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Crew member aboard MS Chief Mailo tests positive for COVID-19 in Pohnpei waters

Crew members isolated and government says there is no immediate danger

By *Bill Jaynes*
The Kaselehlie Press

January 17, 2021

Pohnpei, FSM—On January 8, the FSM could no longer say that it was entirely COVID-19 free. On that day, Pohnpei Medical responders tested all crew members and passengers aboard the MS Chief Mailo and found one person who tested positive for the virus. The President’s information officer said that the fact that the positive case was found and the person was isolated before he could come into contact with anyone except his shipmates is a testimony to the effectiveness of the preparations the various task forces had made. “Everything worked the way it was supposed to work,” he said.

Among the few passengers was Melson Dillidy of Polowat, Chuuk who was found drifting alone in a small boat and rescued by Philippine fishermen on April 9, 2020. He was 10 years old at the time and has been in the Philippines since that time awaiting repatriation after his harrowing ordeal.



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FSM President David Panuelo addresses the nation regarding the MS Chief Mailo
Photo by FSM Information Services

US Department of Labor says that FSM cannot deduct taxes from PUA benefits

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FSM National Government expands tourism sector mitigation fund to more types of businesses also hit by COVID impacts

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By *Bill Jaynes*
The Kaselehlie Press

January 16, 2021

FSM—The United States Department of Labor (DOL) has said that the FSM’s assessment of a 10 percent income tax and a 15 percent deduction for Social Security contributions on Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits are not an allowable expense under the grant that provided those benefits. The grant was provided by DOL to the FSM on the basis of Section 2102 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020.

On January 11, FSM President David Panuelo sent a cover letter to the FSM Congress along with a

copy of the DOL letter along with a legal opinion issued by the FSM Department of Justice. He urged Congress to seriously consider the repeal of the law that established the tax on PUA benefits. He wrote that henceforth, recipients of the PUA will receive the full amount of assistance with no tax being deducted and any funds previously withheld for that purpose will be released to the beneficiaries.

It concludes that the FSM Department of Finance and Administration (DoFA) must reimburse to PUA beneficiaries the amount of the tax it has assessed against their benefits and to cease imposing those assessments on PUA beneficiaries. DoFA must provide written assurance outlining the details about how and when the funds will be refunded to PUA beneficiaries, due the DOL National Office in Washington DC by the end of January. DOL says that if it determines that FSM does not have an adequate system in place for ensuring that PUA is paid as required by the CARES Act, it will be forced to not only terminate the agreement and also to return any funds that are not needed or that were used for other purposes such as tax assessments.

See “PUA” on page 6

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Committee to Wait on the Governor receives updates

By Pohnpei Enginkehlap News

January 12, 2021

Pohnpei—On Monday, January 11, 2021, T.H. Reed B. Oliver, Governor of Pohnpei State met the Committee to Wait on the Governor from the 10th Pohnpei State Legislature in the Governor’s Office, Peilapalap, Kolonia. Heading the Committee was Senator Jack Harris from Kolonia who is also the Chairman of the 10th Pohnpei State Legislature’s Judicial and Governmental Operations Committee. Accompanying Senator Harris was Senator Hudson Abraham from Madolenihmw and Senator Helgena Johnson from Mwoakilloa.

Lambert, and the 10th Pohnpei State Legislature for their support and cooperation during this eventful first year.

Governor Oliver informed the Committee of his nomination of Akilino Susaia to the Joint Committee on Compact Review and Planning to represent Pohnpei in replacement for the late Rev. Bethwel Henry. The appointment has been transmitted to the Office of the President for nomination. Governor Oliver added that nominations for the Boards of Pohnpei Utilities Corporation (PUC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Pohnpei Housing Authority are forthcoming. He also spoke of Pohnpei State’s involvement with the Blue



of working in Government and inspire them to someday take over.

The Committee thanked Governor Oliver for his updates and requested for further clarification on the MV Chief Mailo. Governor Oliver reassured the Senators that while there is one positive case onboard, the MV Chief Mailo remains at sea and no crew member has disembarked. As to the health workers who tested the crew, Governor Oliver also

After welcoming the Committee and thanking them for their visit, Governor Oliver noted that the Oliver/Perman administration will soon be celebrating it’s one year anniversary on January 13, 2021. He thanked the Speaker, T.H. Ausen

Prosperity Coalition and discussed the \$15 million economic stimulus package from the FSM Congress and an additional \$14 million from the Asian Development Bank to support the nation’s response to COVID-19.

While on the subject of COVID-19, Governor Oliver updated the Committee on the MV Chief Mailo’s situation, noting that Chairman of the COVID-19 Task Force, Mr. Wincener David, is the focal point moving forward with Lt. Governor Perman assisted the Department of Health and Social Services. Lastly, Governor Oliver shared the upcoming Student Takeover Day, scheduled to be held on February 23, 2021. The aim of this activity is to give our youth an experience

reassured the Senators that the health crew followed the prescribed protocol when they boarded the MV Chief Mailo. The health crew was in full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), minimized their stay onboard the vessel, properly disposed of their PPE, and went into quarantine on that same day when test results showed a positive case. He further reassured the Senators that they have been tested and have been found to be negative and will be re-tested after seven days of quarantine.

Joining Governor Oliver was Special Assistant to the Governor, Mr. Kapilly Capelle. Joining the Committee to wait on the Governor, was Legislative staff, Ms. Yumi Carl.

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Public Health takes to dispensaries for NCD workshops featuring cooking demonstration as part of COVID-19 awareness campaign



By Department of Health Services
And Alvie B. Cabañez

Pohnpei—In April of 2020, as part of the COVID-19 preparedness efforts, the Pohnpei Division of Primary Health Services decided to decentralize some of its services by providing more services at the local dispensaries situated around the island. The effort has reinforced the efforts of frontline medical personnel to provide a better health care environment to the community.

Organizers at the Non-Communicable Disease Program decided also to add

to those services by providing a series of workshops both to reinforce the ongoing COVID-19 campaign and to provide education and awareness of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). NCDs include cardiovascular (heart) diseases, diabetes, hypertension, cancer, gout, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), major killers of Pohnpei residents.

Part of the NCD Programs initiative was to reinforce the more than 20-year-old Micronesia One Diet Fits All Today (MODFAT) nutritional guidelines. Though the MODFAT guidelines have been in existence for a long time, they are not always observed in daily habits. The MODFAT guidelines were created as a way to categorize and educate on the benefits of a healthy diet that adjusts to local product availability.

Research has shown that individuals with pre-existing conditions such as NCDs could develop severe or even fatal outcomes from COVID-19. Knowing that, the NCD Program personnel initiated a pilot project of a series of educational workshops for patients who visit the dispensaries.

Organizers planned and presented two types of workshops. One is a lecture on SARS-CO-V-2 and COVID-19 with an aim of raising the awareness of patients from far-flung areas on the virus with particular emphasis on how to avoid it. The second is a cooking demonstration that focuses on having a strong immune system and interactive eating habits to fight COVID-19. The cooking demonstration was facilitated by Dr. Mabel Loján, an Integrative Medicine practitioner and a Public Health volunteer.

The first set of workshops was conducted by a team of three volunteers who joined the NCD team on December 9, 2020, at the Pohnlangas Dispensary. Two more were held on December 10 and 11 at the Sokehs Dispensary. While waiting their turn to be seen by medical practitioners at the dispensary, patients enthusiastically participated. The workshops included an audio-visual presentation demonstrating proper hand washing and talking about the importance of frequent use of hand sanitizers. Patients also received printed handout materials to reinforce those hygiene practices in their homes.

Most considered the cooking demonstration to be the highlight of the workshops. Dr. Loján approaches everything she does with a high level of enthusiasm and particularly when she is talking about nutrition, which is one of her passions. That enthusiasm and the demonstration were contagious in the best possible way as she lectured on the principals of sustainability and health in order to build a healthy and strong immune system, a metabolic balance to maintain health before and during COVID-19 times, and with or without an NCD. While lecturing, she demonstrated methods of preparing meals from local food products such as vegetables, fish, or meat. Her demonstration emphasized the importance and benefits of protein like fish; health fats such as are found in coconut oil and milk; and the importance of reducing carbohydrates despite their energetic properties. She said that people tend to overeat carbohydrates if proteins and healthy fats are insufficient in diets.

She also encouraged patients to use flavors and spices like ginger, garlic, citrus like lemon or lime, squash, and banana to name a few. Those

flavors have anti-inflammatory and anti-aging properties that help reduce pain or even aging effects in the cardiovascular system. They are also sources of vitamins and minerals that play a role in helping the metabolism to work efficiently and to have healthy body functions.

Many residents enjoyed the presentation so much that they expressed a motivation to begin to grow their own vegetable gardens in the backyards.

The December presentations were not the last of the workshops to be presented. Going forward, the workshops will continue twice each month, rotating among the various dispensaries in Pohnpei, including Wone, Kitti. The team urges residents to join the activities planned during the second and third week of each month.

In January the emphasis will be on COVID-19 prevention in order to address any questions related to the disease or the vaccine. In February the emphasis will be on cancer, promotion of prevention, and healthy foods.

The teams invite the public to join them and be screened for NCDs. The team goes to Community Health Clinic (CHC) at Kolonia dispensary on Mondays, Wone dispensary on Tuesdays at Kitti, Pohnlangas dispensary on Wednesday and Lukop on Thursday at Madolenihmw and to Sokehs dispensary on Fridays.

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The Pacific Community (SPC) invites applications for the position of **Finance & Administrative Assistant – EU FSM SEAM Project**

in its Micronesia Regional Office (MRO). This position will be located at its regional office in Pohnpei, Micronesia.

Description

The **Pacific Community (SPC)** is the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region, supporting development since 1947. We are an international development organisation owned and governed by our 26 country and territory members. In pursuit of sustainable development to benefit Pacific people, our unique organisation works across more than 25 sectors. We are known for our knowledge and innovation in such areas as fisheries science, public health surveillance, geoscience, and conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

The Micronesia Regional Office (MRO) situated in Kolonia, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), is the main hub for SPC's projects and partnerships with the Micronesian members of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Republic of Palau, and the United States territories of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and Guam. The MRO opened in January 2006.

The role – the Finance & Administrative Assistant – EU FSM SEAM Project will assist with the overall administration of the project activities in the Federated States of Micronesia and coordinate duties associated with the project including travel by project staff, compiling all data for reporting and inputting to project databases. He/she will assist with financial accounting, acquittals, preparation of procurement and contracting documents, and compilation of all supporting documentation.

The key responsibilities of the role include the following:

1. Assist with the overall administration of the project, including the overall coordination and documentation of all the project activities, as well as technical support of project activities to achieve project objectives, outputs, and outcomes.
2. Assist with arrangements for travel by project team and all coordination and logistical arrangements for project meetings.
3. Assist with financial accounting, acquittals, preparation of procurement and contracting documents, and compilation of all supporting documentation.

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- Knowledge of budgetary and administrative processes in PICTs and working directly with PICTs in project environments.
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1. Please list what you consider are the necessary attributes of a Finance and Administrative Assistant and explain how you fulfil each trait. Please list and describe at least 3-5 necessary traits.
2. Please describe an example of when you were responsible for organizing travel and logistics for a conference or meeting. Please specify the steps required to prepare for the conference or meeting.
3. Please describe your experience in financial administration and procurement.

...Chief Mailo

Continued from front page

On Sunday evening, January 3, 2021, the MS Chief Mailo arrived in waters off Pakin carrying 12 crew members, the bare minimum number for safe operation of the vessel. At least one non-crew member was also aboard. The vessel had arrived straight from General Santos City, Philippines after their departure on December 24. According to Pohnpei State Governor Reed Oliver in a face to face conversation and his Public Information Officer in online conversations, the Chief Mailo's radio call to the Pohnpei Port Authority on Sunday evening saying that they were short on fuel, food and water was the first word that Pohnpei officials, and particularly the Pohnpei COVID-19 Task Force had of their eminent arrival.

The Chief Mailo crew asked for permission to dock for resupply. Having no information on the condition of the passengers, the COVID-19 Task Force denied that request. However, after a series of emergency meetings beginning on Monday evening, permission was granted for the vessel to anchor two miles out from Pohnpei's shores. According to a State and National press release, the vessel entered Pohnpei's anchorage area inside the lagoon on January 6 where State and National law enforcement and border protection staff are maintaining constant security.

The crew members had been confined to the vessel since September 22, 2020. Before their departure, each crew member tested negative for the virus in three separate tests each but on January 7, one of the crew members tested positive in two separate tests. The government assures the people of the FSM that the crew members have had no contact with the FSM community other than on board the vessel and that the one individual who tested positive is now isolated in the dispensary of the MS Chief Mailo.

A second round of tests was planned for Thursday January 14 but was later rescheduled for Monday, January 18. The government says that though the first two tests which were nasal PCR tests are "very sensitive and almost certainly correct. However, during Monday's planned testing, medical experts will additionally perform a blood test to check for antibodies which will help them to understand whether the crew member was infected in the past and then recovered. In many such cases, the presence of antibodies in a recovered COVID-19 can lead to a positive COVID-19 diagnosis even though the patient is no longer contagious. However, FSM's medical experts are taking no chances.

During this sensitive time, it is important that citizens receive their information from trustworthy sources," FSM President David Panuelo said in a speech addressing the nation. "The only sources you should receive your information from are the Risk Communication Committees from the National and State COVID-19 Task Forces, the National and State Public Information Offices, and State Public Radio Stations."

During his speech he quickly put down the pervasive rumor that a crew member of the Chief Mailo had jumped overboard and swam to Sokehs island thereby escaping quarantine. He said that there was no truth to that rumor and that no crew member has come into contact with any member of the public other than the four medical responders.

"The team of four testers from Pohnpei State wore a full complement of PPE. The team of four testers did not visit their families, drink sakau, or otherwise act irresponsibly," the President said. "The team of four testers, after confirming the positive test on one individual, voluntarily and willingly went straight into quarantine at the Emergency Medical Unit in Dekehtik. They have all been tested for COVID-19 and their results were negative."

However, the Pohnpei State Public Information officer said that while that statement is true as issued and was what the President was told, the four responders didn't actually enter quarantine until several hours after they were told to do so by the Chair of the Pohnpei COVID-19 Task Force after having been informed of the positive tests. The Chair made that phone call to the medical responders during one of the Task Force meetings. The Public Information Officer was quick to point out, however, that all medical responders had been properly wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), that had been properly handled and properly disposed. He said that because the personnel acted safely and according to protocol, they were not actually required to enter quarantine. However, the Task Force felt it would be wise to do so just the same. All responders initially tested negatively and also tested negatively when they were tested after a week of quarantine.

COVID-19 has not directly hit the FSM populace at large and the government issued not mandates regarding physical distancing, mask wearing or other more drastic measures. The Task Forces still, as they have been doing for month, highly recommends and encourages residents to continue to practice social distancing, mask wearing, and other precautionary measures such as frequently washing hands.



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Reskilling and labour migration vital to the Pacific's economic recovery

New World Bank study examines the pandemic's impacts on Pacific labour markets while underscoring regional opportunities and policy responses

World Bank

SYDNEY, January 18, 2021 – While the Pacific and Papua New Guinea (PNG) have avoided some of the worst health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the closure of international travel and lockdowns to curb the spread of COVID-19 have had serious impacts on employment, international labour mobility, and livelihoods across the region.

A new World Bank report, Pacific Island Countries in the era of COVID 19: Macroeconomic impacts and job prospects details the potential extent of job losses and labour market impacts in the region, while also suggesting how the Pacific may benefit from changing employment trends and other opportunities.

Fewer local jobs and sluggishness in new international opportunities are all taking their toll on labour markets in the seven Pacific countries examined in the report (Fiji, Kiribati, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu). Of these, countries that are more reliant on international tourism such as Fiji, Vanuatu and Samoa have borne the brunt of these effects, with tourism-related employment dropping by an estimated 64 percent in Vanuatu and unemployment claims in June 2020 nearly tripling the 2019 total in Fiji. Employment figures in countries where tourism plays a smaller role are also sobering, with job advertisements in PNG dropping by 76 percent between February and May 2020 as a result of lockdowns and travel restrictions. Flow-on effects to other industries, including retail and food services, together with reductions in commodity prices and remittance inflows, have added to this significant economic hardship across the region.

“The changes that we have seen in labour markets and employment across the Pacific are profound and are hitting the most vulnerable hardest - but importantly they are also leading families who would have been previously secure into vulnerable positions, especially workers in the tourism sector,” said Yasser El-Gammal, Practice Manager, Social Protection and Jobs, the World Bank

The report also highlights opportunities to mitigate the economic and employment shocks presented by the pandemic. These include prioritizing retraining and skill development of workers in affected industries, such as tourism, so they can move into sectors that require similar skill sets; promoting digital literacy skills to help Pacific islanders participate in remote working opportunities; and exploring new employment opportunities for low- and semi-skilled Pacific workers in Australia and New Zealand in the long

term.

“Ultimately, workers from the Pacific will remain in demand in Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere for a long time to come,” said report author Matthew Dornan, Senior Economist at the World Bank. “The various Pacific labour mobility schemes that are focused on employment in rural and regional areas are not only crucial to livelihoods and employment in the Pacific, but beneficial for employers and businesses in Australia and New Zealand.”

Of particular focus in the report is the need to support skills development and employment services in response to the crisis and as part of the economic recovery. This could include subsidizing the reskilling of workers, support for work-study and apprenticeship schemes, the provision of temporary wage subsidies for the unemployed, and an expansion of international labour mobility opportunities for Pacific Islanders. The latter can be facilitated by efforts to improve the employability of Pacific workers (e.g., through upskilling), reducing the costs associated with cross-border labour migration, and by improved marketing and relationship management with international employers. Recipient countries can also play a role through labour policies.

“Labour mobility requires close cooperation between countries,” said co-author Soonhwa Yi, Senior Economist at the World Bank. “While policy improvements from Pacific governments could help expand the overseas employment opportunities available to Pacific Islanders, receiving countries also need to ensure their migration and working visa policies support future demand for increased labour mobility.”

The report stresses that moderating the employment and livelihoods impacts of COVID-19 across the region requires supportive policy responses from governments. While support to affected populations is a priority, governments could also consider support to businesses, as has been provided in Tonga and PNG; safeguarding cash-flow through tax and import duty relief, as has been undertaken in PNG, Samoa and Solomon Islands; and exploring opportunities for direct cash transfers and social assistance to vulnerable populations.

“The COVID-19 pandemic also crisis highlights the urgency for Pacific countries to expand IT-related infrastructure and increase their engagement in the digital economy,” said Soonhwa Yi. “This would provide opportunities for workers in the digital economy and better position Pacific countries to export digital services across borders.”

...PUA

Continued from front page

The DOL letter which was dated December 31, 2020 and transmitted by a US Diplomatic Note to the FSM government on January 4 was in response to a DoFA query asking whether FSM is permitted to make the deductions from the individual benefit payments.

The amendment to FSM law requiring the deduction of the two taxes specifically applicable to PUA benefits provided by the U.S. went into effect on July 2, 2020. The letter says that it is DOL's understanding that since that time the FSM has been collecting the deductions from PUA benefit checks before benefit checks are issued to recipients. DOL is also under the impression that FSM is holding those deductions in a separate trust account pending DOL's resolution of whether such assessments are allowable under the CARES Act.

“DOL has determined that the tax assessments and Social Security deductions are not allowable costs. Payment of these assessments/deductions is not consistent with the purpose of the grant, which is to mitigate the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic by paying PUA benefits to covered individuals”, the letter said. “... On April 3, 2020, FSM entered into an Agreement Implementing the Relief for Workers Affected by Coronavirus Act (Agreement) with DOL, pursuant to CARES Act Section 2102(f), in which DOL agreed to make payments of PUA to FSM, and FSM agreed that it ‘will use all money paid to the FSM pursuant to [the] agreement for the payment of benefits, and related administrative costs, for the purpose for which the money was paid to the FSM, and will return to the United States Treasury, upon request of the Department of Labor, any such money if the Department of Labor finds that the money is not needed for such purpose or that the money has been used for a purpose other than that for which it was paid.’”

That agreement was signed before Congress passed the bill requiring the tax assessments from PUA beneficiary payments. DOL wrote that FSM's budget request did not include taxation as a cost to the grant. Though DOL noted that under the agreement taxes that a government unit is legally required to pay, “except for self-assessed taxes that disproportionately affect Federal (meaning US) programs or changes in tax policies that disproportionately

affect Federal program.” DOL wrote that the exception applies in the FSM's case where the FSM's taxation law changed after the grant agreement and specifically targeted beneficiaries of PUA thereby diverting “25 percent of the grant funds to be used for purposes outside of the grant.”

DOL wrote that at the time of the agreement, FSM's income tax provision applied only to wage and salaries earned in an employment relationship. It noted that DOL is not the employer of the beneficiaries and the payment of unemployment compensation does not constitute payment of a wage. FSM's tax code had not previously had provision for taxation of wages earned from an unemployment compensation program because no State in the FSM has an unemployment program.

DOL also called into question the rate of taxation aimed at PUA beneficiaries as being in excess of the tax rate that FSM assesses on the wages and salaries of employees in the FSM. Wages and salaries are taxed at the rate of 6 percent for the first \$11,000 earned and 10 percent on the amount over the first \$11,000. DOL asserts that some beneficiaries may not have had income levels that rose to the 10 percent taxation level. It further points out that FSM Code requires employees and employers each to contribute 7.5 percent of wages towards social security and that social security payments by self-employed individuals are voluntary. “In contrast, with respect to the CARES Act, FSM seeks to assess both the claimant's and the employer's contributions to the unemployment compensation paid under the CARES Act, even though DOL is not the employer and the claimant is not an employee. Again, the Federal program is disproportionately affected by the imposition of this tax,” DOL wrote.

Under instruction, the FSM's special assistant to the President responsible for information services could not comment or provide documents related to the matter. The Congress Public Information Officer said that she had been advised that the DOL letter to DoFA, and the FSM Department of Justice's legal opinion on the matter were “not ours” to share. However, she was able to share President Panuelo's cover letter.

The scanned copy of the DOL letter we referenced in our article did not come from a governmental source but from an attorney who received it from one of the clients that attorney is representing on the matter of taxes withheld from PUA benefits.

United States Government donates COVID-19 vaccine

Embassy of the United States of America Kolonia

As part of the United States Government's commitment to the safety and security of the citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), we have provided thousands of COVID-19 vaccine doses at no cost.

Because of our special and enduring relationship, the FSM was one of the first international partners with which we shared the vaccine that will fight the spread of COVID-19.

We are dedicated to ensuring the FSM is prepared to respond effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic and will provide thousands of doses of the Moderna vaccine to the Freely Associated States.

We are aware that all three Freely Associated States opted to receive the Moderna vaccine due to temperature storage concerns and are pleased they have begun inoculating frontline workers.

The United States, through the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, Department of the Interior, Department of Defense, Department of Health and Human Services, Veterans Affairs, and many other agencies, will continue to honor our commitments to our partners in the FSM in our combined efforts to support a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Together, we have hope that we will see a healthier and safer world in 2021.

FSMTC awards contract to Xtera to upgrade Hantru-1

Xtera

January 14, 2021

POHNPEI, Federated States of Micronesia- Federated States of Micronesia and ALLEN, Texas, Jan. 14, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Xtera, Inc., a provider of innovative subsea fiber optic solutions, announces a new contract with FSM Telecommunications Corporation (FSMTC). FSMTC is the premium telecommunications service provider for Pohnpei, Kosrae, Chuuk, and Yap in the Federated States of Micronesia. The contract will upgrade the Hantru-1 Submarine Cable System between Pohnpei and Guam to enable FSMTC to meet the growing demand for broadband services.

Xtera's® contract with FSMTC

See "FSMTC upgrade" on page 12

RE-ADVERTISEMENT REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The Government of the Federated States of Micronesia's National Oceanic Resource Management Authority (NORMA) has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Pacific Regional Oceanscape Program and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward a local Corporate Services Consultant to be working with FSM NORMA in Pohnpei, FSM. The Consultant services include:

GENERAL SCOPE OF WORK & DELIVERABLES:

The objective of the assignment is to provide NORMA with support in its transition on reforms and restructuring under the new strategic and corporate plan with a focus on operations as a fisheries management organization. The local consultant being a resident of FSM will assist the international consultant in undertaking operational level tasks required for the establishment of the Corporate Services Division of FSM NORMA.

The Fisheries Corporate Services Consultant will report to the FSM NORMA Deputy Director and work closely with NORMA staff and other relevant NORMA consultants to collaborate on the following tasks to establish and strengthen the NORMA Corporate Services Division:

- Set up and initiate operation of the Corporate Services Division including developing/compiling an operational manual for the day-to-day operation of NORMA's new corporate model to ensure the office is adequately equipped and able to function effectively.
- Formulate and deliver Corporate Services Divisional requirements in the NORMA Strategic and Corporate Plans during its transition and initial stages of implementation.
- Establish protocol and be the point of control and coordination for important internal and external communications for NORMA including website and social media ensuring such are in the operations manual.
- Establish procedure, coordinate and quality control internal and external reporting requirements for NORMA, ensuring such are in the operations manual and in line with FSM government processes;
- Coordinate the development and implementation of a communication strategy and plan for NORMA
- Formulate templates and processes to ensure that reports and data analysis presented to NORMA management are well structured, complete and quality assured through mentoring and/or collaboration with other Divisions
- Establish admin and logistics SOPs where needed and ensure systems are in place that meetings, travel and logistics are carried out to a high standard for NORMA and ensure such are in the

- operations manual;
- With the FSM Personnel Department, develop NORMA HR-related SOPs and assist with initial recruitment, training and capacity development at NORMA especially as related to the corporate restructuring and reforms. Provide advice and assistance for any HR related matter at NORMA including conflict resolution.
- Develop and maintain initially an Asset and Human Resources management system for NORMA.
- Assist with development of a staff orientation package to ensure all new staff and Board members go through a formal orientation process incorporating the new corporate strategy, structure and corporate plan.
- Establish SOPs and schedule and propose how to conduct/coordinate regular audits of how the organization of NORMA functions to ensure NORMA is functioning as effectively, efficiently and focused on the new strategic plan and corporate plan.
- Establish internal budget development procedures and assist with initial implementation of such to ensure NORMA works to an approved budget according to the government budget instructions, operates its finances to the highest possible standard and according to the FSM Financial Management Regulations -and ensuring these are in the operations manual.
- Ensure the NORMA budget process is developed in alignment with FSM Government regulations, the new strategic plan and managed in collaboration with each Division at NORMA.
- Work with management and relevant Divisions on the Administrative Penalty System to ensure payments made are accounted for and managed appropriately per accepted practice.
- In consultation with management and NORMA staff, supervise the setup of NORMA IT systems and infrastructure and address its initial development needs including providing management advice for ICT development and management
- Work with NORMA Management and Divisions to establish and implement protocols and controls of all important documents and data for NORMA including establishing policies, plans, agreements and standard operating procedures thereto. Ensure everything is secure, current, relevant and easy to find and use and also including such in manuals as appropriate.

Specific Deliverables:

- The Fisheries Corporate Services Consultant is expected to work closely with advice of the existing international consultant to deliver more specifically the following:
 - An operations manual, compiling all existing SOPs of the Authority and incorporating new SOPs as they are developed;
 - SOPs specific to the corporate services division including on administrative, finance/ budget management and logistics operations



in alignment with national processes and incorporated in the operations manual;

- Update organizational structure of the Corporate Services Division with job description of all the positions therein with capacity development plan of posts in the Division;
- A NORMA-wide filing system that incorporates paper documents and electronic files of all the 4 divisions of the Authority; and
- Other duties as may be assigned to the Consultant as relate to the general scope of work.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- University degree in Public Administration, Business Management, Public Service or equivalent and/or proven corporate management experience at a Manager/Director level or Senior level experience in public or private sector management or equivalent combination thereof;
- Excellent oral and written communication skills in English; computer literacy; people management skills; attention to detail and process; highly motivated, trustworthy and dependable; supportive and accountable to effective delivery of services to client. Additional desirable qualifications:
 - Specialized training in communications, IT, project management, accounting, human resources; Experience in the public service and fisheries sector; and experience in FSM or Pacific Island administrations.

DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT & COST OF CONSULTANCY

This is a lump sum (based on specific deliverables as stated above) contract for 6 months with FSM NORMA with a salary based on Local Market Payscale with a compensation established depending on qualifications.

APPLICATION:

The FSM NORMA invites consultants to indicate their interest in providing the above-mentioned services by submitting electronic and/or hard copies of Letter of Interest, CV, and support Degrees/Certificates to NORMA no later than January 25, 2021. Selection will be in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers (January 2011 edition). Full Terms of Reference (TOR) can be obtained from NORMA and Application package can be sent to:

Mr. Eugene Pangelinan, Executive Director,
NORMA, FSM National Government,
2nd floor of Ambros Building, PO Box 122,
Kolonia, Pohnpei, FM 96941
Office Telephone: 691-320-2700/5181,
Email: info@norma.fm
Copy to: crawford.nimea@norma.fm

Rising international oil prices could lead to FSM fuel price increases

Vital FSM Petroleum Corporation

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia – On behalf of Vital FSM Petroleum Corporation (FSMPC), Chairman of the Board of Directors Mr. Faustino Yangmog extends warm greetings to our valued customers as the nation welcomes in the New Year, and is pleased to confirm that, while regional and international market prices have steadily risen in the past six months, prices throughout the Federated States of Micronesia have remained stable since May 2020.

“In April 2020, international oil prices fell significantly due to demand destruction caused by the controls introduced by governments in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. But since May 2020, domestic oil prices in the FSM have remained steady, with gas prices as low as \$3.75 per gallon in some FSM states. We are very grateful to our customers in all four states for passing along up to 100% of the savings they’ve received from their wholesale purchases with us,” Chairman Yangmog explained.

“However,” he continued, “international oil prices have seen a gradual recovery impacted by a weakening US dollar and market demand, and neighboring islands like Guam, Palau and Majuro have seen the cost of gasoline and diesel follow the same upward trend. Guam motorists first saw pump prices jump \$0.10 per gallon of gasoline mid-December, and another \$0.10 this past week, to \$3.88 per gallon of gasoline. We have held out price increases over the festive season and will continue to do so as long as we can.”

FSMPC Communications Officer Ms. Hannah-Marie Isaac reported that a market survey revealed, as of January 11, 2021, that Kosrae had the lowest pump price in the greater Micronesian region at \$3.75 per gallon of unleaded gasoline, which was followed by Pohnpei at \$3.85 per gallon. Gas prices in the FSMPC Chief Financial Officer Mr. Johnny Adolph advised that should prices remain at these elevated levels, consumers should eventually expect a gradual increase. “In 2020, as a result of lower international air travel and reduced maritime activities, we experienced a significant reduction in domestic sales by approximately 20%. We will continue to do our best to keep prices in the FSM stable, as low as reasonably practical and within \$0.35 of Guam’s pump price throughout 2021.”

For inquiries, email info@fsmpc.com.

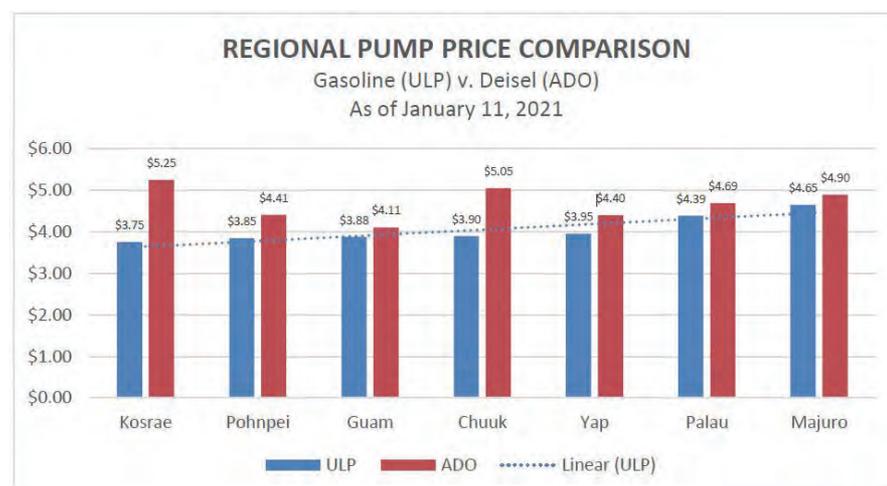


Figure 2: Regional price comparison of gasoline (ULP in blue) and diesel (ADO in red) based on the latest pump prices in Kosrae, FSM (Hardy’s Fuel); Pohnpei, FSM (PITC and SeAir Petroleum Nett); Guam, USA (Sinajana Mobil); Chuuk, FSM (Susumu’s, Island Mart, and K&I); Yap, FSM (CTSC, T&T, and YCA); Koror, Palau (Blue Bay Gas Station); and Majuro, RMI (Ace’s One Stop), as of January 11, 2021.

New information from an old stone adze found in Pohnpei

*Dr. Takuya Nagaoka
(NGO Pasifika
Renaissance)*

*Professor Peter J.
Sheppard (University of
Auckland)*

Do you know where the first Pohnpeian people came from? According to recent archaeological, linguistic, and DNA studies, the ancestors of Pacific islanders departed from Taiwan 5,000 years ago and reached Melanesia 3,200 years ago. Then they probably migrated from the southeast Solomon Islands-northern Vanuatu region to Pohnpei around 2,000 years ago, as some Pohnpeian legends also narrate early migrations from the south. To add new evidence on ancient Pohnpeian people’s movement at that time, we have just published an academic article in “The Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology” that reports a stone adze (“sile” in Pohnpeian) found in Pohnpei was brought by early settlers or their immediate descendants from Melanesia, probably New Guinea, based on our geological analysis.

In 1977, the late Miquel Marquez, a member of the Ponape Historic Preservation Committee, found a stone adze in a pile of coral sand uploaded from a truck at the construction site of the new Awak Elementary School. The sand was brought from an underwater dredging site at Mesihsou, Madolenihmw. An American archaeologist, Dr. Steve Athens, published an academic article about this discovery in 1981 but reported it was made from local basalt rock.

Since ancient Pohnpeian people mostly made adzes from giant clams and other shells, hundreds of shell adzes were found at archaeological sites around Pohnpei. In contrast, stone adzes are very rare; only 13 examples were found so far and some of them were possibly brought from Melanesia and west Polynesia according to their shapes. The recent technical development in archaeological analyses in sourcing such ancient artifacts as stone adzes, volcanic glasses, and pottery has demonstrated that Pacific islanders voyaged around islands very extensively before European contact.

So, wondering about the origin of this rare stone adze from Mesihsou, we loaned the adze to conduct a detailed analysis on it at the University of



Auckland in 2006, where Nagaoka was studying for his Ph.D. According to geological observation by several experts, it is not basalt but metamorphic rock, more specifically schist, which is not present in Pohnpei and Micronesia but in Melanesia. We conclude that New Guinea is the closest and most probable source of this adze. This result shows the adze was brought over 800 miles (1,300 km) and is the first artifact found in Micronesia that is scientifically believed to be transported from Melanesia. This finding gives us some valuable insights. First, the find spot on a shallow reef on the coast suggests that it was recovered from a very early settlement site of around 2000 years ago when the immigrants or their immediate descendants still had a connection with their homeland in Melanesia.

Second, the settlement of previously uninhabited central and eastern Micronesia (Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, the Marshalls, Kiribati) was achieved through intensive long-distance voyages, probably including two-way voyages between their homeland in Melanesia and newly settled Islands in Micronesia and among the latter islands.

Third, since a rare stone adze was probably a trading item, which required a long-distance voyage to obtain it, only limited persons in a community could access to it. In this circumstance, the large Mesihsou adze (7.5 inches/19 cm long) may have functioned as a status symbol.

Thus, the analysis of this stone adze provides us with important information for understanding the early Pohnpeian people’s movements during the largely unknown colonization period. Kalahngan en kupwumwail for the Pohnpei State Historic Preservation Office’s staff (especially the late Jason Lebehn) and other people who assisted us in this project! (If you like to have a PDF version of the article, please email takuya.nagaoka@gmail.com.)

Governor Oliver signs Bill into Law for the designation of Turtle Conservation Zones

Pohnpei Enginkehlap News

December 19, 2020

Pohnpei—On December 18, 2020, T.H. Reed B. Oliver, Governor of Pohnpei State, signed Legislative Bill No. 129-20 into Public Law:

“A BILL FOR AN ACT AMENDING SECTION 6-205 OF PART J OF TITLE 26 OF THE POHNPEI CODE RELATIVE TO THE DESIGNATION OF TURTLE CONSERVATION ZONES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

In his brief remarks, Governor Oliver thanked Rohsa (Mr. William Hawley) and Rohspein (Mrs. Marcella P. Hawley) for their support and important contributions to the designation of turtle conservation zones in Pohnpei. He thanked everyone involved for the support and cooperation from the Pohnpei State Government to the Non-Governmental Organizations represented at the signing.



Joining Governor Oliver to witness the signing of this important Bill into Law was Rohsa and Rohspein Kitti, Director of Resources and Development, Mr. Hubert Yamada, Administrator of the Office of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Mr. Dahker Abraham, Special Assistant to the Governor, Mr. Kapilly Capelle, Mr. Eugene Joseph Executive Director of Conservation Society of Pohnpei, Wendolin Roseo Marquez, and Santiago Joab Jr. from Micronesia Conservation Trust and Ms. Elizabeth Derk, Director of Conservation and Planning from The Nature Conservancy.

An advertisement for Vital Energy. The background is a photograph of a yellow truck with "Autocar" written on the side, parked outdoors under a blue sky. The truck is a large, heavy-duty vehicle with a canopy. On the right side of the image, there is a dark blue overlay containing the Vital Energy logo and contact information.

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Yakipa & Kaselehlie St.
Kolonia, Pohnpei
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info@fsmpec.com

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and more.

RE-ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE OF INVITATION TO QUOTE



Request for Quotations on Standby Generator

The National Oceanic Resource Management Authority (NORMA) of the Federated States of Micronesia has received financing from the World Bank and intends to apply part of its proceeds towards the procurement of one Standby Diesel Generator. FSM NORMA intends to prequalify vendors for sizing, supplying, installation, commissioning of the Generator including providing basic user training to relevant staff.

FSM NORMA is now seeking offers from suitably qualified and experienced vendors/suppliers to size, supply and install a backup generator for use by FSM NORMA at its main office in Kolonia, Pohnpei, FSM. It is expected that the vendor shall provide a quotation or proposal that may involve the following:

- Inventory of NORMA equipment/loading sources with supporting calculations as well as an assessment of the current Uninterrupted Power System (UPS) to ensure compatibility of the proposed generator set.
 - Provide, install/commission a brand new Standby Diesel Generator with secure housing.
 - Provide basic user training on generator proper use and maintenance.
- Bidding will be conducted through the

Shopping procedures specified in the World Bank Guidelines for Procurement of Goods in Fragile and Small States in the Pacific, and is open to all bidders from Eligible Source Countries as defined in the Guidelines. Interested eligible vendors/supplier can obtain further information from and must also request an Invitation To Quote (ITQ) form preferably by January 18, 2021 (Pohnpei Local Time) from the following email address: Crawford Nimea, PROP Project Officer at crawford.nimea@norma.fm with copy email to info@norma.fm.

Quotations in English in response to ITQs must be delivered to the address below at or before 5:00 p.m. January 25, 2021 (Pohnpei Local Time). Late quotations may be rejected. Quotations may be submitted by email, courier, or delivered hand to the address below:

Mr. Eugene Pangelinan
Executive Director
FSM National Oceanic Resource Management Authority Attn: PROP
FSM National Government 2nd Floor of Ambros Building
P.O. Box PS-122
Kolonia, Pohnpei 96941 Federated States of Micronesia Telephone: (691) 320-2700/5181
E-mail address: info@norma.fm and copy to crawford.nimea@norma.fm

RE-ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE OF INVITATION TO QUOTE



Request for Quotations on Rigid-Hull Inflatable Boat

The National Oceanic Resource Management Authority (NORMA) of the Federated States of Micronesia has received financing from the World Bank and intends to apply part of its proceeds towards the procurement of one Rigid-Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB). FSM NORMA intends to prequalify vendors for supplying of the RHIB with fully installed outboard engines and trailer with additional marine safety equipment - completely "turn-key ready" upon delivery.

FSM NORMA is now seeking offers from suitably qualified and experienced vendors/suppliers to supply the RHIB for use by FSM NORMA at its main office in Kolonia, Pohnpei, FSM. It is expected that the vendor shall provide a quotation or proposal that may involve the following:

- Category B (Offshore) RHIB with additional add-ons and safety gear/equipment
- 2 units 80HP outboard motor engines fully installed
- Compatible Trailer

Bidding will be conducted through the Shopping procedures specified in the World Bank Guidelines for Procurement

of Goods in Fragile and Small States in the Pacific, and is open to all bidders from Eligible Source Countries as defined in the Guidelines. Interested eligible vendors/supplier can obtain further information from and must also request an Invitation To Quote (ITQ) form preferably by January 18, 2021 (Pohnpei Local Time) from the following email address: Crawford Nimea, PROP Project Officer at crawford.nimea@norma.fm with copy email to info@norma.fm.

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Mr. Eugene Pangelinan
Executive Director
FSM National Oceanic Resource Management Authority Attn: PROP
FSM National Government 2nd Floor of Ambros Building
P.O. Box PS-122
Kolonia, Pohnpei 96941 Federated States of Micronesia Telephone: (691) 320-2700/5181
E-mail address: info@norma.fm and copy to crawford.nimea@norma.fm

MV Chief Mailo returns to FSM after more than one year abroad; one isolated but confirmed case of COVID-19 on board, citizens encouraged to keep distance from the vessel & quarantine sites until further notice

FSM Information Services & Pohnpei State Government/Enginkehlap Joint Press Release

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On January 6th, 2021, the MV Chief Mailo—a cargo and passenger vessel owned by the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), typically homeported in Chuuk State, entered Pohnpei State's anchorage, inside Pohnpei's lagoon. The vessel had previously left the FSM in late 2019 for drydock-based repairs in the Republic of the Philippines. The crew have been strictly confined to the ship since September 22nd, 2020. On January 7th, twelve (12) crew were tested for COVID-19. One (1) individual was tested twice and, on both occasions, positive for COVID-19. The FSM National and Pohnpei State Governments confirm that the case is classified as an imported case, and does not present any immediate risk of the virus spreading to the broader community. Before any National or State mandates take effect, together or separately, His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the FSM, and the Honorable Reed B. Oliver, Governor of Pohnpei State, will make certain all positive indications are validated.

The MV Chief Mailo is undergoing the same security protection regime as the MV Caroline Voyager did when it left Japan in early November 2020. The individual detected with COVID-19 was detected whilst in quarantine, and has had no contact with individuals in the community; thus, they do not present any immediate risk of the virus spreading to the broader Pohnpeian community. As of January 7th, 2021, the healthcare workers who performed the tests on the crew are quarantined at the Emergency Medical Unit (aka China Star Hotel) in Pohnpei State, and the crew remain in isolation on the MV Chief Mailo. The healthcare workers have been tested for COVID-19, and their results are negative.

National and State law enforcement and border protection staff are maintaining the ship's security on a 24/7 schedule. Citizens and residents of Pohnpei State are requested to remain distant from the MV Chief Mailo until further notice. The vessel itself is an isolation unit; no one is allowed to go onboard, and the crew are not allowed to disembark at any time. The FSM and State Task Forces are ensuring that there is no contact with the vessel to keep the risk of exposure to bare minimum.

The FSM National Government made the decision to return the MV Chief Mailo home in late December on the premise that the Government had two distinct choices: to see individuals in its skeleton crew leave their service in the Government, and thus force the Government to abandon the ship in the Philippines, which already was at high risk of piracy; or, to return the vessel to the FSM at the nearest opportunity. The Government chose for the vessel's return to the Nation. The FSM National Government, having tested the crew of the MV Chief Mailo half a dozen times since September 22nd, 2020, with all results being negative, was of the view that such a return would be safe.

At this time, there are no Government mandates regarding physical distancing, mask wearing, etc. However, both the National and Pohnpei State Governments continue to encourage citizens to practice physical distancing, mask wearing, and other precautionary measures such as frequently washing hands.

Citizens and residents of Pohnpei State are encouraged to maintain a safe distance from the MV Chief Mailo, and the Emergency Medical Unit quarantine facility, until further notice. The FSM National & Pohnpei State Governments continue to collaborate together on approved processes and procedures to minimize further spread of the virus.

FSM National Government expands tourism sector mitigation fund to more types of businesses also hit by COVID impacts

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On January 12th, 2021, His Excellency David W. Panuelo—President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—opened the first of a series of exploratory informational meetings between the FSM National Government and the Nation’s private sector to discuss the expansion of the Tourism Sector Mitigation Fund, frequently referred to as the FSM Economic Stimulus Package. The FSM Economic Stimulus Package is distinct from the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) Program and upcoming social protection programs for low-income families, persons with disabilities, and more on the premise that its primary focus is on Government assistance to businesses in the private sector.

The purpose of these exploratory informational meetings is for the Government to hear from private sector businesses on how they have weathered during the COVID-19 Pandemic, and their view on how the Government can provide meaningful support to them.

The well-attended meeting began with the Nation’s macroeconomics advisor, Mr. Rob Solomon, describing the FSM Economic Stimulus Package thus far, and what recent legislation has done to change it.

The FSM Economic Stimulus Package was developed via Public Law 21-104 on April 3rd, 2020, with regulations issued by the President on May 4th, 2020. Approximately \$15,500,000 of funding has been secured for this purpose, with \$12,000,000 sourced through support from the 21st FSM Congress directly, \$500,000 from the Project Development Fund, and \$3,000,000 through a grant from the Asian Development Bank.

Per Public Law 21-120, the formula for financial stimulus is equivalent to 100% of salaries and wages paid, 100% of social security paid, 100% of power and water utilities paid, and 100% of gross revenue tax paid. As of January 12th, 2021, 157 businesses across the Nation have collectively benefited from \$3,800,000 of assistance.

Public Law 21-211, signed into law by President Panuelo on December 3rd, 2020, expands the FSM Economic Stimulus Package beyond the tourism sector. The law expands the program to include

businesses that can “demonstrate their business relies significantly on the supply of goods and services to the tourism sector” and “businesses that can demonstrate that their business has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Declaration.”

Following these public consultations with the private sector, the Government will update the regulations and procedures for the FSM Economic Stimulus Package, with application forms sent to eligible businesses.

Representatives from the private sector present on the January 12th, 2021 meeting described numerous concerns, and shared many helpful suggestions, for the Government’s consideration on how to improve the implementation of the FSM Economic Stimulus Package.

One business owner described that, during the March 2020 lockdown, many citizens resorted to panic-shopping, and by extension businesses resorted to the same tactic to ensure that consumers would have steady supplies of rice, chicken, and other commodities. Ensuring a steady supply line was noted as a challenge, and how to gauge public demand for a given item versus the Nation’s capacity to supply it was equally noted as a concern. It was noted by the Government that supply-chain efficiency is of the utmost importance.

One business owner described that landlords are facing economic hardship when their tenants are stranded abroad. “We are suffering to meet our short-term financial obligations as of this moment,” one landlord said.

An individual described that cultural sites such as Nan Madol are highly reliant on fees from tourists. Would it be possible for the Government to provide support to tourism sites?

One business owner described that “mom and pop” container stores near schools were highly impacted when schools across the Nation were closed. Would it be possible for the Government to provide support to micro-businesses?

A representative from a nonprofit organization described that nonprofits offer valuable services to society but may not necessarily be eligible for most forms of economic assistance. The representative inquired if nonprofit organizations might be eligible for

financial support, noting that their capacity to provide services to the public would be hindered if they cannot afford their rent, utilities, or salaries to employees.

Another individual, speaking on behalf of the religious community, noted that churches and other places of worship are highly reliant on donations, and that donation-related support has been suffering as citizens more broadly are finding their wallets increasingly empty. The individual asked if there would be any consideration for financial support to churches and other places of worship.

All queries and concerns, including those not mentioned in this Press Release, were noted by the Government and will be discussed in detail at forthcoming meetings after the exploratory conversations with the Nation’s private sector have concluded. Citizens interested in reviewing the PowerPoint Presentation shown to the private sector during these exploratory discussions may find it here: http://gov.fm/files/Covid-19_Economic_Recovery_and_Relief_2021.pptx



Above: Attendees engage in a Q&A session with the President



Right: A private sector representative listens carefully

- Pohnpei-based position
- Join the principal development organisation in the region



The Pacific Community (SPC) invites applications for the position of **FSM National Officer – EU FSM SEAM Project**

in its Micronesia Regional Office (MRO). This position will be located at its regional office in Pohnpei, Micronesia.

Description

The Pacific Community (SPC) is the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region, supporting development since 1947. We are an international development organisation owned and governed by our 26 country and territory members. In pursuit of sustainable development to benefit Pacific people, our unique organisation works across more than 25 sectors. We are known for our knowledge and innovation in such areas as fisheries science, public health surveillance, geoscience, and conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

The Micronesia Regional Office (MRO) situated in Kolonia, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), is the main hub for SPC's projects and partnerships with the Micronesian members of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Republic of Palau, and the United States territories of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and Guam. The MRO opened in January 2006.

The role – the **FSM National Officer – EU FSM SEAM Project** will work closely with the Project Manager and the FSM Assistant Secretary, Energy from FSM's Department of Resources & Development (R&D) to provide coordination for the project, to oversee implementation of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework, and ensure coordination between the national and state energy focal points and state utilities, steering committee, Energy Working Group and technical working group(s).

The key responsibilities of the role include the following:

1. Coordinate implementation of project activities
2. Coordinate monitoring and evaluation related actions

For a more detailed account of the key responsibilities, please refer to the online job description.

1. Qualifications

- Tertiary diploma or equivalent in sustainable energy, climate change, business administration or a related field.

2. Technical expertise

- At least 3 years' experience in

project coordination and delivery in renewable energy or a related field and demonstrated experience with complex project activities.

- Proven track record of working with teams across sectors and sites and producing high quality results with minimum supervision.
- Knowledge of FSM's policies, strategies, institutions, and regulations.
- Demonstrated ability to effectively engage with a range of stakeholders to support project outcomes.
- Excellent oral and written communications skills and demonstrated ability to articulate and communicate complex issues and positions to senior administrators and community beneficiaries alike.
- Sound coordination, administrative, networking, and collaborative skills.
- Advanced computer skills in applications such as Microsoft Word and Excel.

Closing date: 31st January 2021– 11:00 pm Pohnpei time.

Job Reference: SH000039

Applicants must apply online at <http://careers.spc.int/>

For your application to be considered, you must provide us with:

- an updated resume with contact details for three professional referees
- a cover letter detailing your skills, experience and interest in this position
- responses to all screening questions

Please answer all of the screening questions, if you do not answer these questions your application will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed at shortlisting stage.

Screening questions:

1. Developing and maintaining partnerships and collaborations to work towards common goals, while ensuring the objectives of the project are fully met is critical to this position, describe an example where you have achieved this and what you feel were some of the key factors of success.

2. In your experience, what are the most difficult challenges in managing the financial and procurement processes associated with donor-funded projects, and what approaches have you utilised in addressing these?

3. Describe some approaches and tools that you have used to ensure the effective implementation of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework

...FSMTC upgrade

Continued from page 7

provides new capacity using Xtera's Nu-Wave™ Optima Submarine Line Terminal Equipment (SLTE) with state-of-the-art coherent technology. Xtera's equipment makes it possible to upgrade existing submarine systems with the latest photonic technologies. Xtera's solution offers seamless integration with the existing equipment and enables a significant capacity increase of the submarine cable, not only at much lower cost per wavelength than the original installed equipment, but also with enhanced functionality.

“The upgrade of Hantru-1 with Xtera's technology makes it possible to extend the system far beyond its original design capacity,” said Fredy Perman, Chief Executive Officer of FSMTC. “This upgrade will enable us to continue to offer an expansive service portfolio to address the ever increasing customer demand for broadband services.”

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Keith Henderson, Chief Executive Officer of Xtera, comments, “We are extremely proud to have been selected by FSMTC to upgrade Hantru-1. It further demonstrates the value of Xtera's technology and engineering to significantly increase capacity on pre-existing systems in a very cost-effective way.”

TRADE MARK CAUTIONARY NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that our client, PT. FORISA NUSAPERSADA, with an address of Jl. Bumi Mas II No. 7, Kawasan Industri Cikupa Mas, Desa Talaga, Cikupa, Tangerang 15710 - Indonesia is the owner and sole proprietor of the following Trade Mark:

POP DRINK

To be used in connection with the following goods:

Class 30: Coffee, tea, cocoa, sugar, rice, tapioca, sago, artificial coffee, flour and preparations made from cereals, bread, pastry and confectionary, ices, honey, treacle, yeast. Baking-powder, salt, mustard, vinegar, sauces (condiments), spices, ice.

Class 32: Mineral and aerated waters and other non-alcoholic drinks, fruit drinks and fruit juices, syrups, powder and other preparations for making beverages, aerated fruit juices fruit-based beverages, fruit beverages, fruit beverages and fruit juice, fruit-flavored beverages, non-alcoholic fruit juice beverages.

PT. FORISA NUSAPERSADA wishes us to bring to the notice of the trade and public that they attach singular importance to their abovementioned Trade Mark and that legal action will be taken against any person or persons who act in infringement of their rights by imitating, copying, using, or otherwise improperly using the Trade Mark without the permission of the proprietor or the owner, in Micronesia.

Any inquiry relative thereto may be referred to ourselves being their agents:

Hilborne, Hawkin & Co.
230 Commerce Drive, Suite 185
Irvine, California 92602
United States of America
Telephone: (714) 283-1155
Facsimile: (714) 283-1555
Email: info@hilbornehawkin.com

K Press Perspective

Rumors and trustworthy sources

“During this sensitive time, it is important that citizens receive their information from trustworthy sources. The only sources you should receive your information from are the Risk Communication Committees from the National and State COVID-19 Task Forces, the National and State Public Information Offices, and State Public Radio Stations,” FSM President David Panuelo said during his address to the nation regarding the person who tested positively for COVID-19 aboard the MS Chief Mailo and that finding’s impact on the FSM.

Seemingly within moments after MS Chief Mailo arrived in waters off Pakin and radioed to the Pohnpei Port Authority asking for permission to dock for reprovisioning, the rumor mill cranked up. It didn’t reach full speed until someone, in advance of any official word, started the, in this case, absolutely correct rumor that one of the ship’s occupants had tested positive for COVID-19. From that point on, the rumor machine revved up and hit its highest RPM’s.

One of the rumors was that seven people aboard the vessel were tested positive aboard the vessel. That was false. Another was that one of the ship’s occupants had jumped ship and swam to Sokehs island and authorities couldn’t find him. That was patently false and the ship is still under heavy security. A person who had access to the Port, whether a PPA employee or not, said that the person who tested positive was at the isolation unit on shore in Dekehtik. He said he’d seen the person with his own eyes. Certainly he saw someone, but it wasn’t the person who had tested positive for COVID-19. That person is still aboard the MS Chief Mailo, isolated from shipmates in the dispensary. He may have seen medical responders entering quarantine, but the person with COVID-19 was not among that group.

The rumors picked up speed from their first telling to become the gospel according to the last person who heard them, embellished them, and retold them. Businesses closed on the

strength of the rumors. Grocery stores were suddenly packed.

If you’ll allow me the luxury of a moment of “Monday morning quarterbacking”, the “reliable sources” released nothing when they easily could have and probably should have. Even just a preliminary message confirming that, that though there was in fact one person in isolation aboard the vessel who had tested positively for COVID-19 aboard the vessel, no contact had been made with the public and that there was nothing to fear might have helped. Probably not. People believe what they want to believe, more so when there is a vacuum of authoritative information, but it might have helped.

Instead, the messages came out only after several joint task force meetings. Unfortunately, when they did, some of the messages seemed to conflict with what could be demonstratively proved to be what actually happened. President Panuelo announced that “The team of four testers, after confirming the positive test on one individual, voluntarily and willingly went straight into quarantine at the Emergency Medical Unit in Dekehtik.” This was not a lie. It was, however, worded in a way that made it appear, even after multiple readings that the responders got off the boat after performing the test and went straight into quarantine, though that is not what he said. He said, “after confirming the positive test”, not “after arriving back at the dock.”

In fact, the responders did go into quarantine after receiving notice that one person had tested positive. However, they didn’t, in fact, go “straight into quarantine” even after that notice. Pohnpei’s Information Officer (PIO) says that word of the positive test arrived during a task force meeting, and after some discussion the Task Force decided that the responders should go into quarantine. During that meeting the Chair of the task force made the call to the team of responders telling them to go to quarantine. The PIO said that several hours later they had not yet entered quarantine and, in the meantime, did have interaction with the public.

The responders DID receive negative COVID-19 tests upon entry into quarantine. Seven days later, all still

tested negative for the virus. On the release of information regarding the final negative test for the medical officials, the Pohnpei government, in responding to the rumor of whether or not the medical officials had any contact with the public did NOT release the information that in fact, they had done. What they DID say was what should have been fully said at least a week earlier in a way that we could all understand. It probably would have been if all of the Task Forces and Government leaders had been effectively communicating together and if all had been effectively communicating with the public. It was then, seven days after the positive test that the public received the message that, in fact, no COVID protocol was breached by the medical responders who performed the test. Because all four had been protected by Personal Protective Equipment, the COVID response protocol did not require them to enter quarantine. They did so as an extra added precaution but at NO time did their presence in the community put the community at risk.

Yes, it’s important that members of the community get their information from reliable sources. It is equally important that the information be as completely accurate and straight forward as possible. It should also be transparent and not spun if it is to be believable in this age of rampant skepticism.

What I have begun to discover is that even State governments and the National Government are skeptical of each other’s public information, and that doesn’t help.

On Monday evening after KPress had gone to press, the Pohnpei Public Information Officer, a reliable source of information, contacted me with news I thought was important to get out some time much sooner than the biweekly publication allows. I spent an hour asking questions and verifying what I had been told regarding the information that the PIO had given me, that Chief Mailo was in waters off Pakin, that the Pohnpei Task Force knew nothing of its eminent arrival and that Chuuk had said no to the request to receive the ship after return from the Philippines. It was characterized to me that the Governor had requested that the ship not land in Weno.

According to a scathing letter from

the Chairman of Chuuk’s COVID-19 Task Force, it was the Task Force that asked the National Government to send the vessel to Pohnpei because they were not yet prepared to receive it and that request came before the MS Chief Mailo ever left the Philippines. They claimed that my breaking news item, which I wrote that I would develop further as more information came in was that, oh-so-convenient phrase we have all heard all too often over the last four years, it was “fake news”. A representative of the Chuuk government demanded a retraction saying it was not the Governor who made the request, but the State’s COVID-19 Task Force. I suppose the implication was that the Governor knew nothing about the request to ask the National Government to instead send the ship to Pohnpei.

Their letter accused me of irresponsible reporting for accepting the word of the Pohnpei Public Information Officer before reporting though he is on the list of reliable sources of information,.

They also sent a copy of a letter from Dr. Livingston Taulung, Chairman of the National COVID-19 Taskforce as purported proof that Pohnpei knew the ship was coming. The letter was dated the day after the ship actually arrived in waters off Pakin and asked for help. It said that as members of the Maritime Working Group of the National Task Force, Pohnpei knew about the arrival of the vessel. But even as of today, Pohnpei insists it knew nothing about the arrival of the vessel until it actually arrived, low on supplies.

This morning, Governor Reed Oliver, a line in an email to some staff members in charge of public information from the Pohnpei Task Force, the PIO, and Public Affairs telling them that they are to include The Kaselehlie Press in information they release in addition to the State radio stations, put what I’m thinking rather well. “...We’ve experienced how information were received and twisted at times to fit or satisfy one side, instead of sending out the truth and correct information on the events, meetings, results, etc.,etc.. so the people can be better informed and be able to follow what is needed to help resolve the ongoing ordeal of COVID-19 which has spurred so many other reactions and feedback from

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RE-ADVERTISEMENT REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST



The Government of the Federated States of Micronesia's National Oceanic Resource Management Authority (NORMA) has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Pacific Regional Oceanscape Program, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward an **ASSISTANT ECONOMIST** to be working with FSM NORMA in Pohnpei, FSM.

OBJECTIVE & SCOPE OF WORK

The objective of the assignment is to provide NORMA with sound economic analysis and advice to inform fisheries policy, negotiations investments and management decisions with the long term objective of maximising and sustaining economic benefits including government revenue.

General Scope:

The Assistant Economist will report to the Assistant Director for the Fisheries Economics and Development Division (FEDD) and undertake the following illustrative duties:

- Support the Senior Fisheries Economist in work of the FEDD; Liaise with external/regional organizations and internal/national entities to support the work of the FEDD;
- Assist with the collection/review/analysis of economic data for economic assessments of domestic companies; collecting/reviewing data on profitability assessments of foreign fishing partners; collect tuna market data and other research work on fisheries in FSM including collecting data/drafting annual Fisheries Economic Indicators report for FSM quarterly Fisheries Trade newsletters;
- Assist with the analysis/review of Vessel Days Scheme (VOS) and pooling arrangements and in reviewing/analyzing regional and national reports on fisheries management and development;
- Assist with reviews on the feasibility, costs and benefits of (public and private) investment proposals in the tuna sector, including onshore developments and assessing the financial integrity and soundness of new companies expressing interest to fish in the FSM
- Assist to evaluate the economic impact of fisheries conservation proposals and declared Marine Protected Areas and with preparation of briefs and other reports from the FEDD to NORMA Board, Management and stakeholders.
- Represent NORMA in national, regional and international meetings or negotiations as assigned by NORMA.
- Other duties as may be assigned.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

1) Bachelor's Degree in economics, business or a related field. 2) Experience in data collection processes and surveys. 3) Ability to understand cost benefit, financial and other economic analyses, 4) Good written and verbal communications skill with fluency in written and spoken English. 5) Strong attention to detail, multi-tasking and organizational skills

DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT AND REMUNERATION:

The position will be for an initial one (1) year period. (Probationary period of six months and annual performance review determines whether contract would be continued). This is a full time position and may be extended based on satisfactory performance. Salary will be based on the Local Labor Market Payscale and/or depending on qualifications. This will be a 1-year full-time position starting under special service contract with FSM NORMA.

APPLICATION

The FSM NORMA invites applicants to indicate their interest in providing the above-mentioned services by submitting electronic and/or hard copies of a) Letter of interest b) CV or resume, c) support Degrees/Certificates and d) Name & working contact of 3 references. This position will remain open **UNTIL FILLED** but **applications submission is preferable by January 25, 2021**. Selection will be in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers (January 2011 edition). Full Terms of Reference (TOR) can be obtained from the following and applications can be sent to:

Mr. Eugene Pangelinan Executive Director, NORMA, FSM National Government,
2nd floor of Ambros Building, PO Box 122, Kolonia, Pohnpei, FM 96941
Office Telephone: 691-320-2700/518 I, Email: info@norma.fm
Copy to crawford.nimea@norma.fm

USS Russell engages with partners during Oceania Transit

By *USS Theodore Roosevelt Public Affairs*

Jan. 18, 2021

PACIFIC OCEAN—The Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Russell (DDG 59) completed an Oceania transit and presence operation Jan. 18 interacting with partners and upholding commitments with the Republic of Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Papua New Guinea.

Russell conducted a brief stop for fuel in Majuro, RMI Jan. 7. After successfully completing their fueling and replenishment at Majuro, Russell conducted a Cooperative Deployment with two FSM National Police Maritime Surveillance Division patrol craft in the vicinity of Pohnpei, FSM. The ship completed its transit through Oceania, rich in fisheries, by patrolling the Compact of Free Association (COFA) states high seas pockets in order to discourage incidence of known illegal, unregulated, unreported (IUU) fishing.

“USS Russell is honored to work with COFA states to foster our enduring partnerships in the region,” said Cmdr. Ryan Rogers, Russell’s commanding officer. “Our operations showed our support to these fine nations in a wonderful region of the world that is rich with naval history.”

The COFA agreement establishes the relationships of free association between the United States and the three Pacific Island sovereign states of the Federated

States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

“All nations benefit from free and open access to the seas,” said Capt. Steve McDowell, commodore, Destroyer Squadron Twenty Three. “Together with our allies and partners, we are able to ensure maritime security and adherence to international rules and norms that have allowed all nations to continue to prosper. We’re extremely proud to operate with our COFA partners and to continue to enhance our strong partnership.”

Russell’s transit and operations across Oceania demonstrate the U.S. commitment to upholding its agreement with the COFA states, while also building trust with emerging strategic partners like PNG, in support of advancing international rules and norms of the high seas.

“My crew and I enjoyed the opportunity to conduct a Cooperative Deployment with USS Russell,” said Lt. Cmdr. Paulino Yangitesmal, commanding officer of FSS Palikir. “Even without COVID interrupting our ability to complete at sea training with like-minded partners, it is rare for us to meet up with a warship of this size and capability. We look forward to further opportunities as they become available.”

Russell, part of the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group, is on a scheduled

See “Oceania Transit” on next page



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Russell (DDG 59) conducts a cooperative deployment with the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) National Police Maritime Surveillance Division Patrol Boats FSS Palikir and FSS Micronesia in Pohnpei State, FSM, reinforcing US commitment to the safety and security of the Federated States of Micronesia. Russell, part of the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group, is on a scheduled deployment to the 7th Fleet area of operations. As the U.S. Navy's largest forward deployed fleet, with its approximate 50-70 ships and submarines, 140 aircraft, and 20,000 Sailors in the area of operations at any given time, 7th Fleet conducts forward-deployed naval operations in support of U.S. national interests throughout a free and open Indo-Pacific area of operations to foster maritime security, promote stability, and prevent conflict alongside 35 other maritime nations and partners. (Courtesy photo by U.S. Defense Attache Office, Kolonia, FSM)

...Oceania Transit

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deployment to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. 7th Fleet forces remain ready to

respond to crisis in Oceania, supporting the region in event of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations, while supporting COFA commitments.

As the U.S. Navy's largest forward deployed fleet, U.S. 7th Fleet routinely operates

between 50-70 ships and submarines and 140 aircraft with approximately 20,000 Sailors. 7th Fleet's area of operation spans more than 124 million square kilometers, stretching from the International Date Line to the India/Pakistan border; and from the Kuril Islands in the North to the Antarctic

in the South Pacific, providing security and stability to the region. 7th Fleet interacts with 35 other maritime nations to build partnerships that foster maritime security while conducting a wide-range of missions to support humanitarian efforts and uphold international laws and freedoms of the sea.



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information not so clear to the people.”

Admirably, he added, “...we will also expect people to criticize- and yes- it is part of the way things go-and that should not deter our effort in helping the people understand what is the truth.”

I believe with all my heart and will say so until the end of time, that government sources mean well in terms of their information sharing, and they are handling it the way they think is appropriate and, for the most part, it is not in their best interest nor in their desire to release patently false information.

There has never been more news coming out of the FSM President's office than there has been since President David Panuelo took office. He committed to transparency right from the beginning in his inaugural address and since that

time it is a rare day that something doesn't come from his information officer. I respect, appreciate and commend that effort. He is handling it the way he thinks it should be handled. I should leave that at full stop but it would be disingenuous.

The policy has become that no information is to be released from the Executive Branch except through one person, the Public Information Officer. He is the one source of information and he does a great job at the job he's been given to do. We are good friends and I admire him. Every single message that he releases is first edited and approved by the Chief of Staff and by the President. That's fine, but it does not encourage an outside critical look.

This is not at all to say that I believe that they knowingly release false information. I don't believe that to be true. However, during a conversation with the Chief of Staff about my frustrations of not knowing anything until the news comes out in “sanitized form”, he asked me what I thought I was missing. I was too tongue tied at

the moment, or maybe just not quick enough in thought to give him the response that only occurred to me later and has occurred to me on a daily basis since that conversation took place which should have been, “How could I possibly know what I'm missing if nothing comes out that is not already in a press release?”

I was flummoxed to discover when I asked about the issue of PUA taxation that is on the front page that the spokesperson who is in charge of information was instructed not to discuss the matter specifically with me. The person in charge of Congress information said that she was instructed to tell me that the documents regarding the issue that came to Congress from the President's office were “not theirs to share”.

There is a quote hanging on the bulletin board on my wall in my office. Geckoes and other creatures have stained the paper brown in many places but it still hangs there and I look at it often as a reminder. It's a quote by Peter Foster, not the conman Peter

Foster, but a respected journalist from British newspaper, The Telegraph. He wrote, “Part of the challenge of being a good journalist is identifying the gap between actual reality and what governments and politicians would rather have you believe.”

The quote says nothing about needing to be in an adversarial relationship with them but it serves as a reminder to me when I sometimes forget.

For the most part, I DO believe that there is no systemic intention to withhold information until little matters like withholding of documents arise, and they are rare. Yes, the public should get its information from reliable sources. I simply hope that it is getting what it should have and what it deserves to have. The environment tends to makes that a difficult task indeed despite noble ambitions on all sides.

Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor
The Kaselehlie Press



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Update from the President's Office

In line with the COM-FSM Emergency Management Plan, COVID-19 response plan, Appendix G, some services at the college campuses located in Pohnpei will change.

- Anyone entering a COM-FSM campus must properly wear a mask (covers both nose and mouth); observe social distancing (6 feet or 2 arm lengths apart); wear identification badge on the right side of the chest area and visible to others; obtain a visitors badge if not a student or employee; check in at security check points for temperature check. Wash hands or use hand sanitizers frequently. These regulations will be strictly enforced and anyone not willing to comply will be asked to leave the campus
- In person classes starting Monday, January 11 are postponed to January 25, 2021.
- In-person registration for National Campus and CTEC will be cancelled on Monday, January 11, 2021 — but online registration shall continue under its established deadline or extended deadline. In-person registration for National Campus and CTEC will resume Wednesday, January 13, 2021 (allowing clear communications on new guidelines how to register in-person, which will be by appointment)
- Delivery of services by FAO, counseling and tutorial shall be by appointment and remotely. Check our website on Monday, Jan 11, for contact information for these services.
- Resident students of the RHs shall be restricted to remain on campus, off-campus trips are cancelled until further notice, except for exigent circumstances authorized by the VPemss.

Interim President will continue to monitor public announcements and may either shorten or extend the dates for these changes.



In addition to these changes the College of Micronesia-FSM National and CTEC campuses will be closed starting January 12, 2021 and open on January 25, 2021.

Continue to monitor our website for any changes.
www.comfsm.fm

You may contact the following for questions and information:

Karen Simion, Interim President : ksimion@comfsm.fm

Joe Habuchmai, VP Administrative Services : jhabuchmai@comfsm.fm

Joey Oducado, VP Enrollment Management & Student Services :
vpemss@comfsm.fm

COMET SCHEDULES

Pohnpei : January 25 - February 6

Chuuk : January 27 - February 5

Yap : February 3 - February 5

Kosrae: January 25 - January 26

National Campus

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E-Mail: national@comfsm.fm

Chuuk Campus

P.O. Box 879

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Fax: (691)330-2740

E-Mail: chuuk@comfsm.fm

FSM-FMI

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