

Congress selects and welcomes FSM Vice President Aren B. Palik

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

September 13, 2022

FSM—At just after noon today, Acting FSM Supreme Court Chief Justice Beaulen Carl-Worswick administered the oath of office to new FSM Vice President Aren B. Palik.

At the time of his election to office, he was the At-Large Senator from the State of Kosrae. It was his first term in office. In Congress, he served as the Vice Chairman of the Committee on Education and the Committee on Resources and Development. He also served as a member on the Health and Social Affairs and Transportation and

Communications standing committees.

Vice President Palik will fill the vacancy left when the FSM's beloved Yosiwo George passed away last month.

In a prepared statement, he expressed deep appreciation for Vice President George's many contributions to the nation and told the members of Congress that he was "deeply honored, and grateful, humbled by the trust and confidence" the body had placed in him. He said that public servants must be prepared to sacrifice and do our part to ensure unity in our nation, and as such, he was ready to do his part. He said that he understood that his role would be to support and complement the

ongoing policies and goals of the current administration under FSM President David Panuelo.

While Senator Palik was the most freshman member of the FSM Congress, he is familiar with the political arena, having been a delegate of the 3rd FSM Constitutional Convention in 2001 and also a delegate to the Kosrae State Third Constitutional Convention in 2005.

Palik has a background that is as extensive in service as it is rich in management. With a Business and



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Chuuk State kicks off World Coconut Day Celebrations in the FSM!



CocoNes Secretariat

Weno, Chuuk-On September 10th, Vital teams and participating partners, stakeholders and community members celebrated World Coconut Day at Anderson Field in Weno. The day opened with an official opening program, beginning with a special prayer to bless the event given by Bishop Julio Angkel. Vital FSMPC Director Anselmo Daniel gave a warm welcome to all who were there and T.H. Governor Alexander Narruhn closed the program with special remarks to commemorate and celebrate the reason for the day, the Coconut.

Games, information and demonstration booths promoting all things coconut were set up by various local entities, including

Chuuk Public Utilities Corporation, FSM Telecommunications, the Chuuk Women's Council, the Chuuk Community Health Center, Isla Nesia and Vital. Participants had a chance to win prizes and all visitors were entered to win raffle prizes. Local farmers and vendors also participated by displaying beautifully hand-crafted coconut wares, locally-made coconut oils and other products, and mouth-watering coconut-infused pastries and other local delicacies. The Mountain Boyz entertained the crowd

[Click here for continuation](#)



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HHS awards nearly \$700,000 to the Hawaii State Department of Health to establish an Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Behavioral Health Center of Excellence

September 9, 2022

Washington D.C.--The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through its Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), is awarding nearly \$700,000 to the Hawaii State Department of Health to develop a Center of Excellence, advancing behavioral health equity for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AA and NHPI) communities.

The AA and NHPI Behavioral Health Center of Excellence will

promote culturally and linguistically appropriate behavioral health information and practices; establish a steering committee to identify emerging issues; and provide training, technical assistance, and consultation to practitioners, educators and community organizations. Training topics include addressing mental health impacts caused by unconscious bias and hate against AA and NHPI communities.

“People grappling with mental health and substance use disorders need and deserve culturally responsive care

to help them recover,” said Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D., the HHS Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use and the leader of SAMHSA. “This Center of Excellence will instruct provider organizations on how to better serve members of the AA and NHPI communities across the nation.”

“Today’s announcement is a key step in the Biden-Harris administration’s efforts to eliminate health disparities affecting AA and NHPI communities,” said Krystal Ka’ai, Executive Director of

the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. “This new center will provide access to culturally and linguistically appropriate behavioral health services that are essential as our communities continue to grapple with

[Click here for continuation](#)

Presidential proclamation half mast display of the FSM flag in honor of the late Dr. Vita Akapito Skilling

*Office of the President
Federated States of Micronesia*

WHEREAS, it is with profound sadness that I announce officially and formally the passing of the former Secretary of the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs, Dr. Vita Akapito Skilling;

WHEREAS, the late Dr. Skilling served as Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Affairs for two terms starting in December 19, 2007 under the Mori-Alik Administration;

WHEREAS, the late Dr. Skilling completed her medical education training at the Pacific Basin Medical Officers Training Program (PBMOTP) of the University of Hawaii John

Bum’s School of Medicine in 1992, and completed undergraduate education from Grand Valley State University in 1977;

WHEREAS, the late Dr. Skilling contributed important health policies that benefited this nation during her stint as Secretary of Health, and thereafter, she practiced medicine in Kosrae and Chuuk which benefited the communities that she served; and

WHEREAS, this Proclamation bears the heartfelt condolences of the people of the entire nation to the family, relatives, friends and colleagues of the late Dr. Vita Akapito Skilling whose memory reflects not only her dedication to public service and professional accomplishments as a

public servant but also her kindness to fellow citizens.

NOW THEREFORE, I, David. W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, do hereby proclaim a national mourning period in honor of the late Dr. Vita Akapito Skilling commencing on the arrival of her remains in Kosrae, September 6, 2022. The National Flag of the Federated States of Micronesia shall be displayed at half-mast for three consecutive days following this official proclamation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand on this 7th day of September 2022, in Palikir, Pohnpei.



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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

**THE NEXT ISSUE OF
THE KASELEHLIE PRESS
WILL BE RELEASED ON:
September 28, 2022
Deadline for submission of articles or
advertisements for this issue is the end
of working hours on:
Monday, September 26, 2022**

In Kosrae, grassroots organizations are raising the bar for women's right to paid maternity leave

Spotlight Initiative

September 2, 2022

Kosrae State. Law No. 12-286 was "re-passed in the Legislature, Twenty-Second Special Session, 2022, by four-fifths of the members of the Twelfth Kosrae State legislature" on 5 April 2022.

The Law allows for paid maternity leave of up to 90 days to be applied to all female state government employees, regardless of employment status or contractual arrangements.

The Law, addressing public sector employees, paves the way to the adoption of similar measures for private sector employees too, and hopes to lead similar conversations in other FSM states.

"This Law is the fruit of the partnership and dialogue with grassroots organisations such as Utwe Women's Organization." said Senator Andy J. Andrew, who formally introduced the Law. "They are playing a crucial role in voicing the needs and rights of women

and children, and in reminding us legislators of our duties in developing laws that promote and secure the right to health for all", he concluded.

Senator Yamado Melander, Chairman, R&D Committee 12th Kosrae State Legislature said: "Utwe Women's Organisation advocated for women's rights to paid leave because no one else was doing it on their behalf, and they were the ones paying the consequences of such negligence. While the bottom-up approach is advancing the rights of women, it is society as a whole who is reaping the benefits of the advancement of human rights", he concluded.

Krystle Melander, project manager for Utwe Women's Organization, the booster that allowed this amendment to take off, added, "What we are protecting and promoting with this Law is the right of women and children to physical and mental health. Unpaid maternity leave meant no safety net for new mothers. Many working mothers felt worried when transitioning from childbirth to the workplace with no care and recovery time, adding financial pressure to an already sensitive time."

"In the old days, during pregnancy women were supported by the community and exempted from working, creating the time and space for the new mother and the newborn to adjust and recover", said Shelyane Lohn, North Pacific PPAC Officer, Pacific Community (SPC). "With this Law and paid maternity



Kosraean baby girl. Photo courtesy of Krystle Y. Melander

leave, we are formally recognizing the collective responsibility of taking care of mothers and children", she concluded.

The Government of the Federated States of Micronesia has prioritized six indicators to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (SDG Goal 5). The hope with this Law in Kosrae is that it will have a spillover effect in neighboring states so that all women and newborns are equally protected and can have access to a secure time of rest, leaving no one behind.

Mañe'lu's Micronesian Resource Center One-Stop Shop holds the 2nd Micronesian Youth Forum

Mañe'lu

September 2, 2022

On Saturday, August 27, 2022, 180 high school students from throughout the island came together for the 2nd Micronesian Youth Forum (MYF) hosted by Mañe'lu's Micronesian Resource Center One-Stop Shop. The forum, which was coordinated in collaboration with high school student interns and the FSM Consulate, explored the idea of "One Micronesia" by providing a space for students from diverse backgrounds to share their opinions, ideas, and thoughts about Culture & Identity, Drug & Alcohol Prevention, College & Career Readiness, and Environmental Stewardship. Conversations were led by "navigators" or subject matter experts for each of the topics, who shared their perspectives before students dove deep into discussions about their experiences, challenges, and ideas for the future, with the goal of crafting awareness activities to share their MYF experience and lessons

learned with a broader audience.

"The first Micronesian Youth Forum was held in 2019, as a school field trip with about 100 high school students. We had received so much positive feedback from volunteers, teachers, and students, that we had already been planning for a second one when the pandemic started." said Mañe'lu Executive Director Samantha Taitano. "We had only been anticipating 100 students to come out to this year's MYF and were overwhelmed by the number of students who attended. There is a real desire for youth to participate in events where they can share their voices and know they are being heard."

"We had such a great turnout at the event. Some students didn't really know what to expect, but they ended up loving the experience. We are so grateful for our 'MYF Navigators' for coming out and sharing their stories with the students. MYF is meant to celebrate the Micronesian in each

of our youth and I hope the event & its future activities will create a new perspective for not only each of them but for the community as a whole." said Micronesian Resource Center Project Coordinator Mercy Nena.

Deputy Superintendent Joseph Sanchez who attended the event and was able to sit in during discussions said "This event was a great success! It was really inspiring to see so many students from different backgrounds come together to share their ideas and voice their opinions on topics that are important to them. I look forward to working with the coordinators from Mañe'lu and the students on taking their recommendations and implementing them in our schools."

"Wonderful turn out. Almost 200 student participants showed up on a Saturday morning, eager and ready to learn. I'm very happy with the coordination and planning that took place in order to execute such a great

turn out. A message to the students, Le monde attend." said Consulate General Teresa Filipin.

Throughout September, students that attended MYF will continue to meet and launch their awareness activities. "The students collaborated on ideas for the awareness projects to share what they learned with the community. We are all excited to keep the MYF energy going and spread the positivity. There will be some fun stuff coming up in September that will be completely planned and coordinated by the students. Our team and some of our navigators will just be there to help support them in making their ideas come to life." said Nena.

The 2nd Micronesian Youth Forum was funded by a Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant from Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center, the FSM Consulate Office, and a grant from the Department of Interior Office of Insular Affairs.

FSM Appeals panel limits PII settlement on Chuuk road project to \$6 million with no interest

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

September 11, 2022

FSM—The FSM Supreme Court says that the FSM National Government owes Pacific International, Inc. (PII) only \$6 million and is exempt from post-judgment interest. PII was the contractor hired by the FSM Government to rebuild 4.2 miles of road on Weno, Chuuk for a contract amount of nearly \$26 million. However, on November 7, 2013, the FSM terminated the PII contract, asserting that PII had defaulted on the contract.

PII filed suit at the FSM Supreme Court for damages alleging that the contract had been wrongfully terminated. PII also alleged that it was owed an additional \$14 million for work performed and costs incurred. On March 4, 2015, the trial court stayed the litigation pending mediation between the parties which took place with the help of an independent professional mediator. The parties during that mediation agreed that the FSM would, within 14 days, pay \$2 million to PII subject to approval by the FSM President and appropriation of funds by the FSM Congress. Payment would be made within 30 days of appropriation of the funds by Congress. The parties agreed that the matter would then enter arbitration. If the arbitration ruling

upheld the termination of the contract for default, FSM would owe no more money to PII but would not recoup the \$2 million payment. They agreed that if the arbitration ruling award was \$6 million or under in favor of PII, the FSM would pay PII the amount of the award less \$2 million. If the arbitration award was over \$6 million the FSM would pay an amount about the \$2 million not to exceed \$4 million.

The FSM President did not approve the agreement, and the FSM paid nothing. The Supreme Court trial moved forward. In June of 2018, the trial court ordered the parties to pursue settlement negotiations, and, if settlement discussions reached an impasse, to submit the matter to binding arbitration and agree, by October of 2018, on a mutually acceptable arbitrator. The FSM Congress appropriated \$500,000 to defray “PII Litigation/Arbitration” expenses.

The arbitration took place in June and July 2019. The arbitrators issued their final verdict on March 20, 2020. They awarded PII \$8,515,466 plus \$984,988 in interest. On April 7, 2020, PII moved the FSM Supreme Trial Court for the entry of a judgment at the level of the arbitrator’s ruled amount plus nine percent interest once the court entered judgment. On July 2, 2021, the trial court ordered the requested judgment. The FSM immediately

entered its objections, but the trial court ruled that “it would be a great waste of judicial resources to permit the FSM, after fully participating in the arbitration proceeding, to essentially have a second run of the case before the court. The FSM appealed that decision (Appeal Case P12-2021 on Civil Action 2014-046).

The legal opinion issued by the appeals panel on August 30, 2022, was the outcome of that appeal.

The appeals panel heard the FSM’s argument that the FSM’s Financial Management Act bars any agreement, such as the mediated settlement agreement, because the Act prohibits the unauthorized obligation of government funds. “We cannot agree,” the appeals panel ruled. “This litigation, or any settlement of this litigation, or any arbitration of the parties’ claims involved in this litigation is not and cannot be an obligation of any appropriation, apportionment, reapportionment, or allotment” of government funds. A court judgment, a litigation settlement, or an arbitration award does not obligate funds. The most that an award, a settlement, or a judgment can do is determine the amount of a party’s liability (in this case, the FSM’s), not obligate funds for payment.

The FSM also argued that arbitration is an unconstitutional delegation of

(or a usurpation of) the FSM Supreme Court’s judicial power and function.

Again, the Appeals Panel could not agree. “We see no impediment, constitutional or statutory, preventing parties who contractually agree to settle disputes through arbitration instead of litigation from doing so. Like any other lawful contract provision, an arbitration clause or agreement should generally be enforceable by a court. Such enforcement is not a delegation of the court’s judicial power to an arbitrator, but merely the court enforcing the remedy that the contracting parties have chosen and agreed to. This is true even if the national government is one of the contracting parties.”

The FSM contended that the trial court erred when it held that “controlling law” compelled the court to enforce the mediated settlement agreement’s arbitration clause. The Appeals Panel agreed with FSM on that argument, saying that there have been no previous appellate decisions in the FSM concerning arbitration or enforcement of arbitration agreements. This is the first, and therefore, the trial court did err in that regard.

The FSM argued that the mediated settlement agreement is an unenforceable contract, and that

Click here for continuation

Pohnpei DPS hold its first Junior Police Drill competition

Pohnpei Enginkehlap News

September 5, 2022

Pohnpei—The Pohnpei Department of Public Safety had its first Junior Police drill competition at the Spanish Wall ballfield this afternoon. Seven teams of young people competed in the category of Drills and Ceremony, Uniform, and Cadence.

There were three teams from Kitti consisting of students from Salapwuk and Seinwar, Pehleing, and Rohi and Wone. From Sokehs, one team consisting of students from Palikir and Sekerecompeted. Madolenhimw had one team consisting of students from Lukop and Sapwalap. The U team consisted of students from Awak and Saladak. Nett also had a team.



In the category of Drills and Ceremony, the Nett team took third place. The KittiRohi and Wone team took second place, and the KittiSalapwuk and Seinwar teams took the top prize. In the category of Uniform, KittiPehleing took third place. The Nett team won second prize. The KittiRohi and Wone



team won the first prize. For Cadence, third place was the Nett team. Second place was the UAwak and Saladak team. KittiRohi and Wone also won first place in this category.

Pohnpei Governor and First Lady Reed and

Estle attended the competition and closing ceremony.

Names of each of the participants of each team can be found at <https://pohnpeistate.gov.fm/2022/09/05/3047/>

Gender equality and women’s empowerment – a shared challenge

Pacific Community

September 5, 2022

Nadi, Fiji - An agreement to support and facilitate the development of a regional domestic violence counselling framework to ensure consistent, timely and quality standards for counselling support for survivors and victims of domestic violence. was among the key agreements made at the 3rd Annual Meeting of the Regional Working Group on the Implementation of Family Protection/Domestic Violence Legislation (RWG) held recently in Nadi, Fiji.

This agreement will also support RWG member countries that are developing or reviewing their national counselling framework.

Speaking at the meeting, Molieivaai, Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Justice and Court Administration of the Samoa Government, and chair of the RWG said, “Violence against women constitutes the most severe expression of gender-based discrimination and disempowerment of women and girls. To downplay it is to minimise the real

threat that it has to democracy, peace, and security of life.”

The RWG provides a platform for high-level government representation from ministries responsible for implementing domestic violence (DV) legislation. It meets annually to share progress, challenges faced, lessons learned and resources available in advancing implementation of the domestic violence legislation in the Pacific region; and to discuss common regional strategies and initiatives to improve the implementation of DV legislation. Membership on the RWG is by countries/states with existing family protection/domestic violence legislation.

Also at the meeting were Christine Clarke, Australia’s Ambassador for Women and Girls, and Louisa Wall, New Zealand’s Ambassador for Gender Equality (Pacific)/TuiaTāngata.

“When we speak about gender equality and women’s empowerment, we speak to this as a shared challenge – we all still have far to go on the journey towards true gender equality and we have much to learn from each other,” said Ms



Clarke. “Gender equality is a matter of human rights and a pre-requisite for sustained peace, security, and prosperity. Barriers still exist. They are many and intersecting. But we can dismantle them,” she added.

Prior to the RWG meeting, approximately 150 government and civil society delegates from across twelve countries converged at the Regional Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Services Symposium in Nadi, Fiji from 17 to 19 August 2022 to dialogue and advance best practice and a survivor-centered approach to EVAWG services for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). The symposium was convened ahead of the RWG meeting to highlight key progress that has been made

across the region by respective service providers to forward national systems to respond to GBV, including standards for GBV counselling and innovative models for EVAW coordination.

As the meeting drew to a close, member countries and states of the RWG deliberated on and endorsed, in principle, an outcomes document which would guide its work over the next year. The RWG currently has representation from the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia national government, and the state governments of Kosrae and Pohnpei, Fiji, Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Through the FSM-China Great Friendship, the People’s Republic of China Donates \$200,000 to the FSM for COVID-19 Relief & Recovery

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On September 6th, 2022, the Honorable Marcus H. Samo—Secretary of the Department of Health & Social Affairs of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—received His Excellency Huang Zheng, Ambassador

of the People’s Republic of China (China) to the FSM, in a handover ceremony wherein Ambassador Huang, on behalf of the People and Government of China, donated \$200,000 to the FSM for purpose of COVID-19-related relief and recovery efforts. The donation comes after a recent donation of \$18,000 from China on financial

support to the 1st Micronesian Expo, held in Pohnpei State immediately prior to the onset of community spread of COVID-19.

In their respective remarks, Secretary Samo thanked Ambassador Huang and the People and Government of China for their continued Great Friendship with our country,

and Ambassador Huang emphasized the close economic and technical cooperation between the FSM and China on matters of mutual interest and import.

To date, China has given a total of \$550,000 in cash donations to assist the FSM in combating the COVID-19 Pandemic.

...SAMHSA

Continued from page 2

the effects of the pandemic and anti-Asian violence.”

For the first year of the five-year grant program, SAMHSA is awarding the Hawaii State Department of Health \$698,458. The Center of Excellence also will develop accessible, public-facing infographics and other materials that address behavioral health, including those that provide

data disaggregated by race and ethnicity, as well as best practices for improving engagement and retention of AA and NHPI behavioral health professionals. It joins SAMHSA’s other Centers of Excellence directed at behavioral health disparities, including the African American Behavioral Health Center of Excellence and the Center of Excellence on LGBTQ+ Behavioral Health Equity. Read more about the grant recipient.

The HHS Healthy People 2030 initiative defines health equity as “the

attainment of the highest level of health for all people.” The initiative states that “achieving health equity requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and health care disparities.” The Center of Excellence will help advance behavioral health equity, which is a critical component of holistic health care.

Last December, HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra launched the Biden-

Harris Administration’s White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHPI) in response to the President’s Executive Order (EO) 14031: Advancing Equity, Justice, and Opportunity for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. The initiative is charged with driving an ambitious, whole-of-government agenda to advancing equity, justice, and opportunity for the AA and NHPI communities in the United States.

August 25, 2022

BID INVITATION

for

RFP No. 2202-001 YSPSC

Phase 1

New Potable Water Tank No. 3 (Nimar)

And

Phase 2Repair and Refurbishment of Existing Potable
Water Tank No. I (Dololeb) and Tank No. 2 (Nimar)

State of Yap

Federated State of Micronesia

Yap State Public Service Corporation

NOTICE

The Office and Planning and Budget (OPB / Project Management Office (PMO) of the State of Yap, Federated State of Micronesia is hereby issuing this Bid Invitation Notice to qualified contractors for the **Phase 1 -New Potable Water Tank No. 3 (Nimar) and Phase 2 Construction of the Repair and Refurbishment of Existing Potable Water Tank No.1 (Dololeb) and Tank No. 2 (Nimar). The Pre-Bid Meeting and Site Visit is scheduled for Thursday, September 15, 2022 at 10:00 am** at the PMO Office Conference Room in the YCA Complex, Second Floor, Colonia, Yap (Zoom Link Online).

Further information on this ITB may be obtained by submitting a written request for details to Mr. Ar. Samuel E. Luzano, PMO Manager, YCA Complex, P.O. Box 970 Colonia, Yap FM 96943 at email seluzano@vapstategov.org with the subject heading:

RFP No. 2202-001 YSPSC**Phase 1****New Potable Water Tank No. 3 (Nimar)**

And

Phase 2**Repair and Refurbishment of Existing Potable
Water Tank No.1 (Dololeb) and Tank No. 2 (Nimar)**

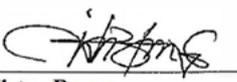
State of Yap

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The bidding documents, including the instructions to bidders, scope of work, bills of quantities, technical specifications and conditions of contract may also be directly obtained from the Department's website: <https://www.tci.gov.fm> in its PMO section.

The closin date for the submission of bids is Tuesda , October 18, 2022 at 3:00 pm (Yap local time).



Victor Bamog
Director, OPB

...PII*Continued from page 4*

the arbitration clause with it is not separately enforceable. It also argued that the FSM never waived its objection to being required to go to arbitration.

The Appeals Panel concluded that the FSM did waive its objection to arbitrability when Congress first appropriated \$500,000 so that the FSM could adequately present its defenses and counterclaims during the arbitration, and the FSM President then signed that appropriation law.

“Second, and more importantly, the FSM never raised an objection to arbitrability before the arbitrator(s), even though the arbitration rules provided for just such an opportunity. If the FSM had wanted to preserve an objection to arbitrability, that was when the FSM should have raised and maintained its objection to arbitrability. One of two things would have happened next. The arbitrator(s) would have either upheld the FSM’s objection and the arbitration proceeding would have ended, leaving the matter to be resolved by the FSM trial court; or the arbitrator(s) would have found arbitrability and the arbitration would have gone forward. But, in that second instance, the FSM’s objection to arbitrability would have been preserved for future litigation,” the Appeals panel wrote in its legal opinion. But the fact that the FSM continued to arbitrate and to present arguments against PII and on its own behalf “was an implied waiver of a known right.”

The FSM argued that the trial court deprived it of its economic benefit of the mediated settlement, which would have given them a liability of only \$6 million. PII argued that because the FSM President never approved the mediated settlement agreement and because it had not paid the agreed-upon \$2 million, the lower and upper limits on an arbitration award ceased to exist.

“We cannot agree. We hold that the upper and lower limits were a part and parcel of the mediated settlement agreement’s arbitration clause. When the parties agreed to arbitration, that is the type of arbitration they agreed to -

a high-low arbitration – an arbitration with upper and lower limits. When the FSM impliedly waived its objection to arbitration, the type of arbitration to which it waived its objection was a high-low arbitration. The agreed high-low limits cannot be separated from the arbitration. The high-low limits must be applied to the final arbitration award,” the Court ruled.

On the matter of post-judgment interest, the Appeals Panel concluded that since the FSM has not statutorily waived its right to sovereign immunity from statutory post-judgment interest, the general statute imposing post-judgment interest, 6 F.S.M.C. 1401, does not make the FSM liable for post-judgment interest. The FSM owes and will owe no interest on the judgment.

The final ruling of the Appeals Panel upheld the trial court’s confirmation of the arbitration award in PII’s favor but limited the amount awarded to \$6 million, with no post-judgment interest. It ordered the trial court to enter an amended judgment to that effect and said that the parties will bear their own costs on the appeal.

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National Campus The National Campus is situated on a 73-acre site near the FSM capital in Palikir, six miles from Kolonia. The student body at the National Campus is composed primarily of recent high school graduates from the four states in the FSM. These students come to the National Campus with bilingual or trilingual backgrounds representing eight different Micronesian languages and as many cultures. Approximately nine hundred fifty full-time students are enrolled each semester in either degree programs or programs leading to a certificate of achievement. Fifteen buildings exist at the site that include classrooms, learning resources center, recreation, student center, dining hall, residence halls for men and for women, offices for faculty and administration, a multipurpose gymnasium, maintenance facilities, tutoring and counseling center.

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...FSM Vice President

Continued from front page

Economics degree from Eastern Oregon State College ('82), Palik returned to the FSM and built a career in the nation's financial sector that spanned over 15 years – from Planner and Economist for the Kosrae State Government to Vice President of the FSM Development Bank to top management positions in the various banking institutions in the Nation. In 2002, he became the President and Chief Executive Officer for the Pacific Islands Development Bank until his election to Congress in 2019. Under his leadership, PIDB has seen unprecedented growth and improved overall performance.

In addition to his rich

professional backdrop, Palik also has an impressive background in civic and community services that range from state level as chairman and/or member on the Kosrae State Board of Education and Kosrae Utility Authority Board to President of Pohnpei Chamber of Commerce and Board member of FSM Development Bank.

His civic services spilled over into the Micronesian region to include: member of the Guam Chamber of Commerce, Board of Governors for the Asia Pacific Association for Fiduciary Studies, member and chairman of the Micronesian Conservation Trust Board of Trustees, to board chairman of the FSM Unified Revenue Authority, to being an FSM Compact Trust Fund Committee member. His extense of his civic roles and contributions encompass the FSM, the collective Micronesian region, as well as the Asia-Pacific region.

Senator Palik is married to Mrs. Adelita Abraham Palik, and they have four children: Sonja, Ryan Lloyd, and Jason.

FSM Congress Speaker Wesley Simina has declared Palik's seat in Congress to be vacant. There will be no special election to fill his seat. Instead, the Governor of Kosrae will appoint his replacement.

...Coconut Day

Continued from front page

and kept the spirits festive and the crowd on their feet with their live performance.

While Chuuk still remains COVID-19 –free State in the FSM, the large crowds at the WCD Chuuk event were still adhering to the State's face mask and hygiene protocols. Face masks, hand wipes, hand sanitizers, and Clorox wipes were available for all vendors and festivalgoers, as well as water and coconut drinks to keep everyone hydrated in that hot weekend sun!

Vital wishes to thank all participating partners and vendors for joining our first World Coconut Day festival in the FSM. The community presence added to the significance of the festival and was a valuable reminder of how important the coconut is to all Micronesians. Great job by FSMPC Chuuk for hosting this first event, and we are excited to see how it grows bigger and better in the years moving forward.

Keep an eye out for word on World Coconut Day celebrations in Yap and Pohnpei in October!



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

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FAO Subregional Office for the Pacific Islands is looking for a **National Project Specialist** to be based in Palikir, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)

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Governor Narruhn with his Isla Nesia products



Chuuk Women's Council promotes and sells their coconut products

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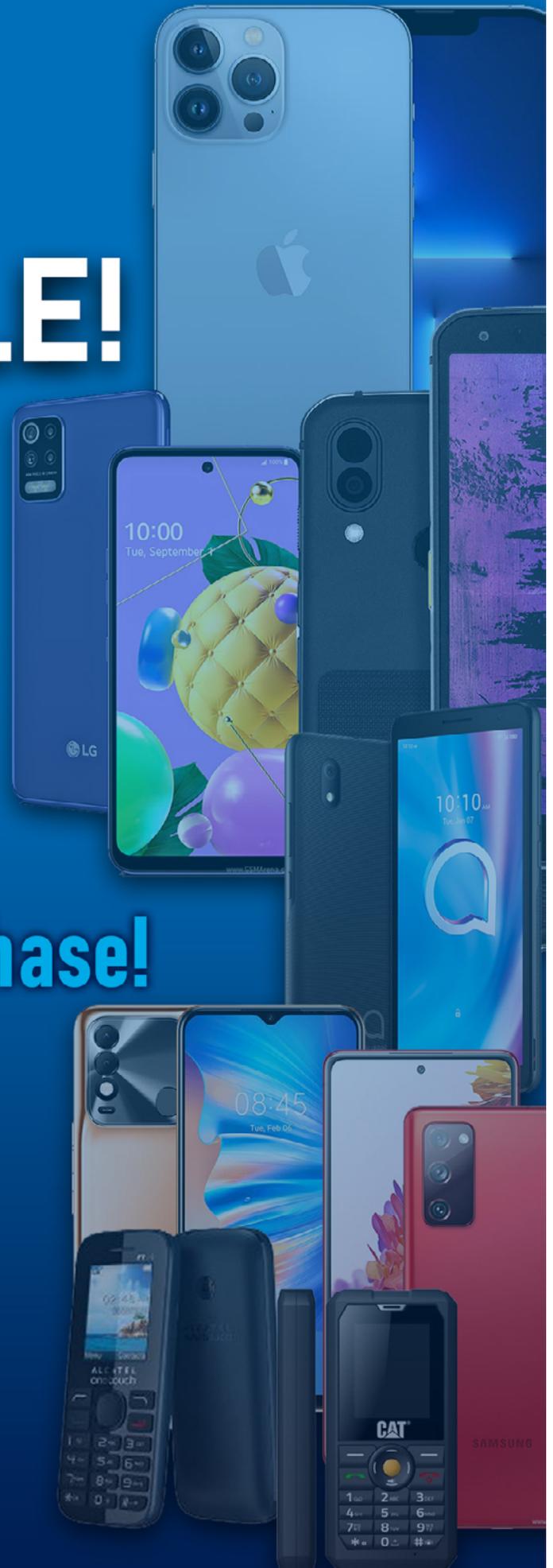
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Executive Order Establishing and organizing a public education task force on the proposed constitutional amendments adopted by the 4th FSM Constitutional Convention

WHEREAS, the 21st Congress established a constitutional convention through passage of Public Law No. 21-19, which was signed into law on August 7, 2019;

WHEREAS, the Constitutional Convention adopted eight (8) separate proposed amendments to the various sections of the Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia, which if passed the amendments will be considered as parts of the Constitution; WHEREAS, Article XIV Section I of the FSM Constitution provides that a proposed amendment shall become part of the Constitution when approved by $\frac{3}{4}$ votes cast on an amendment in each of the $\frac{3}{4}$ of the states;

WHEREAS, it is critical that voters are accorded the opportunity to examine and consider the rationale, the intent and the implications of the proposed constitutional amendments before making any informed decisions with respect to the amendments, and on this basis, a task force must be established in order to properly present and explain the amendments to the voters; and

WHEREAS, public education is key to familiarize the voters with the legal, practical and related issues involved in the amendment, either in favor or against the proposed amendments.

NOW THEREFORE, by the powers vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the Federated States of Micronesia, I order as follows:

1. A public education task force (the "Task Force") is hereby constituted for the purposes stated in this order. The Task Force, with Secretary of Justice as Chair and Deputy Secretary of Foreign Affairs as Vice Chair for organizational purposes, shall be made up of the following members:

- Secretary of Finance and Administration,
- Secretary of Transportation Communication & Infrastructure,
- Secretary of Health & Social Affairs, or designee
- Secretary of Education or designee,
- National Election Director,
- Acting Director of National Archives, Culture, and Historic Preservation,
- Secretary of Foreign Affairs,

- FSM Ambassador and Consuls General based in the United States,
- President's Special Assistant on Legislative Matters,
- FSM Public Information Officer,
- President of COM-FSM or designee, and
- FSM States Chambers of Commerce representatives.

2. Delegates to Constitutional Convention designated by the respective Chairs of the State delegations to the Constitutional Convention shall join the Task Force, apportioned as follows:

- 3 from Chuuk delegation,
- 2 from Pohnpei delegation,
- 1 from Kosrae delegation, and
- 1 from Yap delegation.

3. The Speaker of the 22nd Congress is invited to nominate four representatives from Congress to take part in the membership and activities of the Task Force.

4. The State Governors are invited to nominate their respective representatives to the Task Force, as members, two for every State as recommended by State Governors.

5. Under the supervision the Chair, the Task Force shall mandate the involvement and cooperation of international NGOs and civil society by inviting them to join and assist in the activities of the Task Force in conducting public education of the proposed constitutional amendments. Among the international NGOs invited for this purpose are the following: COF A Alliance National Network (CANN); We Are Oceania; and the FSM Association of Guam.

6. The main function of the Task Force is to conduct a fair, transparent, balanced and effective public education and public awareness campaign in order to inform, educate, and familiarize the voters concerning the issues relating to the constitutional amendments. In carrying out this role, the Task Force shall plan effectively in order to accomplish this task given the very limited time available prior to the special election when the proposed amendments shall be placed on the ballot for the special election to fill in the vacancy in Congress following the inaugural session of the 23rd

FSM Congress. The Task Force may establish appropriate committees to facilitate its activities.

7. The Task Force shall have its first organizational meeting at the call of the Chair at the earliest date possible.

8. The Task Force may adopt such rules, procedures or guidelines, as may be necessary, governing its meetings and the overall conduct of the affairs of the Task Force.

9. Task Force shall have a secretariat appointed or designated by the Chair or Vice Chair. The secretariat shall be provided with a temporary

office, fulltime personnel, with funding and provisions to ensure that the secretariat is fully equipped with essential capacity and resources (e.g., equipment and supplies) required to operationalize it.

10. The Chair of the Task Force shall report to the President of any progress of its work, on a periodic basis or as often as may be required by the President to make such report.

11. The Task Force shall review any existing budget and recommend supplemental budget appropriation, if needed.

Outer Island Chief Executives receive presentation on brackish water for drinking water

Pohnpei Enginkehlap News

September 5, 2022

Pohnpei--On Thursday, September 1, 2022, Governor Oliver attended a presentation that was given to the Outer Island Local Chief Executives in the Governor's conference room. The presentation given by Mr. David Calush was about providing sustainable water treatment systems focusing on brackish water (salty water) that is common to the outer islands. The system which does not need electricity, but uses solar panels, mainly uses chlorine to provide clean water in simple, low maintenance but high output capacity system.

The presentation was well received by the Outer Island Chief executives. Mayor of Pingelap, Mr. Smithy Clark, who is also the Chairman of the Outer Island Chief executive association, was very interested in the sustainable water treatment system and thanked Mr. Calush for his presentation, along with the other local chief executives.

Mr. Calush is in Pohnpei, along with 6 other Engineers from Israel and China working with PUC to renovate their iron removal plant in Nett.





President Panuelo signs Executive Order establishing & organizing a Public Education Task Force on the proposed Constitutional Amendments adopted by the 4th FSM Constitutional Convention

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On September 6th, 2022, His Excellency David W. Panuelo—President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—signed an Executive Order establishing and organizing a Public Education Task Force on the proposed constitutional amendments adopted by the 4th FSM Constitutional Convention. The function of the Public Education Task Force is to conduct a fair, transparent, balanced, and effective public education and public awareness campaign in order to inform, educate, and familiarize voters concerning the issues relating to the constitutional amendments. The proposed amendments shall be placed on the ballot for the special election to fill the vacancies in Congress following the inaugural session of the 23rd FSM Congress; it is highly plausible that this special election would occur in early July 2023.

The Public Education Task Force will be Chaired by the Secretary of Justice, with

the Deputy Secretary of Foreign Affairs serving as the Vice Chair. Members of the Public Education Task Force include the Secretary of Finance & Administration; the Secretary of Transportation, Communication, & Infrastructure; the Secretary of Education; the National Election Director; the Acting Director of the FSM National Archives; the Secretary of Foreign Affairs; the FSM Ambassador to the United States of America; the FSM’s Consuls General based in the United States of America; the Special Assistant to the President on Legislative Affairs; the FSM Public Information Officer and Press Secretary to the President of the FSM; the President of the College of Micronesia-FSM; and representatives from the FSM’s States Chambers of Commerce.

Delegates to the Constitutional Convention designated by the respective Chairs of the State delegations shall join the Task Force, with three members from the Chuuk delegation, two members from the Pohnpei delegation, and one member

each from the Kosrae and Yap delegations respectively.

The Speaker of the 22nd Congress is invited to nominate four representatives from the Congress to take part in the membership and activities of the Task Force.

The Governors of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae are invited to nominate two representatives to the Task Force to serve as members.

The President’s Executive Order describes that the Public Education Task Force “shall mandate the involvement and cooperation of international NGOs and civil society by inviting them to join and assist in the activities of the Task

Force in conducting public education of the proposed constitutional amendments.” The Executive Order explicitly names the COFA Alliance National Network (CANN); We Are Oceania; and the FSM Association of Guam.

The President’s Executive Order can be found here: https://gov.fm/files/EXECUTIVE_ORDER_ConCon_Public_Education_Task_Force.pdf



Chuuk State Auditor notes exceptions on Chuuk State Election Commission audit

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

September 12, 2022

Chuuk—In late August, the Chuuk State Public Auditor released a report on the Chuuk State Election Commission, saying that the Commission had inadequate compliance with the Financial Management Regulations and needs improvement in the conduct of the elections. Chuuk House of Representatives Speaker Innocente I. Oneisom requested the audit, which covered fiscal years 2017 to 2019. It was the Commission's first audit.

The Commission incurred expenditures of \$301,442.48 in fiscal year 2017, \$222,877.34 in 2018, and \$315,913.61 in 2019.

“We conclude that the Chuuk State Election Commission must improve its compliance with the Chuuk State budget when it exceeded its spending with the appropriated budget and used another department's budget

to cover the deficiency,” auditors wrote. “In addition, the commission should comply with the internal control requiring that payment checks be properly received by the recipient. Lastly, the Chuuk State Election Commission, together with the Department of Administrative Services, needs to strictly comply with the requirements of the financial management regulations for the keeping of records, controlling and accounting of fixed assets to avoid the risk of asset loss, theft, and misuse.

“We also conclude that the Chuuk State Election Commission has not been strategically managing its operations. We found that the Chuuk State Election Commission does not have a strategic plan in place, but its annual activities were guided by what they have proposed in its annual budget. The Strategic Plan would communicate and provide clarity, direction and focus towards protecting voter's rights and safeguarding fair election. There were many strategic activities that could be initiated such as the update of laws

and regulations, training for the staff to handle the election, improve the electoral systems/process to provide efficiency, and update the procedure for handling absentee voting/voting by mail, among others.”

The auditors suggested that the \$249,596.80 the Election Commission spent to send election officers to poll precincts overseas could have been substantially lowered by having the embassies and consulates worldwide voter assistance. They said that at least some of that money could have been saved and spent instead to fund strategic activities such as computerized voter registration and elections.

Election Commission management said that it had, in fact, considered utilizing Embassy staff members to assist in elections but that the Embassies and Consulates have limited staff and so resisted the extra work. They further said that Chuuk State has no authority to use FSM Embassy/Consulate staff for election purposes. Additionally, the management said, the Chuuk State Legislature seemed to prefer the Election Commission oversee the polling places overseas. There is also the difficulty that the Chuuk State gubernatorial election coincides with the FSM National Election.

On the matter of Financial Management Regulations and Appropriation Law for the spending of funds, the auditors said that election expenditures in 2017 exceeded the funds appropriated by the Legislature. The overages were charged to the Department of Transportation and Public Works under the line item “Miscellaneous Goods and Services”. The amount of over expenditure was \$31,442.44.

Management told the auditors that the commission was short of funds and unable to request a supplemental budget because the Legislature was not in session at that time. The commission asked for accommodation of the payments from the Department of Transportation with a promise of returning it. However, the

commission was not able to reimburse the Transportation department, and the expenditures were reflected as DOT expenses.

Auditors also found that there were no signatures acknowledging receipt of checks representing payment to poll workers in the total amount of \$29,472.63. Auditors sampled 100 checks and found that in 50 percent of the cases, the payments were not acknowledged by recipients.

Auditors also reported that there was deficient management and maintenance of records of Fixed Assets. They said that when they requested the commission to supply their asset list “they merely forwarded information as to the type and quantity of assets under their office.”

“From the review of list of assets provided by and kept by the Supplies and Procurement, there were 22 assets that were listed that include vehicles, laptop, air conditioner (at the old building they rented per the Director), desktop computer, and printer. Out of the 22 assets in the list, 12 assets (55%) have unknown whereabouts because they were not anymore in the possession of the Chuuk State Election Commission. For these unknown assets, there was no investigation conducted, as required by the financial management regulations, of the facts and circumstances surrounding the missing assets to establish accountability,” the auditors reported.

Auditors were unable to fully examine their selected sample for FY 2017 Travel Expenditures because the person from the Department of Administrative Services responsible for keeping documents had difficulty finding them in storage. The Administrative Officer of the Election Commission has no copy on file of those documents. This fact led to the finding that an “opportunity exists for improving record management and retention”.

The audit's last finding was that the Election Commission did not have a strategic plan to provide clarity, direction, and focus toward protecting voters' rights and safeguarding fair elections.

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H.E. David W. Panuelo solicits Congress' Legislative support for Marine Spatial Planning Legislation, & financial support to forthcoming ConCon public awareness & Education Task Force

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On September 5th, 2022, the 22nd Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) began its 5th Regular Session. After the opening session, His Excellency David W. Panuelo virtually received the Committee to Wait on the President. Chaired by the Honorable Ferny S. Perman, the Committee's members included the Honorable Perpetua S. Konman, the Honorable Joseph J. Urusemal, and the Honorable Paliknoa K. Welly.

The meeting began with President Panuelo updating the Committee on the COVID-19 Pandemic. The President described that the Department of Justice and the Department of Health & Social Affairs recommended amendments to the regulations guiding the Healthy Border Protection Act, and that he has signed off on these amendments, including the removal of the nation-wide mask mandate. Senator Perman—who is also the Chair of the Congressional Committee on Health & Social Affairs—suggested that, in his view, the States of Yap, Pohnpei, and Kosrae are following the Healthy Border Protection Act, and the State of Chuuk is arguably not, on the premise that the other three states are truly “open”, and Chuuk is debatably not. In response, President Panuelo described that limiting the number of flights and the number of passengers until November 1st is, in the Executive Branch's understanding, consistent with the intent of the law.

The next topic of discussion was with regards to the late and Honorable Yosiwo P. George, Vice President of the FSM, and the mechanics for the election of the new Vice President. The Committee to Wait on the President emphasized their continued condolences for the loss of Vice President George. While the Committee did not provide a timeline for the election of the new Vice President, President Panuelo relayed that his Cabinet and staff are preparing briefing documents so that, when a new Vice President is elected, they can become immediately acquainted with the inner workings of the Executive Branch.

The next topic of discussion was with

regards to the FSM Supreme Court's opinion regarding a civil action case between the FSM Government vs. Pacific International, Inc. President Panuelo reported that the FSM Supreme Court's opinion is that the appellate court modified the trial court's award by limiting the money judgment to \$6,000,000 (instead of over \$9.0 million) with no post-judgment interest thereon.

The next topic of discussion was with regards to the outcomes of the 4th FSM Constitutional Convention. Mindful that there are eight (8) proposed amendments to the Nation's Constitution that will be up for citizens to vote either in favor of, or in opposition to, the President reported to the Committee that he will soon be signing an Executive Order for the creation of a Public Awareness & Education Task Force, which will be assigned the duty of informing the Nation's citizens at home and abroad on the eight proposals and what those proposals would do.

The next topic of discussion was with respect to the President's supplemental budget request. In this regard, the President solicited the Congress' support for funding to support the FSM Telecommunications Cable Corporation (frequently referred to as the Open Access Entity to distinguish it from the similarly named FSM Telecommunications Corporation). Additionally, the President solicited Congress' support for funding to provide for the United Nations' Multi-Country Office's land lease; funding for the proposed FSM Embassy to be based in Geneva, Switzerland; and the Nation's membership fees for relevant international organizations, such as the Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The next topic of discussion was with regards to the President's proposed legislation on marine spatial planning. The President noted that marine spatial planning is purpose-agnostic, and that it is not an end to itself but, rather, a practical way to create and establish a more rational use of marine space, and the interactions among its uses, so as to balance demands for development with the need to protect the environment, and to deliver social and economic outcomes

in a manner that is both planned and public.

The next topic of discussion was with regards to grants from donor partners. In order for the FSM Government to formally accept any financial assistance from a donor partner, it is a requirement that the Congress pass a resolution accepting the assistance. In this regard, the President solicited the Congress' support to consider passing a resolution to accept assistance from the World Bank for the purpose of funding the FSM Skills & Employability Enhancement (SEE) Project, which would aim to review and update the National Career & Technical Education Curriculum Standards & Benchmarks, provide performance grants to designated high schools to upgrade and purchase relevant equipment and materials to strengthen hands-on learning opportunities, and to create a flagship vocational learning center.

The last topic of conversation on the President's agenda was regarding nominations for various boards. In this respect, the President noted that his nomination of Mr. Samson Pretrick to serve on the MiCare Board, as a representative of the FSM Government, remains pending with Congress for their consideration. Additionally, the President noted that he will be transmitting the nomination for Dr. Marcelle Gallen, who is Pohnpei State Government's proposed representative for the MiCare Board. President Panuelo noted that, at present, only Lieutenant Governor Arthy G. Nena from

Kosrae, and Mr. Kind Kanto from Chuuk, are active on the MiCare Board, and that it is in the FSM's national interest that the Board be fully constituted again as soon as practicable.

After the President spoke on his agenda, he received requests from Senator Perman on behalf of the Congress. Senator Perman asked President Panuelo if he could provide updates on

the Nation's revenue projections and carryover figures; for an update on the Pharmaceutical Unit, which is required through the FSM Safe Pharmaceutical Act of 2022 to be established by October 1st; for an update on Caroline Islands Air's current status, including its current and forthcoming aircraft assets and how such assets may be used for domestic flights within the FSM; and to solicit the President's support in encouraging the U.S. Government to consider allowing FSM citizens who are blacklisted from travel to the U.S. to be allowed to briefly transit in the U.S. Territory of Guam when said citizens are traveling between the State of Yap and the other States of the FSM.

In response to Senator Perman's requests, President Panuelo advised that he has assigned the Department of Finance & Administration to provide a report on revenue including the specifics behind any and all carryover revenue between fiscal years; that the Department of Foreign Affairs has been assigned to meet with the U.S. Embassy regarding the transiting of persons traveling between the FSM's States; that the Department of Health & Social Affairs will provide a report on its work to implement the FSM Safe Pharmaceuticals Act; and that he will work with the Department of Transportation, Communication, & Infrastructure, as well as Caroline Islands Air, to provide an update report to be transmitted soonest.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, with President Panuelo emphasizing the Executive Branch's continued and sincerest appreciation to the Legislative Branch for their service to the Nation and its citizens.



President Panuelo amends regulations for Healthy Border Protection Act; masks encouraged, not mandated; five days restricted movement upon arrival removed for Yap, Kosrae, & Pohnpei

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—His Excellency David W. Panuelo—President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—has signed amendments to the regulations guiding Public Law 22-134 i.e. the Healthy Border Protection Act.

The President's mandate that all persons wear masks when in public places is now removed. The wearing of masks in public places nation-wide remain encouraged—but are no longer required. Individual State Governments retain the right and power to implement (or not implement) mask mandates within their jurisdiction. It is the opinion of the FSM Government that mask mandates in the States of Yap and Chuuk may presently hold more value at present than in the States of Pohnpei and Kosrae, as Yap

is undergoing rapid community spread and Chuuk State will eventually receive rapid community spread, whereas Pohnpei and Kosrae have returned to relative normalcy. This is ultimately why the nation-wide mask mandate has been removed.

The President's mandate that all persons arriving into the FSM entertain a period of five-days of restricted movement (i.e. staying within the confines of their home or hotel unless necessary to procure supplies) remains only for states that do not have community transmission of COVID-19. The immediate effect is that persons traveling to the States of Yap, Pohnpei, and Kosrae have no restrictions on their movement upon arrival into the country. Persons traveling to the State of Chuuk, which remains COVID-19 free, can still expect to undergo state-

mandated quarantine, potentially at their own expense. Restrictions on the limit of disembarking passengers and mandates on quarantine for the State of Chuuk are scheduled to expire on November 1st, 2022, at which point in time—under the current regulations—persons arriving in Chuuk will be required to undergo five days of restricted movement.

The mandate for all persons to be fully vaccinated in order to enter the FSM remains in full effect, as this is an essential element of the Public Law; the Executive Branch cannot lawfully remove this requirement. However, there are useful amendments to the regulations that should result in the ease of travel to the FSM.

While persons must be fully vaccinated with all primary doses of their

COVID-19 vaccine (e.g. one dose for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, two doses for the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, etc.), booster doses are only required for travel to the FSM if a person has exceeded five months following completion of their primary vaccine, or four months since their first booster dose. In other words, a person who hypothetically receives their last primary dose of a COVID-19 vaccine today can travel to the FSM tomorrow; a person who received their last primary dose of a COVID-19 vaccine several months ago, however, may still be required to obtain their booster dose prior to travel to the FSM.

The amended regulations can be found here: https://gov.fm/files/Amended_Regulations_Healthy_Border_Protection_Act_Sept_2022.pdf

Interior's Office of Insular Affairs announces additional \$1.3 Million in final TAP awards, closes out FY2022 year

U.S. Department of the Interior

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) announces \$1,351,884 in final awards to be funded under the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) and has closed its review and grant award process for fiscal year 2022 TAP grants.

"This final batch of funding will support food security through mangrove crab farming, water security, student development, utilities management, and more," said Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor. "These are important priorities in the Insular Areas that help promote resiliency and well-being in their respective communities."

The TAP awards announced are as follows:

American Samoa

- \$200,000 – American Samoa Power Authority for a Water System Modeling Professional
- Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
- \$527,840 – Northern Marianas

College to leverage aquaculture technology for a Sustainable and Economically Viable Mangrove Crab Farming Industry

- \$93,544 to the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation for the Automated Water Read, Supply, and Leak Detection System Pilot Project

Guam

- \$299,291 – Guam Department of Labor for an Unemployment Feasibility Study
- \$287,792 – University of Guam to strengthen campus security
- \$123,672 – Guam Waterworks Authority for financial management training

Federated States of Micronesia

- \$127,000 in supplemental funding to the Habel Outer Island Education Fund to continue Habel Robotics League in the Federated States of Micronesia
- \$35,000 to the Pohnpei Department of Land Commission to conduct a feasibility study on re-establishment of the Pohnpei State Museum.

Republic of the Marshall Islands

- \$468,500 Enewetak/Ujelang Atoll Local Government will purchase heavy equipment, a wheel loader, backhoe loader, and dump truck to assist in the removal of the *Leucaena leucocephala*, particularly the islands of Enewetak, Japtan and Medren.
- \$100,000 Lib Island to provide for housing in support of recruiting and retaining a long-term health professional for the Lib Island community within Kwajalein Atoll.

OIA's TAP Division has completed its final reviews of applications and recommendations for fiscal year 2022 Technical Assistance Program, Maintenance Assistance Program, and Coral Reef and Natural Resources Initiative grant awards. Applications have been reviewed by OIA with support from other federal agencies when applicable. Award decisions are based on a variety of factors, including the merit review factors provided in the grant announcement on www.grants.gov under CFDA #15.875, recommendations from the leadership from each of the Insular Areas, and letters of support for projects. Consideration is also given to equity

and fairness across all the island areas.

Grant applicants and proposals that have not been selected for funding will receive final notification through the grants.gov system once the entire application and award process has been finalized and the fiscal year has been closed out on September 30, 2022.

The Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs and the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) carry out the Secretary of the Interior's responsibilities for the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Additionally, OIA administers and oversees federal assistance under the Compacts of Free Association to the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. OIA also administers a discretionary Technical Assistance Program for all the insular areas. Find information about OIA and its work on www.doi.gov/oia, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

U.S. Department of the Interior’s Office of Insular Affairs announces nearly \$37 Million in Compact funding to help strengthen Republic of the Marshall Islands communities

U.S. Department of the Interior

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Interior’s Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) today announced that Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor has been appointed the new Chair of the Joint Economic Management and Financial Accountability Committee (JEMFAC). As Chair, Assistant Secretary Cantor convened the Committee for their annual meeting on August 30, 2022. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Committee allocated \$36,968,240 in Compact of Free Association Section 211 grant assistance for fiscal year (FY) 2023 for the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI).

“Funding through the Compacts of Free Association has provided important, reliable support for both the health and education sectors in the RMI, just as the Compacts themselves have provided a solid foundation for democratic governance, peace and security in the larger Indo-Pacific region,” said Assistant Secretary Cantor. “I am honored to serve as the JEMFAC Chair, as we continue to

move forward the important partnership between the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the American people.”

The FY2023 Compact of Free Association Section 211 grant assistance for the Republic of the Marshall Islands was allocated for government operations, infrastructure and disaster assistance as follows:

- \$ 11,090,526 Infrastructure
- \$ 9,121,057 Education
- \$6,880,797 Health
- \$2,845,850 Ebeye Special Needs - Education
- \$ 2,369,620 Ebeye Special Needs - Health
- \$1,590,990 Ebeye Special Needs - Capital
- \$2,535,740 Kwajalein Impact Fund
- \$ 266,740 Kwajalein Environmental Fund
- \$266,920 Disaster Assistance Emergency Fund
- \$ 36,968,240 Compact of Free Association Section 211 Grant Assistance**

The JEMFAC further agreed that a

contribution of \$500,000 from the Supplemental Education Grant and \$214,100 from the Education Sector Grant would be made available for use in conjunction with a contribution of \$2,313,796 from the RMI Government General Fund to the RMI Public School System’s School Lunch Program.

On August 29, 2022, Secretary Deb Haaland appointed Assistant Secretary Cantor to serve as Chair of the JEMFAC with the Republic of the Marshall Islands. As provided for under the Compact of Free Association, as amended, (P.L. 108-188), the JEMFAC is a bilateral committee consisting of officials from the Governments of the United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands who are responsible for strengthening management and accountability regarding assistance provided under the Compact, as amended, and to promote the effective use of funding provided.

The JEMFAC comprises the following five members: Chair Carmen G. Cantor (U.S. Department of the Interior); Minister Kitlang Kabua (RMI Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade); Minister

Brenson Wase (RMI Minister of Finance); Dr. Richard Brostrom (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention); and Mr. Taylor Ruggles (U.S. State Department).

Certain provisions of the Compact of Free Association agreement between the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the United States are set to expire in 2023. Negotiations between the two governments are ongoing.

The Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs and the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) carry out the Secretary of the Interior’s responsibilities for the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Additionally, OIA administers and oversees federal assistance under the Compacts of Free Association to the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. OIA also administers a discretionary Technical Assistance Program for all the Insular Areas.

U.S. Department of the Interior’s Office of Insular Affairs announces \$82.5 Million in Compact funding to help strengthen FSM communities

U.S. Department of the Interior

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Interior’s Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) today announced that Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor has been appointed the new Chair of the Joint Economic Management Committee (JEMCO). As Chair, Assistant Secretary Cantor convened the JEMCO for their annual meeting on August 30, 2022. At the conclusion of the meeting, JEMCO allocated \$82,538,423 in Compact of Free Association (Compact) Section 211 grant assistance for fiscal year (FY) 2023 for the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

“Funding through the Compacts of Free Association has provided important, reliable support for both the health and education sectors in the FSM, just as the

Compacts themselves have provided a solid foundation for democratic governance, peace and security in the larger Indo-Pacific region,” said Assistant Secretary Cantor. “I am honored to serve as the JEMCO Chair, as we continue to move forward the important partnership between the Micronesian and the American people.”

The FY2023 Compact of Free Association Section 211 grant assistance for the Federated States of Micronesia was allocated for government operations and infrastructure as follows:

- \$28,290,115 Education
- \$ 25,372,332 Health
- \$24,983,712 Infrastructure
- \$1,636,282 Enhanced Reporting and Accountability
- \$1,382,982 Public Sector Capacity Building

- \$ 797,000 Environment
- \$ 76,000 Private Sector Development
- \$82,538,423 Compact of Free Association Section 211 Grant Assistance**

The JEMCO further authorized the infrastructure sector assistance for the design, engineering and construction of the Tonoas and Uman Health Centers in Chuuk State.

On August 29, 2022, Secretary Deb Haaland appointed Assistant Secretary Cantor to serve as Chair of the JEMCO with the Federated States of Micronesia. As provided for under the Compact of Free Association, as amended, (P.L. 108-188), the JEMCO is a bilateral committee consisting of officials from the Governments of the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia

who are responsible for strengthening management and accountability regarding assistance provided under the Compact, as amended, and to promote the effective use of funding provided.

The JEMCO comprises the following five members: Chair Carmen G. Cantor (U.S. Department of the Interior); Mr. Lorin Robert (FSM President’s Office); Mr. Leo A. Falcam (FSM Chief Compact Negotiator); Dr. Richard Brostrom (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention); and Mr. Taylor Ruggles (U.S. State Department).

Certain provisions of the Compact of Free Association agreement between the Federated States of Micronesia and the United States are set to expire in 2023. Negotiations between the two governments are ongoing.

FSM swimmers compete in international events

FSM Swimming Association

September 12, 2022

FSM—It has been a busy summer for FSM Swimming. In addition to FSM's participation in the FINA World Aquatics Championships earlier this summer, two young athletes represented the FSM at the Junior Pan Pacific Swimming Championships in Honolulu, Hawaii, August 24-27. This was the first time Micronesia participated in this championship meet,

in Guam since competing in the World Championships in Budapest, swam in the 100 Meter Backstroke, 100 Meter Freestyle, and 50 Meter Freestyle, achieving a personal best time in each event. While making a solid showing in the two 100 Meter events, it was the 50 Meter Freestyle that saw a significant drop in time, more than half a second faster than his time earlier in the summer in Budapest. Eperiam, having trained in the US mainland through the summer, made his international swimming debut at this event and firmly established himself as a solid sprinter. His events were the 100 Meter Backstroke, 100 Meter Butterfly, and 50 Meter Freestyle, achieving a personal best time in each. His highlight swim was also the 50 Meter Freestyle, where he dropped an astounding 2.86 seconds off his fastest time from earlier in the season.

After Junior Pan Pacs, Kyler Kihleng traveled on to Lima, Peru for the FINA World Junior Swimming Championships, which took place from August 30 to September 4. Kihleng entered two events at this competition, the 50 Meter Butterfly and the 100 Meter Freestyle, achieving a personal best in both events and reaching a long-strived goal in the Freestyle event. Pleased

with the results he achieved at this last competition of the season, Kihleng was anxious to return home to Pohnpei after a full summer of competition and training.

FSM Swimming is proud to be able to participate in these Junior events as they give young swimmers aged 14-18 the opportunity to compete on an international level in an extremely competitive environment. The swimmers return home motivated to work harder and proud to have represented their country among so many other nations. FSM Swimming is hoping to acquire more funding in the coming year to send a larger team to these junior events in the future as we work to build the next generation of swimmers in the islands.

How are swimmers selected for these events? Every time an athlete competes in a swimming competition, they receive a FINA ranking based on the time they achieve. FSM Swimming then uses these rankings to select athletes for future competitions. These competitions begin at the local level, including the recent Liberation Day Swimming competition and the upcoming Pohnpei State championship meet, which will be open to all swimmers in Pohnpei.



known to be one of the most competitive international swimming competitions outside of the Olympics and World Championships. Kyler Kihleng, age 17, and Elijah Eperiam, age 15, both from Pohnpei, represented the FSM well. Kihleng, who has been training

known to be one of the most competitive international swimming competitions outside of the Olympics and World Championships. Kyler Kihleng, age 17, and Elijah Eperiam, age 15, both from Pohnpei, represented the FSM well. Kihleng, who has been training

Now that the 2021/2022 international swimming season has come to an end, all eyes are set on the next big international competition, the FINA World Swimming Championships, which will be in Melbourne, Australia this December. FSM Swimming has a goal of raising enough funds to send four athletes to this competition.

You can follow FSM Swimming on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/FSMSwimming/> and view all the videos of each individual swim from the summer competitions.

CocoNES completes two State consultations

Vital FSMPC

September 12, 2022

FSM—The Coconut National Export Strategy (CocoNES) initiative is well underway, having completed the first two of a series of consultations in the respective FSM States. Kosrae stakeholders convened on August 10th at the Nautilus Resort to begin their series of consultation sessions and Pohnpei and National-level stakeholders convened on August 31st at the Vital Conference Hall to commence their own consultation series.

Both of these consultations, as with the sessions to be held in Chuuk and Yap in the coming weeks, have begun discussions with stakeholders on what to expect in the development work of the CocoNES. The participants were presented data and information that the ITC and local focal points have compiled to highlight what the current coconut production status is

in the FSM and where the FSM could be with a comprehensive and feasible export strategy. As the first subsector export strategy in the FSM, the input and feedback of stakeholders is critical, to help inform a strategy that works for everyone in the FSM, inclusive of the different capacities and needs unique to each State. FSM R&D Assistant Secretary Yatilman noted in his opening remarks, 'the FSM's coconut sector has a huge potential to develop into one of the largest export centers of the country, which would help secure income for farmers while also contributing to the

FSMs economic stability.'

The stakeholder participants, which included representatives from the public and private sectors as well as the local communities, were able to highlight the challenges they experience or observe with the local coconut industry and trying to break into the export business. A stakeholder in Kosrae noted that right now most businesses prioritize the local demand, as it is too costly to maintain a sustainable coconut products export business. There was also collective agreement in Kosrae, which was also



highlighted as a key challenge with Pohnpei stakeholders, to the disinterest in being either a coconut supplier or a coconut processor/vendor, as they feel the price that it yields, does not compare to the work that's put in or the price yield of other competing local products. This is just one of the challenges highlighted during discussions that will help ITC and the CocoNES develop a feasible strategy document.

Chuuk and Yap state have yet to start their own consultations, due to various concerns, but will likely be scheduled within the next few weeks.

Vital FSMPC serves as the CocoNES Secretariat and endeavors to keep the public informed on key activities and updates on social media on the following pages:

Facebook: @VitalEnergyMicronesia
Twitter: @VitalEnergy2
LinkedIn: Vital Energy Micronesia
You can also follow #FSMCocoNES

Pohnpei Police Academy graduates 25 officers

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

September 9, 2022

Pohnpei—This afternoon, Pohnpei’s Department of Public Safety graduated 25 from the Police Academy during a ceremony at the Pohnpei Island Centrals School (PICS) Cafeteria. According to Detective Lieutenant Bronson Martin, Academy Commander, the rigorous Seventh Police Academy began with 30 cadets on May 30 at the Kolonia Elementary School and was conducted over the course of 14 weeks. The participants came from the Pohnpei Department of Public Safety, and local municipal governments including Pingelap, Sapwuaifik, Nukuro, and Kanpingamarangi along with the six municipalities on Pohnpei proper.

The Academy covered policing foundations, traffic offenses, property crime, crime against persons, and evidence management. It also included a great deal of physical training. DPS Director Patrick Carl said that one of the challenging training aspects was the use of pepper spray for practical application.

As covered in the previous issue of The Kaselehlie Press, for the first time, this academy included the Officers’ Health and Wellness Program, a chance for family members to have an overview of the program in order to know how they could be a support to the officers.

Acting Chief Justice Mayceleen D. Anson swore in the graduates and family members pinned on the new badges for the officers. Lt. Martin congratulated the graduates for their hard work and dedication over the 14-week academy. Director Patrick Carl, on behalf of Governor Oliver, expressed appreciation for their commitment and advised them to remember the virtues of respect, responsibility and honesty as they continue in their careers. He reminded the graduates that they are public servants.

“They are already inserted in the patrol, traffic sections and Division of Corrections roster,” Director Carl told the Governor in an email. “They will be assigned to an FTO Officer (Police Officer III) during the probationary

period. The probationary period will determine if they will move on to become permanent employees or separated during the probation period.”

The successful graduates were:

JD Edmund (Nett District Police); Venister Tilfas (Department of Public Safety); Ioanis Saimon Jr. (Department of Public Safety); Jade Hadley (Nett District Police); Morgan Handy (Pingelap Municipal Police); Richello Torres (Department of Public Safety); Tyson Iriarte (U Municipal Police); Andrea Anton (Department of Public Safety); Bradley Kohper (Sokehs Municipal Police); Nelsin Mack (Kolonia Town Police); Jatney Pehmot (Department of Public Safety); Shania Albert (Department of Public Safety); Mackson Alfons (Kitti Municipal Police); Peter Luhk (Madolenihmw Municipal Police); Darson Noah (Department of Public Safety); Delwin Nason (Kolonia Town Police); Alivia Amida (Department of Public Safety); Hudson Panuel

(Sapuahfik Municipal Police); Kenray Marino (Department of Public Safety); Adaring Sakai (Department of Public Safety); Albert Cornelios (Pingelap Municipal Police); Gary Barnabas (Department of Public Safety); Courtney Paul (Department of Public Safety); D-More Henly (Department of Public Safety); Elscino Elias (Madolenihmw Municipal Police)

Police Academy Instructors were:

Det. Lt. Bronson Martin - Police Academy Commander, DPS; Hilario Bermanis Jr. - Deputy Commander, DPS; Sgt. Ketson Kapiriel - First Sergeant, DPS; Sgt. Jemris Noket - Tactical Officer, DPS; Det. Brenson Rodriguez - Tactical Officer, DPS; Det. Steward Silbanuz - Tactical Officer, DPS; PO Brian Henly - Tactical Officer, Kitti Municipal Police

Pohnpei Governor Reed Oliver attended the ceremony as did Speaker Marvin T. Yamaguchi, Senator Jayson A. Walter, Hon. Rofino Primo Chief Minister of U, Hon. Michael Lieman, Chief Magistrate of Sokehs, Hon. Ricky Mudong, Keriau en Meninkeder Lapalap.



All photos courtesy of Pohnpei Enginkehlap