued that the contract that engaged the contractor is itself illegal and should therefore be nullified. However, she argues, if the Court disagrees with that assertion, the failure to name that party could be easily rectified by a Court order requiring the Plaintiff to name the party. She says that the Court is under no obligation to dismiss the civil action for failure to name the party.

On the matter of jurisdiction, Oliver argues that since neither Patricia Edwin nor the President live on the property in question, "the government has no business treating the land as official land or home of the First family," and therefore has no jurisdiction in the matter. "The FSM Government cannot sit in its offices in Palikir, then unilaterally decide to construct a road on private land somewhere in Pohnpei, and call it a government project and therefore claim government jurisdiction," she argues.

On the matter of intentional infliction of emotional distress, Oliver asks the Court to allow the claim to proceed so that she can produce evidence to prove the physical manifestation of the alleged infliction of emotional distress.

Lastly she provides points and authorities that she claims back her reasons and right for filing the lawsuit against government officials both in their official and personal capacities.

Each of the two motions span more than 30 pages. The Court will have a lot of work to do before it can make any ruling on which of the arguments it accepts.

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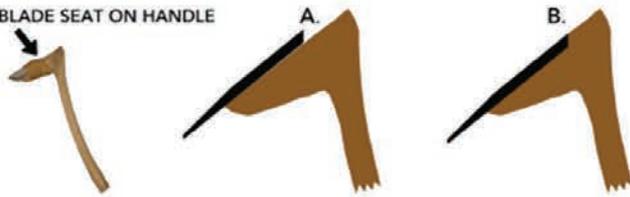
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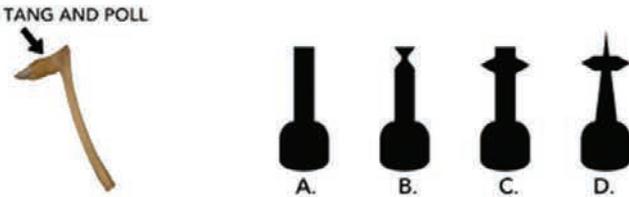
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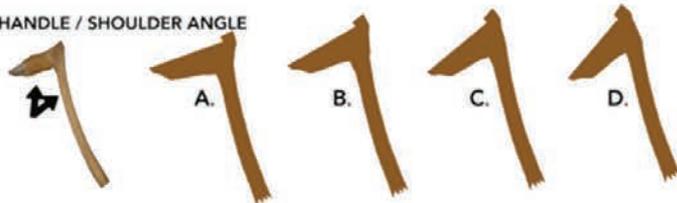
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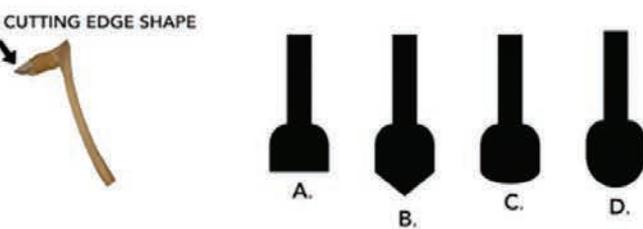
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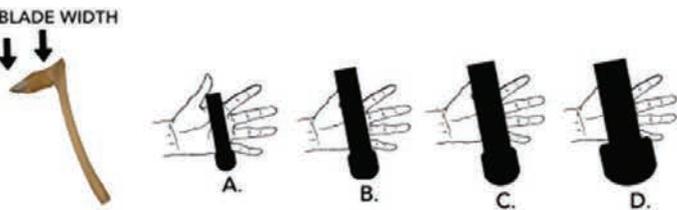
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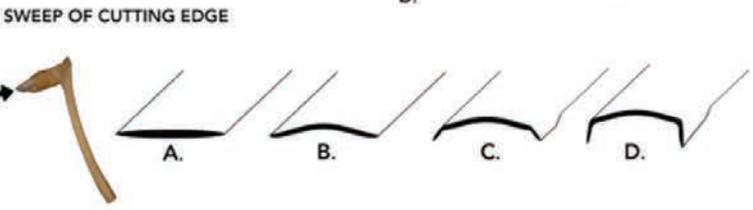
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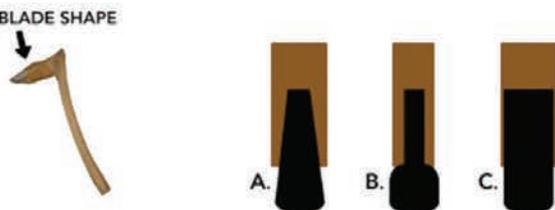
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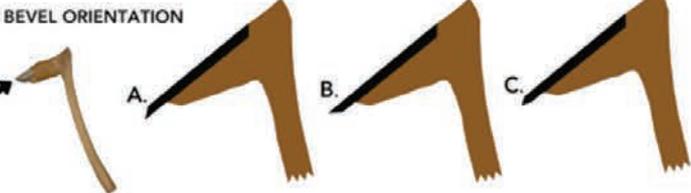
7. SWEEP OF CUTTING EDGE



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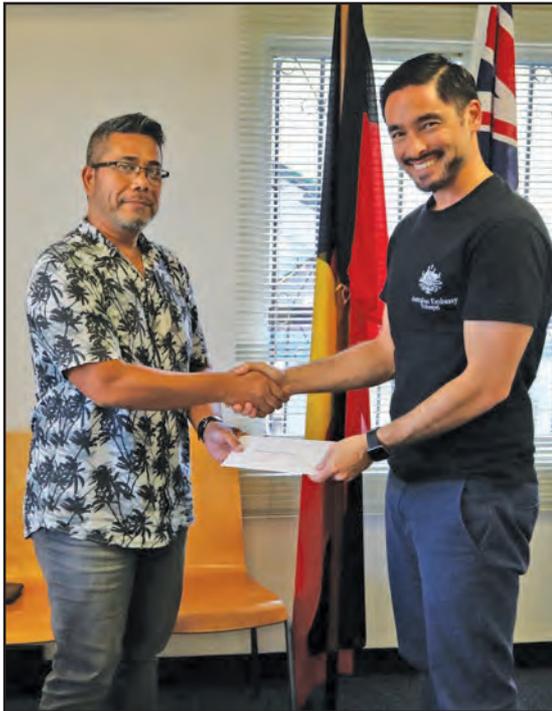
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Peniensene Community Water project receives Australian Direct Aid Program Grant

The Australian Embassy

The Australian Embassy congratulates Peniensene Community Water Infrastructure & Storage Development Project, a recent grant recipient of our Direct Aid Program (DAP). Acting Deputy Head of Mission, Takuro Steele, presented a cheque for \$19,251.20 to Richard Dereas for the project. The community in Weno, Chuuk does not have access to metered water and has been relying on rainwater, rivers/stream to meet their needs at household level. With the DAP assistance provided, the project will focus on improving access to water sources through the installation of water tanks and improved water piping which will also ensure that the community will be more resilient to periods of drought.



development activities. DAP applications can be submitted year-round. For more information and to apply online, visit www.fsm.embassy.gov.au

DAP is a flexible, small grants scheme for

Governor Oliver meets with FSM TC&I Secretary, Mr. Carlson Apis

Pohnpei Enginkehlap

November 9, 2020

Pohnpei--On October 30, 2020, Governor Oliver met with FSM Secretary of Transportation, Communication, and Infrastructure (TC&I), Mr. Carlson Apis, at the Governor's cabinet room. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss communications, public projects, transportation, and other items to align and coordinate efforts in these areas. Secretary Apis was accompanied by Mr. Takuro Akinaga from the FSM's Telecommunications Regulation Authority (TRA), Mr. Jolden Johnnyboy, and Edward Albert from TC&I, Mr. Rob Solomon from FSM Department of Finance and joining via zoom, Mr. Mike Lott with FSM Open Access Entity (OAE) and Mr. Frank McLaughlin with FSM TRA. Secretary Apis asked for Governor Oliver's and the State of Pohnpei's support with the liberalization of telecommunication services, listing a number of expected improvements and upgrades, including a short presentation by Mr. Mike Lott on Fibre optic access and benefits. Governor Oliver and Secretary Apis also discussed Pohnpei Transportation Authority's

potential development as a semi-autonomous entity, similar to PUC that can translate to improved service and delivery not just for Pohnpei but for the nation. Finally, the Governor and Secretary spoke on the expected renovation of the Pohnpei State Government Administration building by China Construction Steel Structure Corporation. Secretary Apis agreed that Pohnpei's Office of Transportation and Infrastructure will take the lead on this project. Governor Oliver thanked Secretary Apis for his visit and looked forward to the continued coordination and alignment of State and National communication, infrastructure, and transportation projects.



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INVITATION TO BID

The Pohnpei Utilities Corporation (PUC) has received funds from the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) towards **THE PROCUREMENT OF A NEW WATER WELL DRILLING RIG WITH ACCESSORIES (hereinafter referred to as the "Good")**. The Pohnpei Utilities Corporation is referred to in the document as **"the Purchaser"**.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain one (1) complete set of the bidding documents from PUC Main Office during working hours or by emailing nanson@mypuc.fm. The RFP Packages will be available for pickup starting Monday, November 02, 2020. The documents may be emailed to the eligible bidder upon request to the email address below:

Mr. Nixon Anson General Manager
Pohnpei Utilities Corporation
PUC Building
P.O. Box C
Kolonias, Pohnpei, FM 96941
Federated States of Micronesia
Telephone: (691) 320-2374
Emailing: nanson@mypuc.fm

In the case of submission by international courier, you are asked to take special note of the remoteness of the Federated States of Micronesia, the frequency of airline transportation services, and the effects which these factors have on mail and courier services.

All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of two percent (2%) of total bid price and must be delivered in accordance with the Instructions to Bidders on or before **4:00 p.m. Friday December 04, 2020 Pohnpei time** and will be publicly opened immediately thereafter. All bidders are responsible for the time difference.

The Pohnpei Utilities Corporation will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of bids.

Bids will be opened in the presence of those bidders who choose to attend in the Conference Room, Pohnpei Utilities Corporation, Kolonias, Pohnpei FM 96941.

The Pohnpei Utilities Corporation reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of PUC. All proposals shall become the property of PUC.

FSM receives PUMA Drone & surveillance supplies from United States

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—The Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) recently acquired capacity-building surveillance supplies, including an AeroVironment RQ-20 Puma drone, in a handover ceremony between the Honorable Joses R. Gallen, Secretary of the Department of Justice, and Lieutenant Colonel Erin Richter, Defense Attaché at the Embassy of the United States of America. Authorized through Section 333 from Title 10 of the U.S. Code's Chapter 16, which grants the U.S. Department of Defense "Authority to Build Capacity", the U.S. Embassy's provision of training and equipment to the FSM National

Police is intended to strengthen the Nation's capacity to conduct maritime and border security operations, among other operations or activities necessary for the FSM's overall security needs.

In addition to the Puma drone, the FSM National Police also received supplies for retooling, cleaning, and maintaining the Nation's armory.

"On behalf of His Excellency David W. Panuelo, the Honorable Yosiwo P. George, and the People of the FSM," Secretary Gallen said, "I thank the U.S. Embassy for their continued support in strengthening our FSM-U.S. Enduring Partnership. These supplies and Puma drone will help

the Department of Justice's capacity in effectively carrying out its mandate equitably enforcing the law, and keeping our Nation secure."

It is the intention of the FSM National Government to constantly improve its capacity in equitably and consistently enforcing the Nation's laws. In a statement following the receipt of the supplies, President Panuelo said: "We are grateful to the United States and our Enduring Partnership in strengthening our capacity to conduct law enforcement activities. I pledged during my inaugural address in July 2019 that the Panuelo-George administration will demonstrate a commitment to the rule of law, and that this will be measured by, among other means, the newly implemented Division of Anti-Human Trafficking, the strengthening of our FSM National Police and Maritime Wing, and joining the International Police Organization (INTERPOL), the latter of which I hope to see positive developments on before the end of 2020. It is my hope that these supplies and this Puma drone will increase our Nation's efficacy in ensuring that justice, while blind in its delivery of fairness to all citizens, has the necessary vision to witness wrongdoing where it occurs, and make a competent determination on the appropriate course of action thereof."



Joint Leadership Meeting with 10th Pohnpei State Legislature and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance presentation

Pohnpei Enginkehlap

October 31, 2020

Pohnpei--On Monday, October 26, 2020, Governor Oliver and Lieutenant Governor Perman welcomed the Legislative branch led by the Hon. Ausen T. Lambert, Speaker of the 10th Pohnpei State Legislature and Vice Speaker, Hon. Stevick Edwin, to the Governor's Conference Room for a Joint State Leadership Meeting at 10:00 am.

Lt. Governor Perman and Speaker Lambert provided opening remarks for the Executive and Legislative branches, respectively. Lt. Governor Perman welcomed Mr. Rob Solomon from the FSM Department of Finance, asking him to help explain the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program (PUA). Speaker Lambert thanked Governor Oliver for initiating this joint leadership meeting and also for the FSM Department of Finance for

accepting the Governor's invitation to provide a presentation on the PUA. Mr. Rob Solomon, represented the FSM Secretary of Finance, Mr. Eugene Amor.

Mr. Solomon gave an overview of the program, including the prescribed amounts payable to qualified applicants, \$166 per week, and added that from April – July 2020, an additional \$600 was included in the weekly payments. He went on to add that the PUA is a U.S. Department of Labor regulated program and the FSM Department of Finance is following their rules and regulations and because FSM does not have an unemployment benefits program, the guidelines used are for the state of Hawaii. Since the start of the program, there has been \$7 million paid out in PUA benefits, \$4 million in Pohnpei alone. In explaining eligibility for PUA, Mr. Solomon said that everyone is encouraged to apply, but not everyone will be eligible for

benefits. He said since there have been no positive COVID-19 cases in FSM, proving that COVID-19 is the reason for loss or reduction of income is crucial in the application process.

During the question and answer session that followed Mr. Solomon's presentation, Governor Oliver reiterated an offer that was made before the start of the PUA program in Pohnpei to provide assistance to the PUA office through a State Focal Point, to help Pohnpei residents properly fill out applications and provide the required documents to qualify. Mr. Solomon acknowledged that a challenge exists with applications being properly filled out and would take the Governor's request to the FSM Secretary of Finance. Speaker Ausen T. Lambert asked that this very important benefit be managed carefully especially in light of the ongoing compact re-negotiations.

**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
(CONSULTING SERVICES – FIRMS SELECTION)**

COUNTRY: Federated States of Micronesia
NAME OF PROJECT: FSM Prioritized Road Investment and Management Enhancements Project (P172225)
Assignment Title: Design & Supervision of Urgent Climate Resilience Improvement Works for Identified Road Network Assets
Reference No.: FM-DOTCI-168145-CS-QCBS

rscgoodwin@hotmail.com.

The Department of Transportation, Communication and Infrastructure (DoTC&I) now invites eligible consulting firms (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. The shortlisting criteria are:

- i. General experience in the core areas of design and construction supervision (a minimum of 10 years’ experience will be required)
- ii. Experience on similar assignments as per the Terms of Reference (at least 3 similar assignments over the past 10 years of which at least 1 assignment should be in a small island developing state)
- iii. Proof of technical, managerial and financial capacity of the firm
- iv. Experience in the pacific region is desired

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank’s “Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers” July 2016 revised November 2017 and August 2018 (“Procurement Regulations”), setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflict of interest.

Consultants may associate with other firms to enhance their qualifications, but should indicate clearly whether the association is in the form of a joint venture and/or a sub-consultancy. In the case of a joint venture, all the partners in the joint venture shall be jointly and severally liable for the entire contract, if selected.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost Based Selection Method (QCBS) set out in the Procurement Regulations.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours 0900 to 1700 Pohnpei Time (Local Time).

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by e-mail) by Friday, December 4th, 2020

Robert Goodwin,
 Program Manager
 Department of Transportation,
 Communication and Infrastructure
 (DoTC&I)
 Palikir, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)
 Tel: (+691) 320 2080
 Email: rscgoodwin@hotmail.com
 Web: www.tci.gov.fm

And cc to:
 Ciu.tci@gov.fm
 (Central Implementation Unit)

The Federated States of Micronesia has applied for financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the FSM Prioritized Road Investment and Management Enhancements Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The consulting services (“the Services”) will involve undertaking field investigations and surveys, options analysis, preparing designs and procurement documentation, and providing procurement assistance and construction supervision of improvements to identified road network assets in each of the four states – Pohnpei, Chuuk, Yap and Kosrae.

The improvement works will comprise the replacement of 3 existing bridges (1 in Pohnpei and 2 in Yap), the upgrading of the Lelu Causeway in Kosrae and reconstruction of about 2.5 km of the Weno Road in Chuuk.

The services to be provided by the Consultant will be undertaken in a 2-stage approach as follows:

Stage 1 – Field investigations, surveys, preliminary and detailed design, procurement documentation & procurement assistance

- field assessments, surveys and site investigations, consultation, concept designs and costs of feasible improvement options;
- preliminary engineering design
- detailed design and procurement documentation
- provision of assistance to state authorities during the procurement process

Stage 2 – Construction supervision and works contract(s) administration

- supervision of construction and administration of contract(s)
- defects liability / notification period and finalization of works contract(s)

Two separate consulting services contracts will be signed between the parties to cover this assignment; a lump-sum contract to cover the full Stage 1 services, and a separate time-based contract to cover the full Stage 2 services.

Stage 1 of the assignment is expected to commence in April 2021 and will take about 17 months. Stage 2 will start in September 2022 and will take about 24 months (including the defects liability period).

To obtain the detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment you are encouraged to write to the Program Manager at

In quest for equity in education, First Lady Edwin visits children with special needs in schools & homes

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—

On November 11th, 2020, His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), having completed a thorough review of the FSM’s Education Sector Development Plan for 2020 to 2024 and, having recently endorsed a Congressional Resolution accepting a grant of \$2,844,888.90 in funding from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs to support the FSM Special Education Program under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), received an update from First Lady Patricia E. Edwin who, in a quest for improving equity (fairness) in education, has been visiting children with special needs in schools and homes. The First Lady, who has partnered with the Nation’s educators, has been asked by President Panuelo to help in tackling this part of the Nation’s implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.



First Lady Edwin has a personal investment in ensuring that the Nation’s children, including its children in special education programming, receive the assistance they need. As of November 11th, 2020, First Lady Edwin has thus far conducted two formal school visits and four formal home visits, accompanied by staff from the FSM National Department of Education and the Pohnpei State Department of Education.

Challenges facing special education students across the Nation are both significant in scope as well as effect. The FSM Education Sector Strategic Plan 2020-2024 describes, for example, that 83% of special education students graduate from their elementary school site to their secondary school site; then, 64% of special education students in secondary school graduate with their high school diploma. In other words, if there are 100 hypothetical students, then 83 of them will graduate from elementary school (with 17 of them dropping out)—and then, of those 83 in high school, 55 will graduate. Of the original 100 students, 45 will not complete their formal public education in both elementary and secondary schools.

Increasingly, First Lady Edwin is of the view that the reasons behind the significant student dropout rates amongst children with special needs are intricate and multifaceted, and that a simple explanation, and cure, for these systemic

issues is implausible. Using Pohnpei State as an example, for the 679 students this academic year in Pohnpei State with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), there is a total of \$33,950 for instructional supplies. This is \$50 in instructional supplies for each child with special needs. It seems likely, to the First Lady, that the funding for instructional supplies may not be enough; by extension, it seems likely that instructional supplies, or the lack thereof, are not the only reason for poor academic performance and high dropout rates.

“One of the things that I’ve heard so far,” First Lady Edwin said in a statement, “Is that parents are fearful that, after [Early Childhood Education] or 1st grade, many special needs children with physical disabilities are not able to go to school anymore. They get too big or too heavy for parents to carry to school, especially if they live in remote areas. While homeschool services are implemented, I am seeing that services occur, on paper, once per week. In practice? It can be less than that sometimes if they don’t have the resources, or if they lack the transportation, or the personnel.”

First Lady Edwin is looking forward to strengthening her partnership with the FSM National and Pohnpei State Departments of Education in seeking solutions to these issues. Meanwhile, the First Lady intends to reach out to the Yap, Chuuk, and Kosrae Departments of Education in the near future, for a similar purpose.

“At this precise moment in time,” First Lady Edwin said, “We can draw public attention to this issue and say: this is a problem. We have children in this Paradise in Our Backyards who are being left behind. I don’t know that I know the solution to this problem yet, but I am determined to find it, in partnership with our Nation’s educators and parents. In the meantime, there is value in continuing our national conversation on how we are preparing our children [in special education programs] to participate in our democracy for when they become adults.”

Governor Oliver receives UNICEF Hygiene Kits

Pohnpei Enginkehlap

November 2, 2020

Pohnpei--On October 29, 2020, Governor Oliver received 1,500 hygiene kits from UNICEF in a handover ceremony at the Governor's Conference Room. Director of the Department of Education, Mr. Stanley Etse, thanked Mr. Cromwell Bacareza and UNICEF Micronesia for their continued support to the children of Pohnpei and the Department of Education.

In his remarks, Governor Oliver expressed his gratitude on behalf of the Pohnpei State Government for UNICEF's generous donation of items that will help the health and well being of the children of Pohnpei. He recalled a recent book launch at Nett Elementary School where children were given a copy of the book "Virus Stopping Champions"

to help spread awareness on hygiene and COVID-19 prevention. He asked Mr. Bacareza to convey his thanks to the staff and to UNICEF headquarters.

Before turning over the hygiene kits, Mr. Bacareza outlined UNICEF's mandate to look out for the rights and welfare of children. He thanked Governor Oliver, Director Etse, and the Pohnpei State Government for their support and the five principals whose schools will be models for the hygiene kit donations:

Principal Darlington Lebehn from Sokehs Powe Elementary
Principal Joseph Amor from Saladak Elementary
Cecilia Martin from Rohi Elementary
Rosalinda Siennes from Ohmine Elementary
Jeremy Donre from Awak Elementary School



The nation's FSM Trust Fund & Compact Trust Fund both grew in FY 2020

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—The unaudited Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 reports for both the Federated States of Micronesia's (FSM) sovereign Trust Fund (FSM Trust Fund), as well as the Trust Fund for the People of the FSM (Compact Trust Fund) show that both Trust Funds grew in FY 2020, despite the market volatility resulting from the crisis posed by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The FSM Trust Fund saw its total assets increase from \$266,900,000 (266.9 million dollars) in FY 2019 to \$307,300,000 (307.3 million dollars) at the end of FY 2020. The \$40,400,000 (40.4 million dollars) increase reflects direct contributions of \$17,300,000 (17.3 million dollars) from Congress appropriations and investment gains of \$23,100,000 (23.1 million dollars). The investment returns include dividends,

interest, and market value appreciations, and are net of all fees and expenses. The FSM Trust Fund had an annual rate of investment return of 8.6% for FY 2020, net of all fees and expenses.

The Compact Trust Fund, which was developed bilaterally between the FSM and the United States of America via the Compact of Free Association, as Amended, saw its total unaudited assets increase to \$780,100,000 (780.1 million dollars) at the end of FY 2020. The Compact Trust Fund had an annual rate of investment return of 7.9% for FY 2020.

"Our FSM Trust Fund and Compact Trust Fund, combined, the amount is \$1,087,400,000 (1.08 billion dollars)," His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the FSM, said in a statement. "Our canoe's destination has always

Pacific Security in the COVID-19 Environment – Joint Heads of Pacific Security

The second Joint Heads of Pacific Security event was held virtually on the 5th of November, bringing together the security leaders of 23 Pacific nations and territories, Timor Leste, the United States of America, Japan, France and Australia.



The forum facilitates discussion to collectively build resilience for future security challenges, like the pandemic we are currently facing.

The global pandemic continues to impact us all profoundly and managing the security effects in addition to social, economic and health impacts of COVID-19 is now a central challenge for our region.

COVID-19 has presented new challenges to the security environment, impacting our nations in different ways – including to our maritime and border security efforts. These challenges were not made any easier by the devastation of Tropical Cyclone Harold across Fiji, Vanuatu, Tonga and Solomon Islands, complicating the humanitarian assistance and disaster relief responses that followed.

Fortunately, we have been closely engaged as partners throughout the COVID-19

period as each nation responded to the immediate challenges to our security, our health and our people.

Coming together for the Joint Heads of Pacific Security forum encourages discussion of our individual responses to COVID-19 and how we can become better than the sum of our parts. The collective knowledge and experience of Pacific security leaders informs and shapes the regional security agenda. It leads to interagency responses and resilience activities that will ensure we are future ready.

By staying connected we can respond to this pandemic together. We are stronger together and we look forward to brighter days with more regular engagement, exercises and operations. Australia looks forward to hosting the third iteration of the Joint Heads of Pacific Security forum in 2021.

been self-reliance, and we are doing everything we can to keep our Nation financially secure beyond 2023 and far into the future."

In a recent meeting with the FSM Trust Fund's advisors, President Panuelo requested that the FSM Trust Fund purposefully seek to evaluate the potential impact to the portfolio's sustainable growth from risks introduced by Climate Change, and to ensure that the Nation's sovereign wealth fund's investments in overseas private sector entities support the FSM's vision of a sustainable, clean, and prosperous natural environment. This environmental-aware and green economy-conscious investment philosophy is commonly known as sustainable investment.

"It is only common sense that a Nation that champions environmental

stewardship ensure that its long-term financial security be grounded in environmentally-friendly investments," President Panuelo said.

In reflecting on the significant growth of the FSM Trust Fund as well as the vision of environmental leadership projected by President Panuelo, the Honorable Eugene Amor, Secretary of the Department of Finance and Administration, expressed his gratitude to the strong support from the FSM leadership and added: "I also want to thank our investment advisor Wilshire Associates for its work in guiding the Trust Fund's efforts of growing responsibly. In the new fiscal year, the Trust Fund will focus on further aligning its investments with [President Panuelo's] vision of a sustainable future. We will also seek to share our approach with the entire Pacific community."

COM Youth led the Global Handwashing Day 2020

By Alvie Cabanez
KPress Volunteer

October 15, 2020

Pohnpei--On October 15, 2020, the College of Micronesia (COM) Youth volunteers celebrated Global Handwashing Day. This year's theme, "Hand Hygiene for All", is a wakeup call for communities to achieve universal hand hygiene especially during the current COVID-19 pandemic. The day serves as a platform to raise global awareness on the importance of frequent handwashing with soap at critical times.

The event, which coincided with celebration of UN at 75 years was commemorated from October 15-31, 2020 in a series of activities. A total of 2,941 students participated in the celebration wherein 1,519 were boys and 1,422 were girls.

The latest data collected by Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) outreach team indicated that over 85% of families in Pohnpei have access to functional handwashing facility at home while over 75% stated that they know the correct steps of handwashing.

"This year's event is particularly significant for everyone because it is not just about supporting health and hygiene habits, it is about safeguarding our lives", said Mr. Jeffrey Ing, WASH Chief in North Pacific. "Washing our hands with soap and water frequently is something that we have often taken for granted. The COVID-19 pandemic reminded us that one of the most effective ways to stop the spread of the virus is also one of the simplest; through proper hygiene, especially handwashing with soap,"

he continued.

One of the highlights of the event was a hand-washing competition, which was intended to judge students that would be able to follow the recommended handwashing techniques. Through this competition the students were reminded about the importance of handwashing and the correct hand-washing steps. An estimated 105 students, half of them were girls, participated in the hand-washing competition by following the correct hand-washing steps provided by the Department of Health & Social Affairs (DOHSA).

"Seeing the students' creativity, their insights on the pandemic, their wisdom on how they perceive things around, they seem to be very aware just how severe the condition of the virus is right now," said Kawika Duff, COM Youth Leader.

The schools that participated in the hand-washing competition were Lukop Elementary School, Enipein Elementary School, Awak Elementary School, Nett Elementary School, and Pohnpei Integrated Central School (PICS) High School, and the College of Micronesia at the national campus. The winners of the contest were given hand washing essentials and school supplies such as crayons, markers.

Alongside the handwashing competition, COM also conducted a Poster and Essay Writing contest which required participants to send in their best entries on proper handwashing. The winners for the poster contest came from Seventh Day Adventist School (SDA) namely, Madlima Leben- 1st place; Makaylea Charley, Beulah Tamani, & Maryjoy Serrano-2nd place; and Sanjay William,



Sandileen Talugmai, & Simplicia Aisam-3rd place. The essay contest winners came from Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School (OLMCHS) namely: Prinert Richard- 1st place; Vemica David- 2nd place; and Kathleen Dacanay- 3rd place.



"Micronesian Youth plays a very crucial role in building a better future for FSM. These generation of young people forms a large part of the society but a lot of them are not realizing their full potential to make a difference," said Mr. Cromwell Bacareza, Chief of UNICEF, North Pacific. "In partnership with the College of Micronesia, UNICEF works with these youth champions to help advocate their rights to have access to good health and education services; promote gender equality and fight any forms of discrimination; ensure that

safe water, proper toilets and hygiene practices are within reach", he added.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and COM have an ongoing partnership which aims at mobilizing young people through training and advocacy activities on issues of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), especially during the current COVID-19 pandemic. This partnership between UNICEF and COM is generously supported by USAID.

MV Caroline Voyager departs Japan; crew to face 14-day at-sea quarantine & additional 14-day at-anchorage quarantine prior to arrival in the community

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On November 4th, 2020, the MV Caroline Voyager, a vessel of the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), departed Japan from the Port of Osaka for return to the Nation. The vessel had previously arrived in Osaka on August 26th for necessary maintenance.

The crew of the MV Caroline Voyager, as essential employees, are not considered by the Government as equivalent to private citizens undergoing repatriation;

however, the Government is committed to ensuring that the return of the MV Caroline Voyager and her crew are held to the safest and most airtight standard possible.

All of the crew were tested for COVID-19 twice on September 29th to October 1st, 2020, and again on October 28th to 29th, 2020, and had since been held in strict quarantine/confinement on the ship without any outside contact from September 29th (a month prior) until the time of departure on November 4th. All

crew tested negative for the virus.

It is expected that the MV Caroline Voyager will enter into the FSM on November 18th, 2020, where it will arrive at the pilot station outside the Pohnpei State main vessel entry channel for a medical briefing and further COVID-19 testing. The crew will then be tested again on November 26th, and for a final time on December 3rd. Presuming that all crew remain COVID-19 free at that time, the crew will then be released into the community and, by extension, able to

visit their friends and family before the Government requires the vessel undergo its next field trip requiring their services. His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the FSM, wrote a letter to the Honorable Reed B. Oliver, Governor of the FSM State of Pohnpei, et al., detailing these efforts. The letter may be found here: https://gov.fm/files/November_5_2020-Gov_PNI_Return_of_Caroline_Voyager_Vessel_from_Japan.pdf

Pohnpei Port Authority begins work to clean up sunken ships in the Transportation Zone

The coastline in Dekehtik has been improved through a cleanup project that the Pohnpei Port Authority has implemented as part of their strategic plan of activities at the port. The photos below show a before and after scene of the area that has been cleaned up. PPA staff worked to remove the sunken vessels that were part of an old Micronesian Longline Fishing Corporation (MLFC) fishing fleet but were sunk years ago. Wrecks like this litter the Dekehtik landscape and PPA took the initiative to clean up this area to improve the site for the environment and for tourism purposes. PPA has other strategic plans to create a domestic dock for ships that are travelling to the outer islands and to dredge the turning basin to allow for cruise ships to maneuver safely during berthing at Pohnpei's dock. As PPA has full responsibility for improvements to the port, the Board of Directors of Pohnpei Port Authority, has approved a strategic plan that will lead PPA's actions through 2023 and assist Pohnpei State with economic growth activities



Before



After

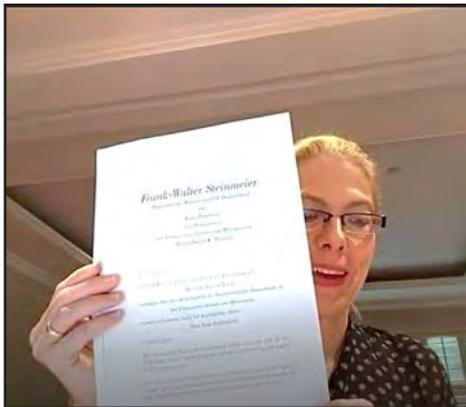
at the Port of Pohnpei. According to General Manager Pius Roby, there are more sunken vessels alongside the Dekehtik causeway, outside of Transportation Zone.

PPA will work with the Pohnpei State Government to plan for the removal of these sunken vessels.

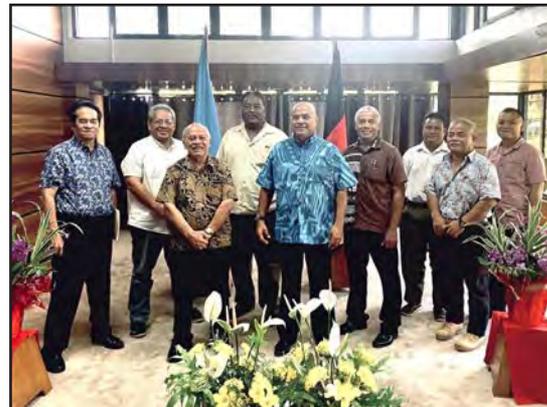
President Panuelo and Vice President George virtually receive Her Excellency Anke Reiffenstuel, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the FSM

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—Recently, His Excellency David W. Panuelo—President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and the Honorable Yosiwo P. George, Vice President of the FSM, received Her Excellency Anke Reiffenstuel, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the FSM, in a virtual Presentation of Credentials ceremony and follow-up courtesy call.



Ambassador Reiffenstuel shows her letter of credence



President Panuelo, Vice President George, and Members of their Cabinet pose in front of the FSM and German flags per Presentation of Credentials tradition



A view of the teleconference from the FSM Department of Foreign Affairs's conference room

After the acceptance of Ambassador Reiffenstuel's credentials and confirmation to the FSM as the Ambassador of Germany, the Ambassador spoke about the historical ties between the FSM and Germany, and the strong potential to enhance FSM-German cooperation in areas of mutual interest, including strengthening FSM-German multilateral cooperation at international organizations such as the United Nations. The Ambassador noted Germany's awareness of how the FSM has thus far prevented COVID-19 from entering the Nation's shores, and congratulated the Nation for its vigilance towards protecting public health.

Beginning his remarks, President Panuelo said "Our two countries have indeed had long historical ties.... My great-grandfather was German; my middle-name is Weilbacher, a German name, and you can see Germany's presence from the late 1800s to the early 1900s has continued to influence elements of our languages and

social and governmental structures. We thank Germany for continuing to remember our close ties together. I also thank Germany for your global contributions to multilateral organizations, such as the United Nations, and through the European Union via the Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Islands (ACP) grouping."

President Panuelo noted his appreciation for the high rate of women in positions of leadership in Germany, and noted his hope that the FSM can eventually follow its lead. "[Chancellor] Angela Merkel is one of the leaders our Nation truly respects for her strong performance in standing up for justice, not only for Germany and the European Union, but throughout the world, including dedication to the rule of law and your progressive position on Climate Change."

"We treat Climate Change very seriously," the President continued, "it's an existential threat to the Pacific, and I appreciate that Germany is one of the countries advocating for our mutual obligations under the Paris Agreement."

The President thanked Germany for its support of the forthcoming United Nations Multi-Country Office that

will serve the North Pacific countries in the Micronesian sub-region.

President Panuelo and Ambassador Reiffenstuel agreed that the Ambassador will continue to liaise with the Honorable Kandhi Elieisar, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, in an effort to strengthen existing FSM-German cooperation.

Traditional Navigation Program sets sail at College of Micronesia

Okeanos Foundation

The tight travel restrictions that isolated Micronesia from international travelers over the preceding months has not stopped twelve Micronesian men and women from learning to voyage like their ancestors. In the summer of 2020, College of Micronesia-FSM launched its year-long traditional navigation program in collaboration with philanthropic non-profit Okeanos Foundation for the Sea.

The highly practical program is running over the course of one year, consisting of two parts: "Traditional Navigation" delivered by Yapese Grand Master Navigator Ali Haleyalur and "Applied Seamanship" initially intended to be taught by Okeanos Fleet Commander and Grand Master Navigator Peia Patai.

Ali Haleyalur, relative of Pwo Master Navigator Mau Piailug who famously sparked the voyaging renaissance in Hawaii in the 1970s, has long preserved the knowledge of traditional navigation amongst Micronesian sailors. Haleyalur aims to provide participants with the knowledge and skills in the traditional way of Micronesian navigation. It is hoped that its offering will rekindle interests in the preservation of this indigenous knowledge and to examine its relationship with modern science, e.g. oceanography, meteorology, and other related fields.

The twelve participating students, comprised of men and women from Yap and Pohnpei, will be assessed in identifying the navigational stars, sea creatures, birds or flocks of birds, groups of fish, and insects. Like their seafaring ancestors, the students will have to demonstrate proficiency and knowledge in determining the general directions of ocean waves, which in turn determine navigational directions and the bearings of other islands, while also naming the ancient sea lanes between Palau to the Marshalls to the Marianas.

In lieu of the COVID travel ban that has prevented Captain Peia Patai from traveling from the Cook Islands to teach the second half of the program, acting College of Micronesia-FSM Dean Tioti Bauro Teburea voluntarily assists with the course offering in the area of seamanship (Basic chart-work) and COLREGS "International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea". The College of Micronesia campus also provides safe transportation and dinner to all students.

Aside from teaching, Haleyalur continues to collaborate with Okeanos Foundation to support traditional sailing and sustainable sea transportation in Yap and beyond Micronesian borders. In 2019, Haleyalur sailed the sustainable and traditionally inspired canoe Okeanos Ambassador from Saipan to Yap, where it works in tangent with its sister canoe Okeanos Waaqab to service Yap's outer islands.



Grand Master Navigator Ali Haleyalur studies the clouds at dawn to predict the weather for the following days. Students of the Traditional Navigation program will learn this ethnoscience that has been preserved by Yapese navigators for centuries. Photo Credit: Dena Seidel.



Traditional navigation students at the College of Micronesia FSM-FMI campus in Yap. Photo Credit: Director DY&CA Constantine Yowblaw



Ali Haleyalur navigating aboard Pacific-inspired Vaka Motu Okeanos Ambassador, which now operated by local crew in Yap to service outer island communities with sustainable sea transportation. Photo Credit: Dan Lin



Okeanos-built Vaka Motu's, or "boat for the islands," were designed specifically to serve vulnerable island communities. It is operated by wind and solar power, allowing islanders to transport up to 3 tons of cargo and 12 passengers without relying on expensive fossil fuel. Photo credit: Chewy Lin.

FSM National Government recognizes U.S. President-Elect Biden & U.S. Vice President-Elect Harris' victory; President Panuelo sends formal congratulations

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On November 10th, 2020, His Excellency David W. Panuelo—President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—sent the Nation's formal congratulations to the President-Elect and Vice President-Elect of the United States of America, His Excellency Joseph R. Biden Jr. and the Honorable Kamala D. Harris, respectively. The FSM recognizes President-Elect Biden as the winner of the recent United States Presidential election.

"As an alumnus of Eastern Oregon University (EOU), I am well familiar with the United States, and in my capacity as the 9th President of the Federated States of Micronesia, I am at once pleased and honored to congratulate you both on your recent election victory," President Panuelo wrote in his letter.

President Panuelo first noted the Nation's appreciation for the past four years of strengthening the FSM-U.S. Enduring Partnership, which is based on shared values of democratic principles, the rule of law, and peace, unity, and liberty. "It is my hope and intention that, under your administration, we will continue to move rapidly on issues of mutual import to our two nations, including the completion of the negotiations on the expiring economic provisions of our Compact of Free Association, as Amended. The Federated States of Micronesia has heard the calls from the United States of America to promote a Free and Open Indo-Pacific Region, and Micronesians are committed to doing their part in maintaining regional and international security," the President wrote.

The President then described the FSM's keen hope for the United States to return to championing the global effort in tackling the existential threat of Climate Change, which remains the Nation's primary long-term security issue. President Panuelo wrote: "Mr. President-Elect and Madam Vice President-Elect, with respect, I have seen you pronounce that on your first day in office that the United States of America will rejoin the Paris Agreement, and it is my sincere and heartfelt hope that this is precisely what will occur."

President Panuelo concluded his letter by describing the Nation's faith in the United States to overcome the recent challenges faced by the World during the COVID-19 Pandemic. "This year of 2020 has brought significant challenges, from the COVID-19 Pandemic and the loss of always-precious and invaluable human lives, to economic hardships that are increasingly unequal in the

categories of people most affected. Overcoming these challenges may at first appear to be Sisyphean in nature, but I want you to know that I, and the People of the Federated States of Micronesia, have faith in the United States of America, and the American People, in overcoming them, and becoming stronger as a result. As John 1:5 says: "The light shines in the darkness; and the darkness had not overcome it."

President Panuelo's letter to President-Elect Biden may be found here: https://gov.fm/files/Nov_10_2020_HEDWP_to_POTUS-Elect.pdf

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Preparing the Voyage to Re-affirmation of Accreditation 2023

COM-FSM is now in the first stages of preparing the next Institutional Self-Evaluation Report for the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges/Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACCJC/WASC).

Every seven years, we are required to create an Institutional Self-Evaluation Report in which we summarize our work here at COM-FSM, and present evidence to show how we meet or exceed the standards set by ACCJC. This provides a comprehensive overview of the college and our work so we can better understand how we are doing and where we need to improve. To complete this work, we have recruited a Steering Crew, including Lynn Sipenuk, Martin Mingii, Doman Daoas, Roselle Tognon, Caroline Kocel and Karen Simion, who will be leading events and conducting training on gap analysis and writing. Captain of our efforts is our Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO), Karen Simion. The deadline to submit the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report to ACCJC is August 2022.

The Steering Crew has adopted the logo "Welewel", a Yapese traditional navigation term that refers to the constellations of the North and South stars. Welewel means "straight" – on this long voyage we will follow the straight and honest path. Whenever you see the Welewel logo, we ask you to cheer and support the college wide efforts to maintain our accreditation with ACCJC. During our voyage, we plan to sponsor various events to help make this a great learning and enjoyable experience. Good luck on the quiz! We look forward to welcoming you on the voyage!



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