

FSM launches national skills certification testing to recognize workers' practical abilities

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

October 15, 2026

Pohnpei, FSM — The Federated States of Micronesia officially opened its first round of testing under the newly established FSM Skills Certification Unit (SCU) during a ceremony at the Pohnpei Governor's conference room, introducing a national system intended to assess and certify workers' practical abilities according to internationally recognized occupational standards.

President Wesley W. Simina, Pohnpei Governor Stevenson A. Joseph, College of Micronesia-FSM President Dr. Theresa Koroivulaono, and SCU Director Xavier Yarofmal

addressed the gathering, which included FSM Cabinet members, government officials, educators, technical specialists, and COM-FSM students preparing to participate in the first round of testing.



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National audit finds \$126,000 in Kosrae public projects unaccounted for and questions Congressional involvement

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

October 19, 2026

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—The FSM Office of the National Public Auditor has identified more than \$126,000 in public projects in Kosrae that government officials could not adequately account for, along with procurement practices involving the Kosrae Congressional Delegation Office that auditors said violated an FSM Supreme Court ruling restricting Congressional involvement in the implementation of public projects.

The findings appear in Report No. 2026-12, dated September 30, 2026, which examined public projects

funded through FSM Congress appropriations for Kosrae between October 1, 2022, and March 31, 2025.

The inspection covered \$4.67 million in expenditures, of which auditors selected approximately \$950,000 for detailed testing. The report identified \$126,234.59 in equipment and other public project purchases that could not be satisfactorily verified.

Among the questioned items were fishing boats, outboard motors, cellular phones, a laptop computer, solar streetlights, a riding mower, and two trucks.

The auditors did not conclude that all of the equipment had been stolen or

that the entire amount represented a financial loss. Rather, they found that officials responsible for the projects could not produce sufficient evidence to establish that the items had been delivered to their intended recipients or otherwise properly accounted for.

In several instances, people identified in government disbursement records as beneficiaries told inspectors that they had never received the equipment.

The report listed six 19-foot fiberglass boats among the questioned purchases. According to the auditors, beneficiaries identified in the records said they had not received the boats. Another intended recipient reported not receiving a 40-horsepower

outboard engine.

Five people listed as recipients of cellular phones said they had never received them. Another beneficiary reported not receiving a laptop computer.

The auditors also questioned \$23,400 in solar streetlights. During the inspection, three municipal governments reported receiving none of the equipment, while one municipality confirmed receiving 30 lights. Of those, five had been installed at Kosrae Airport, and the remaining 25 were in storage.

In Utwe Municipality, inspectors

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Gouland questions election database work; Lambert rejects interference allegations

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlle Press

October 15, 2026

Palikir, Pohnpei - Senator Victor Gouland has demanded a halt to work on Chuuk's election database, alleging insufficient transparency and political bias ahead of the March 2027 congressional election. National Election Director Ausen T. Lambert rejected the allegations, describing an effort to improve election equipment and resolve problems with an aging voter registration system.

The dispute is set out in Gouland's October 2 letter to Lambert and the director's October 6 response, which includes a technical activities report and an advance email from Mendez to Chuuk's national election commissioner.

Gouland wrote that he and others in Chuuk had met a man identified as "Juan," who said he was assigned by the National Election Office to update voter master lists and other election information.

The senator argued that work involving election data required public notice and

stronger oversight. He asked Lambert to stop the database update, provide secured copies of existing voter lists to opposing candidates and appropriate oversight agencies, and allow representatives of national candidates to observe the work before it continued.

Lambert identified the consultant as Mendez of Computer Networks International, whom he said has provided computer support to the election office since the original registration system was donated by the Australian Electoral Commission in 2000. He also disputed the reported encounter, saying Mendez had told him he had never met or spoken with Gouland.

Mendez's attached technical report describes establishing a local office network, connecting five computers, repairing and upgrading two computers, configuring shared printing, installing a staff attendance device and providing battery backup protection.

His September 21 email notifying Chuuk National Election Commissioner Frita Jerry Irons of the planned visit also listed printer and network work, an attendance system, voter identification equipment and other

technical needs. Neither the email nor the activities report describes Mendez adding or deleting voters or correcting their registration records.

Lambert's covering letter discusses both the technical visit and a broader transition to replacement voter registration software. He said the old system had become obsolete and developed problems when registered-voter information was exchanged between national and state election offices, sometimes creating duplicate names.

According to Lambert, two Australian Electoral Commission specialists visited in November 2024, trained election personnel and helped them manually eliminate duplicate entries before the March 2025 congressional election.

The specialists returned in July 2025 to install the replacement system, GVRs Hybrid, and provide further training, he wrote.

Some voter records did not automatically transfer from the old system into the replacement. Lambert said election personnel have been comparing printed lists from both systems and manually entering registered

voters missing from the new database.

He said the other three states had completed that work and that his office was helping Chuuk finish before the March 2, 2027 congressional election.

The Australian Electoral Commission's 2024-25 annual report confirms that GVRs Hybrid was released in June 2025. It describes duplicate detection, improved security and the ability to operate without an internet connection among its features. That provides background on the software, but does not independently establish how individual voter records have been handled in Chuuk.

Gouland's concerns extended beyond the technical assignment. He accused the National Election Office of supporting the President's electoral interests and cited the disqualification of prospective candidates on recommendations from the Attorney General. His letter did not name those candidates or include records of the decisions.

Gouland also asserted that proceeding without his requested safeguards would make the incumbent President automatically ineligible for the March 2027 election on grounds of "election tampering and fraud". The letter did not cite a legal provision or ruling supporting that assertion.

Lambert denied political interference.

"There has not been a single point in time when the President commanded me to do anything at all," he wrote.

He said he performed his duties independently according to law and sometimes sought legal assistance from the Department of Justice.

The President was traveling and was unavailable for comment by the time the documents came to the newspaper's attention.

Lambert offered to provide Gouland with printouts from both registration systems after the update was completed, saying the comparison would demonstrate his office's efforts to protect the integrity of the election process.

That offer differed from Gouland's request for secured copies before further work proceeded. Lambert's response did not expressly agree to suspend the work or provide candidate representatives with an opportunity to observe it.



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Pohnpei Legislature overrides Governor's line-item vetoes of FY2027 budget

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

October 19, 2026

Pohnpei — The Pohnpei State Legislature has overridden all of Governor Stevenson Joseph's line-item vetoes of the state's fiscal year 2027 budget, restoring appropriations for the Legislature, Judiciary, and Office of the Public Auditor that the Governor had attempted to remove.

The Legislature confirmed the overrides to The Kaselehlie Press. The action restores the appropriations affected by the vetoes to the Comprehensive Budget Act, State Law No. 11L-139-26, which Governor Joseph signed into law earlier this month.

Governor Joseph signed Legislative Bill No. 400-26, L.D.1, exercising line-item veto authority over increases the Legislature had added to the Executive Branch's original budget proposal.

According to an October 7 press release from the Pohnpei Governor's Office, the Governor vetoed additional appropriations for the Pohnpei Supreme Court, Pohnpei State Legislature, and Pohnpei State Public Auditor.

The Governor's Office said those

increases had not been included in the administration's original budget submission and that the vetoes would return the affected amounts to the state's unassigned fund balance.

Joseph made exceptions for funding intended to support traditional leaders, known as Mwoalen Wahu, and the "All For Us" conference in Chuuk.

The Governor's decision followed a prolonged budget process that continued into the final hours of the state's fiscal year.

According to the Governor's Office, the Executive Branch submitted its proposed FY2027 budget in February, but the Legislature did not return the approved measure until approximately 10 p.m. on September 30, just two hours before the beginning of the new fiscal year.

The delay created uncertainty over continued funding for government operations.

Before the Legislature completed its budget deliberations, Acting Governor Herolyn S. Movick submitted a proposed continuing resolution and an emergency statement intended to prevent interruptions in government

services.

The Governor's Office said the Legislature did not endorse those measures before passing the budget.

Governor Joseph subsequently signed the budget while objecting to certain legislative changes, including the elimination of personnel positions in the Governor's Office and the Attorney General's Office.

Although he opposed those staffing reductions, Joseph allowed them to remain in the enacted budget.

"As we look toward the certainty of an El Niño event and the emergencies that may accompany it, it is imperative that our services and staffing are adequate to serve the people of Pohnpei," Joseph said in the October 7 release.

"While I have left the defunding of these positions as approved to allow the budget to move forward, I do so with the sincere hope that we may work together to restore them."

The Governor's Office said the line-item vetoes were intended to provide an opportunity for further discussions between the Executive Branch and Legislature about spending priorities

and the restoration of essential government positions.

Joseph also submitted two proposed bills intended to provide funding for the declared state of emergency and preparations for a possible drought.

The Legislature's subsequent decision to override all of the Governor's line-item vetoes means that the additional appropriations he rejected will remain part of the state's FY2027 budget.

However, the override does not, by itself, restore the personnel positions that Joseph said the Legislature had eliminated. Those reductions were not among the provisions he vetoed.

Although the Legislature confirmed that it overrode all of the Governor's line-item vetoes, The Kaselehlie Press has not received the official override records or an explanation of the Legislature's decision.

The budget dispute comes as the state faces concerns about government operations, emergency preparedness, and the availability of funding for essential services during the new fiscal year.

FSM calls for greater role for women in leadership and climate action

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

October 6, 2026

NEW YORK — The Federated States of Micronesia has called for women's leadership to be fully included in climate action and disaster preparedness, while acknowledging continuing barriers to equality at home and abroad.

In an October 6 statement to the United Nations General Assembly's Third Committee, the FSM delegation identified gender-based violence, unequal economic opportunities and barriers to decision-making as challenges affecting women and girls, including in Micronesia.

The statement, released by the FSM Permanent Mission to the UN, reaffirmed the country's commitment

to gender equality and emphasized women's contributions to education, healthcare, public service, community development, environmental protection and peacebuilding.

The delegation also highlighted the traditional foundations of women's leadership in Micronesian communities.

Women have long served as peacemakers and mediators, helping resolve disputes and maintain community harmony, the statement said. In several FSM states, matrilineal customs continue to influence traditional governance and social structures, including women's stewardship of land.

"Through these traditions, women exercise stewardship over land, one of our most important social, cultural, and economic assets," the delegation stated.

Despite those longstanding roles, the statement acknowledged that significant obstacles remain to women's full participation in society.

Climate change presents particular challenges, the delegation said, calling for women's voices, knowledge and leadership to be incorporated into efforts to reduce disaster risks and strengthen community resilience.

The FSM also urged stronger international cooperation and adequate financing to support national efforts toward equality. It identified sustained investment in education, healthcare, training and economic empowerment as priorities.

As countries work toward the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable



Development, the delegation called for renewed efforts to ensure women and girls are included in that progress.

The statement described the advancement of women as both a matter of human rights and a requirement for peaceful, prosperous and resilient societies. It concluded by reaffirming the FSM's commitment to working with other UN member states and partners to advance women's rights and leadership.

...Skills certification

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The initial assessments are scheduled for October 19 through 23, with approximately 45 college graduates expected to participate in five occupational categories.

The certification system is designed to provide workers with formal recognition of their demonstrated skills, whether those abilities were acquired through formal education, workplace experience, or other means. The objective is to improve employment opportunities, give employers greater confidence in workers' qualifications, and make FSM occupational certifications more widely recognized at home and abroad.

In his opening presentation, SCU Director Xavier Yarofmal explained that the unit was established through the World Bank-financed Skills and Employability Enhancement Project (SEE Project), implemented by the FSM National Department of Education in partnership with the Department of Resources and Development.

The unit currently operates under the Department of Resources and Development and received accreditation in May 2026 from the National Accreditation Center under ISO/IEC 17024:2012, an international standard governing organization that certifies individuals' professional competencies.

Yarofmal said the certification system is intended to ensure that workers' skills are recognized, credible, aligned with labor market requirements, and comparable to international standards.

The first five occupational certification categories are PC Repair and Support Technician, Residential Electrician, HVAC Technician specializing in refrigeration and air conditioning, Consumer Electronics Service Technician, and Telecommunications Technician covering fiber-optic and wireless technologies.

Four additional categories will be introduced during subsequent rounds of pilot testing: Tourism and Hospitality Worker, Agriculture Worker, Bookkeeping, and Skilled Construction



Worker.

Altogether, the program plans to test nine occupational certification schemes over three rounds.

Yarofmal said the first assessments will involve faculty members from COM-FSM's Career and Technical Education Center and National Campus, who will serve as assessors.

President Simina emphasized that skills certification serves a different purpose from traditional academic qualifications.

"An academic qualification generally recognizes the successful completion of a course or program of study," he said. "Skills certification serves a different complementary purpose."

He explained that certification verifies whether individuals can demonstrate the competencies required to perform particular jobs, regardless of how they acquired those skills.

"A credible skills certificate must therefore reflect what workers can actually do, not simply what they have studied," Simina said.

The President said the initial testing will also help determine whether the system's occupational standards, assessment procedures, quality assurance measures, and administrative arrangements are effective or require improvement.

He stressed that the participation of employers and experienced industry professionals will be essential to the system's long-term credibility.

Employers, he said, should help develop occupational standards, evaluate



assessment procedures, and eventually recognize certifications when making hiring and promotion decisions.

"When certification has real value in the workplace, more people will be motivated to have their skills assessed," he said.

Simina also connected the initiative to concerns about youth unemployment. During a recent community outreach meeting with FSM citizens in Hawaii, he said, participants asked what the national government was doing to address the problem.

"This initiative is one of such answers," he said.

He called for continued cooperation among national and state governments, COM-FSM, and private employers to ensure that the certification system survives beyond the World Bank-



financed project's completion.

"Our goal is to provide a trusted national service that continues to serve our people long after this project ends," Simina said.

Governor Joseph offered a candid account of his initial reaction to the initiative, saying he had questioned whether it would duplicate other workforce development programs already operating in the FSM.

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FSM urges financing reforms to address small island vulnerabilities



By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

October 8, 2026

NEW YORK — The Federated States of Micronesia has called for changes to international development financing, arguing that income-based measures alone fail to reflect the climate risks, geographic isolation and economic vulnerabilities facing small island nations.

In an October 8 statement to the United Nations General Assembly's Second Committee, the FSM delegation urged international financial institutions to better account for those challenges and expand access to concessional and climate finance.

The statement, released by the FSM Permanent Mission to the UN, addressed financing sustainable development in a changing global economy. Micronesia aligned itself with the position of the Alliance of Small Island States.

"Traditional income-based criteria alone do not capture the realities we face, including climate risks, remoteness, and exposure to external shocks," the delegation stated.

The FSM reaffirmed its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals but said progress is increasingly challenged by climate change, economic shocks, isolation and limited access to affordable financing.

Closing that financing gap is essential to accelerating development, the delegation said. It called for funding mechanisms that are accessible, predictable and responsive to vulnerable countries' needs.

The statement identified climate resilience, renewable energy, food security, sustainable fisheries and ocean-based economies as priorities for investment.

For Pacific island countries, the delegation said, ocean-based development offers opportunities to strengthen economies

while protecting the marine resources that communities depend upon.

International assistance must also support domestic efforts to improve governance, build local capacity and encourage sustainable economic growth, the statement said.

With the 2030 deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals approaching, the FSM urged countries to turn commitments into implementation through stronger cooperation and greater investment in vulnerable nations.

The delegation concluded by expressing Micronesia's readiness to work with international partners toward a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable future.

...Skills certification (2)

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"When I heard that it was related to skills, in my mind I'm saying, here we go again," Joseph said, recalling his first discussions with the SCU director.

He said a subsequent explanation convinced him that the certification system was not simply another overlapping program but an important addition to existing skills training efforts.

Joseph urged those responsible for the initiative to ensure that it becomes a lasting part of the FSM's education and workforce development system rather than disappearing when external financing ends.

"Let us not treat this as just another program, another project," he said.

He expressed hope that the initiative could eventually become a permanent part of the education system.

Joseph also called for greater recognition of students whose strengths lie in practical work rather than conventional classroom learning.

He said educators should recognize that students have different abilities and help them pursue educational and career

paths suited to those strengths.

"While we're teaching our children math, English, literature, and all these core subjects that we've all gone through the education system, let us teach them life skills," he said.

The Governor also addressed the increasing use of artificial intelligence, describing it as both a useful tool and a potential danger if people become overly dependent on it.

"Machines are supposed to be doing what humans tell them. Not machines telling humans what to do," Joseph said.

COM-FSM President Dr. Theresa Koroivulaono welcomed the certification initiative as an extension of the College's existing commitment to technical education and workforce preparation.

She said the College's Career and Technical Education Center provides certificate and degree programs, customized training, and continuing education designed to meet community and workplace needs.

The certification initiative, she explained, will help connect the College's training programs with clearly defined occupational standards and identify areas where workers require additional instruction.

Koroivulaono also announced that she had asked the Dean of the Career and Technical Education Center to reactivate the College's Industry Advisory

Committee, which previously brought together private-sector representatives, government officials, and community members to participate in program evaluation and development.

She said closer cooperation with employers would help ensure that the College's programs respond to actual workforce requirements.

As examples of current technical training activities, Koroivulaono said 60 FSM Telecommunications Corporation technicians from all four states have been participating in a telecommunications training program since the summer of 2026. Participants are expected to earn certifications in several technical and workplace safety areas upon completing their training.

She also described a five-day training program involving 24 participants from Pohnpei and Chuuk who are learning to use QGIS geographic information system software with instruction provided by a University of Guam specialist.

Koroivulaono said the College is also experimenting with artificial intelligence in its learning management system, including a pilot application intended to provide students with immediate feedback on assignments. She said COM-FSM adopted an AI policy in August 2025.

Turning to the broader employment situation, she said the FSM and other Pacific Island countries continue to experience shortages of qualified

tradespeople, including electricians, plumbers, carpenters, and construction workers.

She also acknowledged that wage differences contribute to the movement of skilled workers overseas, making it increasingly important for the FSM to strengthen connections between training, certification, and employment.

The College intends to expand apprenticeships, internships, and other practical training opportunities that can lead to permanent employment, she said.

Koroivulaono thanked the faculty members who have taken on additional responsibilities as assessors and examiners for the certification initiative and asked them to stand for recognition during the ceremony.

The first round of testing represents the beginning of a broader effort to establish a national system through which workers can demonstrate their competencies and receive formal certification without relying exclusively on academic credentials.

While the pilot will initially concentrate on five technical occupations, officials said future testing will expand into other fields, with the eventual goal of providing workers throughout the FSM with access to occupational certification.

President Simina formally declared the testing open, setting the stage for the first group of applicants to undergo assessments beginning October 19.

Australian Ambassador Jenny Grant bids farewell to FSM after nearly three years of partnership and friendship

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlle Press

October 16, 2026

Pohnpei, FSM—Australian Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia Jenny Grant hosted a farewell reception at her official residence on October 15, bringing together national and state government officials, members of the diplomatic corps, representatives of international organizations, embassy staff, and friends to celebrate her service and the relationships she developed during her posting.

FSM Vice President Alik B. Alik, speaking on behalf of President Wesley W. Simina and the national government, thanked Grant for her contributions to the relationship between the two countries. Australian Third Secretary Josh Critchley also spoke, offering a personal tribute to her leadership and mentorship.

The evening combined reflections on diplomatic accomplishments with personal memories of Grant's years in Micronesia, including her enthusiasm for exploring the FSM's mountains, forests, and surrounding waters.

Grant opened her remarks by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land and thanking her embassy staff, particularly Deputy Head of Mission Sarah McCarthy, for organizing the reception.

Looking out toward Sokehs Island, she spoke of how much her years in the FSM had meant to her.

She organized her remarks around four accomplishments in the Australia-FSM partnership and four memorable experiences exploring Micronesia's natural environment, explaining that she had chosen four because of the number's cultural significance in Pohnpei.

Her first diplomatic accomplishment was the East Micronesia Cable, developed through cooperation among the FSM, Australia, Japan, and the United States. The project connected Kosrae to the international submarine cable network and provided additional communications

capacity and redundancy for Pohnpei.

Grant said the project's completion meant that every Pacific Island nation was finally connected through submarine communications cables. She thanked FSM leaders, particularly those from Kosrae, for their support.

Her second accomplishment was Australia's family protection program, which works with local organizations and government agencies to address domestic violence.

"There is no more important work for us than keeping our homes safe," she said.

Grant emphasized that preventing domestic violence requires the involvement of men as well as women, including brothers, uncles, and sons. She recognized the work of women's councils, police, hospitals, health departments, and international partners, many of whom provide frontline assistance to victims.

Climate action was her third area of accomplishment. Grant discussed Australian-supported renewable energy initiatives intended to bring electricity to outer island communities, including Etten and Piserach in Chuuk, with additional islands under consideration.

She said reliable electricity would change how residents work, how children study, and how island economies develop. She thanked the government officials, development partners, and embassy staff who had worked to advance the projects.

Her fourth accomplishment was Australia's scholarship and volunteer programs.

Grant said more than 155 FSM

scholars had studied fields including law, medicine, and science through the Australia Awards program, attending institutions in Australia and elsewhere in the Pacific.

She emphasized the importance of scholarship recipients returning home to apply their education and assume leadership roles in their communities.

The Ambassador also recalled President Simina's historic official visit to Australia earlier this year, the first such presidential visit in 36 years, during which the FSM opened its embassy in Canberra.

She said the two countries would celebrate 40 years of diplomatic relations in 2027.

Vice President Alik reinforced many of those themes in his remarks, expressing appreciation for Grant's role in arranging the presidential visit, supporting the new FSM Embassy in Canberra, advancing the East Micronesia Cable, and expanding educational and renewable energy cooperation.

He also thanked Australia for its recent commitment of AUD \$5.6 million to the FSM Contingency Emergency Response Project.

Alik said the establishment of the FSM Embassy in Australia represented more than the opening of another diplomatic mission. It provided a foundation for closer cooperation in maritime security, climate resilience, education, economic development, and regional affairs.

He placed particular emphasis on



educational opportunities, describing education as a major priority for the FSM and thanking Australia for its scholarship support.

The Vice President also referred to the upcoming FSM-Australia cooperation talks, which he said were scheduled for December.

Reflecting on his recent participation in the 81st United Nations General Assembly, Alik said international partnerships were essential for small island nations seeking to address climate change, sustainable development, maritime security, and other common challenges.

"For small island nations like ours, diplomacy must always serve a clear purpose," he said, explaining that international engagement should

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...Grant farewell

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protect national interests, create opportunities for citizens, and ensure Pacific Island countries have a voice in international discussions.

He expressed confidence that cooperation between the FSM and Australia would continue under Grant's successor.

Alik also shared a personal anecdote about Grant's enthusiasm for exploring Micronesia, recalling an occasion when she persuaded traditional leaders to arrange an experience that would not ordinarily have been available to visitors.

The Ambassador's own reflections on her outdoor adventures brought a more personal dimension to the evening.

Grant joked that people sometimes called her the "hiking ambassador," leaving her to wonder whether they thought she spent more time exploring mountain trails than working.

She described paddling through a



mangrove channel near Sokehs Island at midnight during a king tide, with stars overhead, glowing water, and the sounds of mangrove crabs. She also recalled hiking across Yap with a local companion and traveling far offshore with an experienced fisherman who taught her how seabirds could help locate schools of tuna.

Perhaps her most memorable adventure was a 17-hour expedition up Pohnpei's Nahnalaud mountain, which involved steep, muddy slopes and driving rain. She described the experience with

considerable humor, recalling that her hiking companions had objectives of their own beyond simply getting the Ambassador safely to the summit.

The experience, she said, gave her a deeper appreciation of Pohnpeian culture and the relationship between its people and their environment.

As her remarks drew to a close, Grant spoke emotionally about the friendships she had formed in the FSM.

"Everyone in the room, you have been more than friends. You have been family," she said.

She thanked those who had supported her through personal changes and challenges during her posting and told her friends that they would always be welcome in her home in Australia.

Australian Second Secretary Josh Critchley offered the evening's final speech, praising Grant's leadership and the lasting relationships she had established throughout the FSM.

He recalled the presidential visit to Australia and the opening of the FSM Embassy in Canberra as important accomplishments during her tenure.

Critchley also spoke about the personal

significance of serving under Grant during his first overseas diplomatic assignment.

"You only get one first posting," he said, adding that he felt fortunate his had been in the FSM.

He thanked Grant for giving him responsibilities, encouraging him to take on unfamiliar challenges, and helping him develop professionally.

"I know I will leave this posting a more capable, confident and well-rounded officer than when I arrived," he said.

Critchley said the accomplishments of the Australia-FSM partnership rested not only on formal agreements and government initiatives but also on relationships, trust, and sustained engagement.

The evening's formal remarks concluded with a toast by Vice President Alik, who wished Grant and her family well and assured her that she would always have friends in the FSM.

Guests then continued the farewell gathering over a buffet dinner, bringing an informal close to an evening devoted as much to personal friendship as to the diplomatic relationship between Australia and the FSM.

Kosrae public schools remain closed as health officials monitor flu-like illness

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

October 17, 2026

TOFOL, Kosrae — Kosrae's public schools remain closed as health officials continue monitoring an outbreak of influenza-like illness, although the latest situation report indicates that the number of cases is declining.

In response to an inquiry from The Kaselehlie Press, the Kosrae Governor's Office confirmed that schools have not reopened and that officials are awaiting recommendations from Public Health Services before making a decision.

"The schools have yet to open pending recommendations from Public Health Services," the Governor's Office said. "At the moment, the latest situation report indicates an improvement in the numbers of cases, but the Kosrae Department of Health still needs more time to monitor the situation before they

can provide their recommendations."

Governor Tulensa W. Palik ordered the temporary suspension of in-person classes and school-sponsored gatherings at all Kosrae public schools beginning at noon October 9, following elevated reports of influenza-like illness.

Executive Order No. 02-26, signed October 7, set no reopening date. It provides for the suspension to continue until further written direction from the governor.

The order cited an October 5 Department of Health and Social Services situation report showing that cases remained above the department's alert threshold of 38 during epidemiological weeks 38 through 40. In week 40, authorities recorded 71 cases.

The health department recommended

temporary school closures to reduce transmission. The Governor's Cabinet supported that recommendation to protect students, school personnel, their families, and the wider community.

The latest response from the Governor's Office suggests that the preventive measures will remain in effect while health officials assess whether the improvement in reported cases is sufficient to recommend reopening schools. The office did not provide updated case numbers or an anticipated reopening date.

As an immediate measure ahead of the closures, the executive order directed the Department of Education to distribute face masks to schools and allow students and staff affected by the illness to remain home.

The Director of Education was assigned responsibility for implementing the suspension, notifying school

administrators, employees, parents, and guardians, and issuing instructions on staff attendance and essential school operations. The order also calls for learning to continue where practicable.

Health officials must maintain surveillance of influenza-like illness and provide regular assessments to the governor. In consultation with the education director, the health director is to advise whether the closures remain necessary and what conditions would allow in-person classes to resume.

The mandatory suspension applies only to public schools. Private schools were strongly advised to consider equivalent preventive measures in consultation with the health and education departments.

The executive order describes the closures as a temporary preventive administrative measure rather than a declaration of a state of emergency.

...Kosrae Audit

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were unable to reconcile records for a riding mower costing \$5,920.49. Two riding mowers found during the inspection were inoperable and did not match the specifications of the equipment purchased under the project.

Records also showed the purchase of two 2007 Mazda Titan cargo trucks costing \$30,178, but the vehicles identified by municipal officials did not match the project documentation.

The report attributed the problems to inadequate oversight by officials assigned to manage and inspect the projects.

Under FSM financial management regulations, designated project inspection officials are responsible for ensuring that public funds are properly accounted for and projects are completed as intended.

The auditors found that those responsibilities had not been adequately carried out.

A second finding raised questions extending beyond missing or unverified equipment.

The auditors found that the Kosrae Congressional Delegation Office had participated directly in procurement and distribution activities for certain projects, particularly those involving fishing equipment and sewing machines.

According to the report, the delegation office participated in obtaining price quotations, coordinating with suppliers, selecting project recipients, and handling payments.

Although the Department of Finance and Administration issued checks in vendors' names, delegation office personnel routinely collected the checks from the Finance Field Office before passing them to the vendors.

Finance personnel told auditors that the delegation office explained the practice as necessary to make copies for its records.

The auditors questioned whether those activities went beyond recordkeeping and amounted to the Congressional office assuming responsibilities legally assigned to project allottees and implementing officials.

The report cited the FSM Supreme Court's 2001 decision in *Udot Municipality v. FSM*, which prohibited Congressional involvement in deciding which projects receive funding after Congress has already appropriated the money.

The auditors said the Kosrae delegation office's participation in procurement and recipient selection violated that ruling.

The inspection also found inconsistent procurement documentation. Some price quotations were issued in the name of the Congressional Delegation Office, while others carried individual names. Certain records failed to identify intended recipients.

In other instances, recipient names had been crossed out and replaced without documentation explaining the changes or showing that they had been authorized.

The auditors said those practices created risks of favoritism, weakened financial controls, and made it more difficult to establish whether public funds had been used for their intended purposes.

The report recommended that FSM Congress ensure its members do not participate in implementing or administering public projects after the relevant appropriations become law.

It also called on project allottees and implementing officials to strengthen procurement procedures, maintain accurate asset records, obtain signed acknowledgments from recipients, and conduct proper inspections.

Kosrae Governor Tulensa W. Palik responded to the draft findings in a letter dated August 27.

The Governor's Office acknowledged shortcomings in project oversight and agreed that officials had failed to adequately account for the \$126,234 in questioned projects.

However, the Governor's Office also

offered explanations for several of the items.

It said changes in project managers over the years, including transitions between administrations, had made it difficult to maintain accurate records.

Regarding the riding mower, the Governor's Office reported that the equipment had been located.

It also explained that the two cargo trucks had been changed to dump trucks through a change order because of circumstances involving the original order and a change from an outside dealership to a local vendor.

For the solar streetlight project, the Governor's Office said one municipality had located four lights distributed to its office under a previous mayor. It also said another municipality had received 30 lights, while individuals in other municipalities had received equipment directly.

The Governor's Office provided lists identifying recipients of solar lights, boats, and outboard motors, and said officials would continue working to locate and account for the remaining equipment.

It agreed with the second finding concerning procurement and documentation practices and promised stricter monitoring of future public projects.

The Tafunsak Municipal Government also responded to the report, agreeing with the findings and recommendations. Its response suggested that Congress appoint a separate allottee for public projects rather than assigning that responsibility to a mayor or the state government.

The National Public Auditor reviewed the responses but concluded that the additional explanations and documentation did not resolve the first finding.

Regarding the mower, auditors said the Governor's Office had not provided serial numbers, photographs, inventory records, or other evidence demonstrating that the equipment reportedly located was the same mower purchased with public funds.

The two mowers inspected remained inoperable and did not match the purchase specifications.

The auditors also rejected the explanation concerning the trucks as insufficiently documented. They said a change from cargo trucks to dump trucks required an authorized change order and corresponding changes in procurement, payment, and project records.

Without those records, they could not verify that the dump trucks represented properly authorized replacements for the vehicles originally purchased.

The additional lists of solar light recipients and custodians of boats and outboard motors were also insufficient to resolve the findings.

Although auditors were able to verify some of the individuals identified in the new records, others could not be located or their receipt of the equipment confirmed.

The report said that providing lists after an inspection does not establish that officials maintained adequate accountability records when the projects were implemented.

Consequently, the auditors left the \$126,234 finding unresolved pending further documentation and verification.

National Public Auditor Haser H. Hainrick called for stronger oversight and better training for officials responsible for managing public projects.

The Kosrae inspection is the first of a planned four-part series examining FSM Congress-funded public projects in each of the four FSM states.

The Office of the National Public Auditor said the remaining states will be reviewed sequentially under its annual audit plan.

The full report, *Inspection Review Identifies Accountability Issues and Weaknesses in the Implementation of Public Projects*, Report No. 2026-12, is available from the Office of the National Public Auditor at www.fsmopa.fm.



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FSM retains Tier 2 trafficking rating as U.S. cites gaps in prosecutions and victim protection

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlle Press

October 16, 2026

Washington D.C. - The Federated States of Micronesia remains on Tier 2 in the United States' 2026 Trafficking in Persons Report, receiving credit for increased anti-trafficking efforts despite continuing gaps in prosecutions, victim identification and protection.



The State Department reported that FSM authorities investigated six potential trafficking cases in 2025, distributed victim identification procedures to law enforcement, provided training and continued public awareness activities.

But for the fourth consecutive year, authorities initiated no new trafficking prosecutions and convicted no traffickers. For the third consecutive year, they identified and assisted no trafficking victims. An updated national action plan also remained unfinished for a third year.

Those findings illustrate what the annual ratings measure: how governments respond to trafficking. A country's tier is not a count of victims or a ranking of how widespread trafficking is within its borders.

For the FSM, Tier 2 means the State Department believes the government is making significant efforts but still falls short of minimum standards established under U.S. law.

What the ratings mean

The report places governments in four main categories.

Tier 1 means a government fully meets the minimum standards for eliminating trafficking. It does not mean trafficking has been eliminated or that a country has no victims.

Tier 2 means a government does not fully meet those standards but is making significant efforts to comply.

The Tier 2 Watch List applies to governments making significant efforts but facing additional concerns,

such as a failure to demonstrate increasing efforts or a very significant or growing number of victims without a proportionate response.

Tier 3 means a government neither fully meets the standards nor makes significant efforts to do so.

The standards examine whether governments prohibit trafficking, prescribe sufficiently serious penalties and make sustained efforts to investigate crimes, prosecute offenders, protect victims and prevent exploitation. Assessments also consider governments' resources and capabilities.

In the supplied international placements, the Marshall Islands and Palau join the FSM on Tier 2. Fiji and Papua New Guinea are on the Tier 2 Watch List. The United States is on Tier 1.

Why the United States issues the report

The report's authority comes from the U.S. Congress. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, as amended, requires the State Department to assess governments' anti-trafficking efforts annually.

The State Department describes the report as a tool for diplomacy, international cooperation and directing resources toward prosecution, victim protection and prevention. Its 2026 reporting process sought information covering April 1, 2025, through March 31, 2026.

The United States has included an assessment of its own government since 2010.

The resulting ratings are U.S. government judgments under U.S. legislation, rather than decisions issued by an international court or the United Nations. However, the underlying definitions of trafficking in U.S. law closely resemble those in the United Nations' trafficking protocol.

The ratings also have potential financial consequences. Tier 3 governments may face restrictions on certain nonhumanitarian, nontrade-related U.S. assistance, as well as U.S. opposition to some international financial institution assistance. Presidential waivers are available, including to protect vulnerable populations.

Investigations increased, but no victims identified

The FSM investigated six potential cases in 2025, compared with one in the previous reporting period, but authorities determined that none involved trafficking.

The report also describes unresolved proceedings against a former government official in Pohnpei. Two prosecutions initiated in an earlier reporting period included multiple charges, among them alleged sex trafficking. The former official remained pending trial and appealed one charge during the reporting period.

The report does not describe those allegations as proven offenses.

Although national victim identification procedures were distributed to law enforcement, observers reported that insufficient training weakened their implementation.

The government operated dedicated trafficking shelters in all four states. According to observers cited in the report, each could accommodate one victim at a time. Services were located on the main islands, creating access difficulties for potential victims on outer islands.

The anti-human trafficking division

received a reported \$150,000 budget for investigations, victim assistance and prevention, unchanged from the previous reporting period.

The absence of identified victims does not establish that trafficking was absent. The report separately describes concerns about unreported exploitation and barriers to detecting it.

Recruitment and fishing remain concerns

The State Department identified weaknesses in oversight of labor recruitment, including inconsistent enforcement of recruiter registration requirements and gaps affecting migrant workers in private employment.

It also reported that migrant workers seeking to change private-sector employers had to leave the country or obtain an approved permit costing \$1,000. The report warned that this could leave some workers with exploitative employers.

Authorities conducted no labor inspections aboard fishing vessels because legislation did not authorize such inspections on foreign vessels, although efforts were underway to develop a process involving referrals to anti-trafficking officials.

The report describes risks both within the FSM and for citizens abroad. Traffickers may use promises of well-paid jobs in the United States and its territories to recruit Micronesians who are subsequently exploited in forced labor, domestic servitude or commercial sex.

Trafficking does not require crossing a border. It involves exploitation through force, fraud or coercion; when a child under 18 is exploited in commercial sex, proof of those means is unnecessary.

The FSM's unchanged rating therefore carries both recognition and criticism: the State Department credits continued efforts while reporting that those efforts have yet to produce new prosecutions, convictions or identified victims.



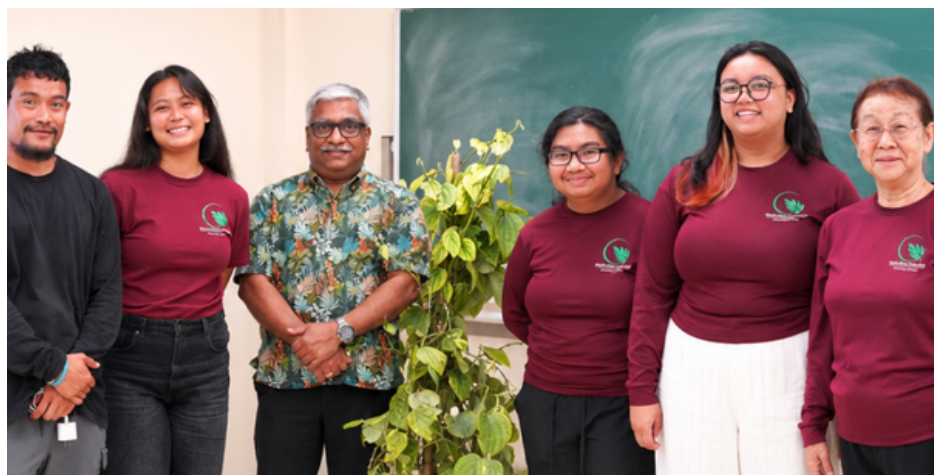
FROM TRAINING TO PLANTING: COM-FSM RESEARCHER LEADS FOLLOW-UP BLACK PEPPER WORKSHOP IN GUAM

Farmers and community members in Guam gained practical knowledge and planting materials to start growing black pepper at a workshop led by Dr. Murukesan Krishnapillai, with the College of Micronesia-FSM's Cooperative Research and Extension program at the Yap Campus.

Held on September 12, 2026, the Black Pepper Plant Distribution Workshop was hosted by the Horticulture Laboratory under the University of Guam's Land Grant agInnovation Research Center. The event combined comprehensive production training with the distribution of potted black pepper plants, helping participants take the next step toward establishing the crop in their gardens and farms.

The workshop followed Dr. Muru's June 2025 engagement at the University of Guam, undertaken at the invitation of Professor Mari Marutani. During that visit, he presented "Black Pepper—Science, Cultivation, and Global Perspectives" at the Black Pepper Forum. He provided technical guidance through visits to the Yigo Agricultural Experiment Station and local farms. Discussions addressed propagation, shade management, nutrient requirements, and cultivation practices suited to island conditions. This year's follow-up extended that collaboration by connecting production knowledge with planting material for community use.

Dr. Muru's detailed lecture covered the production cycle, from nursery propagation and site selection to planting, field establishment, maintenance, harvesting, and processing. Participants learned to select healthy planting material, provide suitable support for climbing vines, manage shade and soil moisture, maintain drainage, and monitor pests and diseases.



The training also addressed harvesting at the appropriate stage, processing black and white peppercorns, and maintaining product quality through careful drying, cleaning, grading, packaging, and storage. Illustrated materials helped explain these practices and the seasonal tasks needed to keep vines productive.

Beyond cultivation, Dr. Muru discussed opportunities to establish small-scale businesses, including locally grown pepper, value-added products, and specialty markets. Comparisons between growing conditions in Pohnpei and Guam highlighted the importance of adapting production practices to local rainfall, soils, and dry-season conditions.

At the conclusion of the workshop, each participant received a potted black pepper plant for field establishment. This practical component gave participants an immediate opportunity to apply what they learned during the session.

The continuing partnership between COM-FSM and the University of Guam demonstrates how regional land-grant collaboration can bring research and extension expertise directly to communities. By linking training, planting material, and enterprise development, the workshop supported efforts to diversify island agriculture and explore new livelihood opportunities for local growers.

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FSM calls for stronger climate action and accessible financing ahead of COP31

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

October 17, 2026

New York—The Federated States of Micronesia has called on the international community to strengthen climate action, increase financial assistance to vulnerable countries, and fulfill existing commitments ahead of the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP31).

FSM Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Jeem Lippwe delivered the appeal on October 16 during a special event convened by the President of the UN General Assembly under the theme "A Planet Fit for the Future: Restoring Trust through Climate Action."

Lippwe told delegates that climate change is already affecting the FSM's coastlines, freshwater supplies, infrastructure, and livelihoods, making international action an immediate necessity rather than a matter for future generations.

"For my country, COP31 represents a critical opportunity to advance the action necessary to safeguard our people, preserve our homeland, and secure a viable future for generations to come," he said.

Although the FSM is responsible for stewardship of a vast ocean area, Lippwe said its islands remain particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels and other consequences of climate change.

He described coastal erosion, saltwater contamination of freshwater resources, and threats to ecosystems and infrastructure as challenges that extend beyond economic development to the country's cultural heritage and national identity.

"For us, climate change is not a future challenge. It is a present reality with profound implications for our sustainable development, cultural heritage, and national identity," he said.

Lippwe called for stronger adaptation measures, improved disaster

preparedness, and greater investment in systems capable of warning communities about approaching hazards.

He identified multi-hazard early warning systems as among the most practical and cost-effective measures available to protect lives and reduce losses from climate-related disasters.

Such systems, he said, must reach remote communities and incorporate both scientific expertise and traditional local knowledge.

The Ambassador also emphasized the need for international climate financing that vulnerable countries can access without taking on additional debt.

He called for funding that is predictable, sufficient, and provided through grants rather than loans, arguing that countries contributing relatively little to global greenhouse gas emissions should not bear additional financial burdens to address the consequences.

"Vulnerable countries should not be compelled to assume additional debt in order to respond to a crisis they did little to create," Lippwe said.

His remarks reflected the FSM's longstanding position that climate financing must account for the particular circumstances of small island developing states, whose limited resources and exposure to climate hazards make adaptation especially difficult.

Lippwe also warned that adaptation measures alone cannot adequately address the climate crisis.

He called for immediate reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to preserve the international goal of limiting global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

In particular, he urged rapid reductions in methane and other short-lived climate pollutants, which contribute significantly to global warming.

"At the same time, adaptation cannot substitute for mitigation," he said. "Preserving the 1.5°C goal requires ambitious and immediate action, including rapid reductions in methane and other short-lived climate pollutants."

The Ambassador concluded by urging countries preparing for COP31 to demonstrate greater international solidarity and translate previous climate commitments into concrete results.

"As we look toward COP31, we call for renewed solidarity, strengthened support for vulnerable countries, and the full implementation of commitments already made," he said.



"Let COP31 be remembered as the moment when the international community matched the urgency of the climate crisis with meaningful action."



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Kosraean-Chuukese pilot prepares for jet training with One Pacific Airways

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

October 19, 2026

Pohnpei, FSM—Daisy Sepe Duffy has earned her commercial pilot's license and is preparing to begin training on the Embraer ERJ-145 regional jet as she works toward flying for One Pacific Airways, a new airline based in Pohnpei that plans to provide air service throughout Micronesia.

Duffy, whose father is from Kosrae and whose mother, Jaslyn Nuokus, is Chuukese, is believed to be the first Kosraean-Chuukese woman to earn a commercial pilot's license. Her achievement continues a family aviation tradition spanning three generations and comes as efforts are underway to expand commercial air transportation services within the Federated States of Micronesia.

The Marshall Islands Journal recently featured Duffy's achievement in an article titled "Aviation ambassador," describing her aviation training and her plans to return to the islands to begin her professional flying career.

Her father, John Duffy, subsequently contacted The Kaselehlie Press to share additional information about the family's aviation history and his daughter's accomplishments.

In a follow-up email, John said Daisy would travel to Dallas on October 25 to begin training on the Embraer ERJ-145 regional jet. The training could take up to three weeks.

Once she completes her simulator training, she will return to undergo One Pacific Airways' training program in the aircraft itself before receiving authorization to begin flying regular airline operations.

The additional training means that although Daisy has already earned her commercial pilot's license, she has not yet completed the qualifications necessary to begin flying the airline's jet.

According to the Marshall Islands Journal, Daisy initially planned to become a veterinarian. Her interest in aviation developed after she attended a colloquium for Micronesian students at Kealakehe High School in Kona, Hawaii, where her father had been invited to speak.

The experience helped persuade her to pursue aviation instead.

She began flight training in Olympia, Washington, where she obtained her private pilot's license. She subsequently attended California Flight Academy in the San Diego area, completing her commercial multi-engine and instrument training.

Financial support from the FSM Scholarship Board helped her complete the final stages of her training.

Her father knows firsthand how important that assistance can be.

John Duffy began his own aviation career in the early 1990s, obtaining his commercial pilot's license in 1993 with support from the FSM Scholarship Board under the late Dr. Cantero.

He subsequently flew for Caroline Pacific Airlines out of Chuuk and for the National Fisheries Corporation throughout Micronesia.

He now flies an Airbus A321 for Alaska Airlines/Hawaiian Airlines.

John, who is from Kosrae and has family ties to the Marshall Islands, was described by the Marshall Islands Journal as the first Micronesian to fly for Aloha Airlines, Air Nippon Airways, Hawaiian Airlines, and Alaska Airlines.

His daughter's entry into commercial aviation adds another chapter to a family history that extends well beyond the cockpit.

John's brother, Aliksa James Duffy, completed his Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) mechanic training in the late 1990s and has worked for several major aviation companies, including American Airlines, Boeing, Rolls-Royce, and GE.

His career has also included positions with Piti Plant in Guam, Trans Air in Honolulu, and BF Goodrich in Everett, Washington.

He currently works in GE's jet engine testing department as a line mechanic supervisor on the Boeing 747.

The family's third generation is also entering the aviation industry. Aliksa's son, Tyler Duffy, is beginning his career as an A&P mechanic and currently works

as a line mechanic for SkyWest Airlines in Los Angeles.

"We are indeed an aviation family that continues to grow as each generation opens the door to the next," John Duffy wrote in his earlier email to The Kaselehlie Press.

He credited the FSM Scholarship Board for helping both him and his daughter pursue their aviation careers more than three decades apart.

"Thanks to the FSM scholarship board under the late Dr. Cantero, I was able to obtain my commercial license back in 1993 and thanks to the current FSM scholarship board Daisy was able to follow my contrails," he wrote.

John also recalled helping another Micronesian aviator begin his career.

He said he introduced Kelly Tobin to flying approximately a decade ago. Tobin is now a Boeing 757 captain with Asia Pacific Airlines.

"It's rewarding to see how far he has come in his aviation career," John wrote.

Daisy's planned return to Micronesia represents an opportunity to apply her training in the region where her family has its roots.

The Marshall Islands Journal reported that she could become the first woman from the FSM to fly a commercial jet if her plans proceed as anticipated.

Her father said she is enthusiastic about the opportunity to work for an airline serving Micronesia.

"Daisy is very excited for the opportunity to fly for One Pacific Airways, which will be servicing Micronesia," he wrote.

The Marshall Islands Journal quoted John as saying his daughter recognizes the broader significance of her achievement.

"Daisy understands that she is an ambassador for Micronesians and women in aviation as a whole," he said.

He credited her hard work, growing competence, and confidence, along with the humility he associates with Micronesian culture.

"Our Micronesian aviation family continues to grow, and it's encouraging



to see more of our own pursuing careers in aviation and paving the way for future generations," John wrote in his latest email.

John closed his earlier message with encouragement for his daughter and others working to expand aviation opportunities in the region.

"I wish for clear and smooth skies for the aviators and for those investing in air service throughout the remote islands of Micronesia," he wrote.

Kalani Torres takes top honors as Moffet couple wins big at Panuelo Fishing Tournament

Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlle Press

September 26, 2026

Pohnpei—Kalani Torres had a particularly successful day on the water during the 19th Annual Alexander Panuelo Fishing Tournament, landing the biggest fish of the tournament and taking first place in the Ladies category as well. Meanwhile, Buzz and Lizzy Moffet had a pretty profitable day of their own, hauling in a combined \$1,500 in prize money.

Fishing aboard Marlin, Torres brought in a 52.2-pound yellowfin tuna, earning the \$800 first-place prize for the heaviest fish of the day. She also landed a 10.6-pound barracuda, which earned her first place in the Ladies category.

Buzz Moffet, fishing aboard Dear Diane, had a good day as well, bringing in the second- and third-heaviest fish of the tournament. His 45.4-pound yellowfin earned him \$700 for second place, while another yellowfin weighing 34 pounds brought him the \$600 third-place prize.

Not to be outdone entirely by her husband, Lizzy Moffet landed a 27.6-pound yellowfin, earning the \$200 sixth-place prize. Between them, the couple took home three of the six Big Fish prizes, making Dear Diane a particularly successful boat in the tournament.

Two anglers tied on fish weight for fourth and fifth place. Bernard Ifamlik, aboard Dolphin, landed a 29.6-pound yellowfin for the \$500 fourth-place prize. Richson Soswe, fishing aboard CMFI, also landed a 29.6-pound yellowfin, earning the \$300 fifth-place prize.

All six of the tournament's Big Fish prizes went to yellowfin tuna, with the winning fish ranging from 27.6 to 52.2 pounds.

Prizes were also awarded for the largest fish in several species categories.

JayRayden Kapiriel landed the top tuna in the species competition at 25.4 pounds. O'niel Optaia took first place in



the skipjack category with a 10.2-pound fish.

Saimon Mix brought in the largest barracuda at 21 pounds, while Nile Panuelo landed a 26.2-pound giant trevally (GT) to take first place in that category.

In the Ladies competition, Torres's 10.6-pound barracuda earned first place, followed by Marcia Palasko, who landed a seven-pound GT for second place.

Junior angler MJC Soswe, fishing aboard CMFI, also made it into the prize winners with a 9.6-pound skipjack, good enough for second place in the skipjack category.



The Pohnpei Fishing Club thanked the tournament's sponsors, Blue Nile, Ocean View Plaza Westwing, One World/Para Nui, Panuelo Gas Station, Rain Water, Arnolds Restaurant, and David W. Panuelo, for helping make the annual competition possible.

The club also thanked the participating anglers, boat crews, volunteers, and those who assisted with registration and weigh-in.

The next Pohnpei Fishing Club competition will be the Budweiser Derby, scheduled for October 24.

Finance and Administration Officer

The position of Finance and Administration Officer is assigned to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Pacific Country Office (PCO) within the Pacific Department (PARD). You will be based at the FSM PCO, with frequent visits to the Palau PCO and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) PCO.

Description of Responsibilities

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Selection Criteria

Specific criteria include:

- Bachelor's degree in business administration, accounting, economics, or a related field; advanced training is preferred.
- At least 8 years of relevant experience in financial accounting, institutional procurement, general office administration, and personnel management, preferably gained in multilateral development banks or similar international organizations.
- Hands-on experience using digital tools and systems to support administrative, financial, and operational processes, including data management and reporting (e.g., Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and SharePoint).
- Knowledge of local government administrative systems, institutions, and procedures.
- Demonstrated experience building and maintaining working relationships with partners in a multicultural environment and working collaboratively as a constructive team member.
- Proven experience in improving processes, driving innovation, and adapting to changing organizational needs.
- Proven experience in preparing clear written outputs (e.g., emails, memos, reports, briefing notes), and coordinating with internal and external stakeholders

in a professional work setting.

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which is used in International classes upon or in connection with the following goods:

Class 12: electric motorcycles; windscreens; rearview mirrors; civilian drones; motorcycles; motorcycle frames; wheels for motorcycles; motorcycle saddles; shock absorbers for motorcycles; side cars; motorcycle tires; motorcycle engines; all-terrain vehicles; motor scooters; motorcycles for motocross; non-skid devices for vehicle tyres; clutches for land vehicles; brakes for vehicles; bicycles; fuel tanks for vehicles.

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Studio Pietrangeli wins Lehnmesi hydropower study in Micronesia

Studio Pietrangeli will assess hydropower development options on Pohnpei's Lehnmesi River under a consultancy covering feasibility studies, bidding documents and procurement support

By International Water Power and Dam Construction

October 15, 2026

Pohnpei - Studio Pietrangeli has been awarded a consultancy contract for the proposed Lehnmesi hydropower project in Pohnpei, marking its first assignment in the Federated States of Micronesia.

The work forms part of the Clean Energy Project and will assess hydropower development options along the Lehnmesi River, with the aim of increasing renewable electricity generation and reducing fossil fuel use.

The consultancy covers a full feasibility study, preparation of bidding documents and support throughout the procurement process.

During an initial visit to Pohnpei, the company's team met the FSM Department of Resources and Development and other stakeholders, presented preliminary findings and inspected sites identified for the project alternatives.

The team also carried out geological, geomechanical and topographical surveys to characterise the sites and support assessment of the proposed options.




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More Than a License: 132 women gain skills and new opportunities through FSM driver licensing pilot

FSM Department of Foreign Affairs

October 19, 2026

Pohnpei - For 132 women across the Federated States of Micronesia, learning the rules of the road represented more than preparing for a driver's license. It offered a step toward greater independence, easier access to work and essential services, and fuller participation in family and community life.

The women took part in the Driver Licensing Pilot and Capacity-Building Initiative, delivered by the FSM Department of Transportation, Communications and Infrastructure (DoTC&I) through the Gender Equity and Empowerment component of the World Bank-supported PRIME and SCORE projects. The consultancy concluded on October 14, 2026, after reaching 132 women—surpassing its target of 120 across Chuuk, Pohnpei, Yap, and Kosrae.

Launched in February 2026, the initiative opened driver education to women aged 16 and older who did not hold a valid driver's license. With an original goal of reaching 30 women in each state, the program achieved approximately 110% of its overall target—evidence of strong interest in an opportunity that can make everyday movement, employment, caregiving, and community participation more accessible.

Implemented with CH Group Consulting and state-level partners, the initiative combined driver education workshops with practical support for the public institutions responsible for licensing. Department of Public Safety personnel received capacity-building support, state partners received follow-up assistance, and relevant staff were trained to use the driver license applicant database.

The program also recognized that access is not only about teaching driving skills. It requires public services where women are treated with dignity and where personnel understand gender equality and safety. Training therefore covered gender equality, gender-based violence (GBV), sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), sexual harassment (SH), and appropriate response and referral mechanisms.

Implementation was not without challenges. Limited time for community awareness and different rates of progress among the states showed the need for earlier outreach, close coordination with state partners, flexible schedules, and clear information about eligibility and licensing procedures. These lessons will be important in helping future participants move successfully from driver education through the licensing process.

The pilot's strongest result is reflected not only in the number of women reached, but in what that participation

can make possible. Continued support and coordination can help participants complete the licensing process and turn new knowledge into lasting mobility, confidence, and opportunity.

Partnership Behind the Progress

DoTC&I extends its sincere appreciation to the World Bank for the financial support and commitment that made the initiative possible, and to CH Group Consulting for its technical expertise, dedication, and collaboration.

Special recognition is extended to the Pohnpei State Department of Public Safety for its cooperation throughout the driver licensing activities and to the Pohnpei Women Council for helping reach, encourage, and support women to take part.

Most importantly, the Department thanks all 132 women who stepped forward to participate, learn, and pursue the opportunity to obtain a driver's license. Their participation demonstrates why accessible programs for women matter—and how practical skills can strengthen involvement in economic, family, and community life.

The initiative's progress reflects the collective effort of government agencies, development partners, community organizations, trainers, and participants working toward a shared goal: creating safer, more inclusive pathways for women across the FSM.



Yap Youth Services seeks student input on future activities

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

October 15, 2026

Yap, FSM—The Yap State Division of Youth Services, assisted by newly arrived Australian volunteer Josh Braine, conducted an outreach activity on October 15 to gather students' opinions about youth programs and encourage participation in upcoming events.

According to a Facebook post from the Yap State Government, the outreach took place at the park next to Manta Ray Bay Resort and Yap Divers, a popular gathering place for students waiting for their buses after school.

Division staff selected the location and the 3:00 p.m. starting time to reach young people during their normal afternoon routines rather than requiring them to attend a separate meeting or organized event.

During the outreach, staff distributed surveys asking students about youth activities and events they had particularly enjoyed. The division plans to use the responses to better understand young people's interests and help determine what types of programs and activities to organize in the future.

The outreach also provided an opportunity for staff to introduce

students to Youth Trivia Night, scheduled for October 16 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Small Business Development Center Conference Room.

The government said the activity was part of the division's continuing efforts to involve young people in decisions about programs intended for them.

By collecting feedback directly from students, the division hopes to develop activities that attract greater participation, strengthen connections among young

people, and support youth development throughout Yap State.

The outreach also involved Australian volunteer Josh Braine, who recently arrived in Yap and joined Division of Youth Services staff for the activity.



Advisory warns of very dry conditions ahead for Pohnpei and Kosrae

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlle Press

October 13, 2026

POHNPEI — Pohnpei and Kosrae face an increased risk of very dry conditions in November and December, according to an October 12 rainfall advisory that identifies potential threats to water supplies, crops and public services.

The Early Action Rainfall Watch for the two states forecasts a very high chance of very dry conditions in November for Oroluk, Pohnpei, Mokil, Pingelap and Ngatik. Kosrae has a high chance, while Kapingamarangi has a medium chance.

For December, the advisory forecasts a very high chance of very dry conditions across Oroluk, Pohnpei, Mokil, Pingelap, Kosrae, Ngatik and Nukuoro. Kapingamarangi remains in the medium-chance category.

The outlook follows a mixed rainfall picture in September. Ngatik, Kosrae and Nukuoro experienced very dry conditions during the month, while no extreme conditions were recorded for Oroluk, Pohnpei, Mokil, Pingelap or Kapingamarangi.

Over the three months from July through September, however, most

locations experienced very wet conditions. Nukuoro was very dry over that period, while Kapingamarangi recorded no extreme conditions.

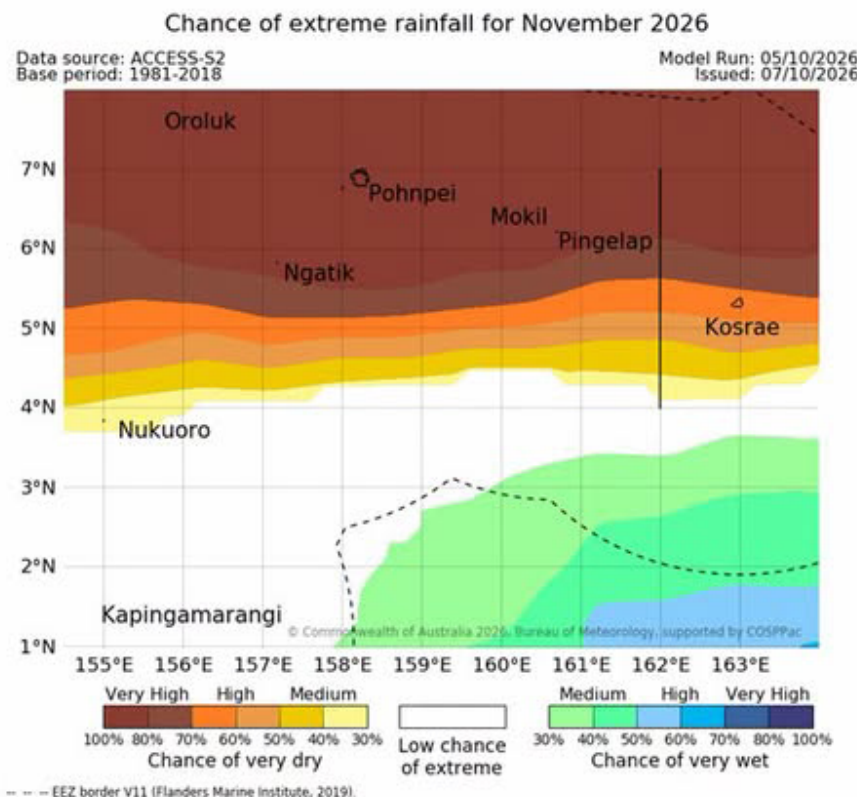
The advisory outlines how prolonged dry weather could affect communities, with impacts becoming more extensive the longer conditions persist.

In Pohnpei, a month of very dry conditions could affect shallow-rooted crops such as cucumbers, peppers, eggplant and cabbage, and could lead to scheduled water service. Around three months of dryness could affect sakau, reduce dam levels, dry up outer-island wells and increase fire risks. Longer periods could threaten additional food crops and reduce river and stream levels.

For Kosrae, the advisory identifies household water supplies, drinking water, water pressure and garden irrigation among the concerns associated with a month of very dry conditions. Continued dryness could affect a wider range of crops, small streams and freshwater fish.

These are potential impacts rather than reports of current damage. The advisory cautions that the time frames

Rainfall Outlooks for November to January 2026



are estimates and that conditions will vary with island size, geology and soil type.

It also notes that wet periods provide opportunities for island communities to collect and store rainwater for future dry periods. Residents and sector managers seeking further information about potential impacts are directed to their local Disaster Coordination Office.

Simina establishes temporary Compact fund safeguards

FSM Information Services

October 5, 2026

PALIKIR, Pohnpei — His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), on October 2, signed Executive Order No. 10-28, titled “Implementing on a Temporary and Transition Basis Interim Subrecipient Monitoring and Compact Fund Accounting Measures.”

The Order puts into effect temporary measures for Compact fund accounting and subrecipient monitoring, to be implemented by the Department of Finance and Administration (DOFA). These measures are intended to ensure continued compliance with Compact requirements, strengthen financial

accountability and oversight, and prevent disruptions to Compact-funded programs pending legislative action.

These interim measures are particularly important in safeguarding Compact assistance that supports essential public services throughout the FSM, especially in the health and education sectors. Compact funding supports the salaries of teachers, healthcare professionals, and other public servants, as well as the procurement of medicines, vaccines, medical supplies, and educational programs. The Order aims to help ensure the continued delivery of these vital services to FSM citizens while a permanent legislative framework is being pursued.

The Order comes as proposed legislation to establish a permanent framework for Compact fund accounting and subrecipient monitoring remains pending before Congress. The bill is supported by Resolution No. 3, adopted during the Fifth Chief Executive Council Meeting in Chuuk, which endorsed the agreed procedures for Compact grant subrecipients and the necessary legislation.

The Simina-Palik Administration remains committed to working with Congress to enact the proposed amendments to Title 55 of the FSM Code, which would establish a permanent framework for Compact fund accounting and subrecipient monitoring.



Pacific evidence on ending violence against women and girls takes center stage at SVRI Forum 2026

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

October 6, 2026

Bangkok, Thailand - A 27-member Pacific delegation representing government, civil society, faith, sport, academia and development partners will take Pacific-led evidence on preventing violence against women and girls (VAWG) to the SVRI Forum 2026 in Bangkok, Thailand, from 5–9 October.

The delegation will deliver 16 formal interventions—including two panels, two five-minute presentations, one programme presentation and 11 posters—drawing on Pacific-led evidence and practice, including eight years of learning through the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (Pacific Partnership).

The SVRI Forum, convened by the Sexual Violence Research Initiative, is a leading global platform bringing together researchers, practitioners, policymakers and funders to share evidence on what works to prevent and respond to violence against women and children. This year marks the largest and most significant Pacific presence at the Forum to date, reflecting a growing body of Pacific evidence on what it takes to prevent violence against women and girls. The Pacific is not only learning from the global conversation; it is increasingly helping to shape it.

The delegation reflects more than 20 organisations working through the Pacific Partnership. At SVRI, Pacific delegates will share evidence, practical tools and lessons from across the region, while engaging with global research and practice on what works to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls.

The Pacific Partnership is funded primarily by the Government of Australia, and the European Union, since 2018, and is coordinated by UN Women and the Pacific Community (SPC), in strategic partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). New Zealand was a funding partner

in the first phase of programming. Over eight years, the programme has worked across prevention, survivor services, and laws and policy, with governments, civil society, faith and sport organisations across the region.

The Pacific contributions to the Forum span prevention, response, policy, financing and community-led approaches. Sessions include a panel on rugby as a platform for prevention in the Pacific, featuring Olympian Rusila Naqasau and Fiji Rugby CEO Koli Sewabu; a panel on gender-based violence response amid climate change, with speakers from five Pacific countries; and a Fiji Government presentation on its National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against All Women and Girls (2023–2028).

Delegates will also present evidence and experience on costing prevention, faith- and sport-based approaches, and survivor-centred shelter models.

“What makes the Pacific experience powerful is partnership: governments, women’s rights organisations, faith leaders, sport and regional institutions working towards a shared goal. This delegation reflects eight years of collaboration through the Pacific Partnership, practical tools and hard-won lessons from across the region to share with the world,” said Alison Davidian, Representative, UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office.

A key focus for the Pacific delegation will be the challenge of financing prevention. Pacific Leaders have affirmed sustainable financing for national frameworks to prevent violence against women and girls, committing to reflect prevention priorities in national planning and budgets. Mereseini Rakuita, Principal Strategic Lead - Pacific Women and Girls, the Pacific Community (SPC), will present on “Costing across the continuum: Costing national prevention frameworks in the Pacific.”

“Prevention needs more than a policy commitment. Understanding what

prevention costs, helps governments plan, resource and sustain action at the national level,” said Rakuita.

For civil society organisations working directly with communities, evidence and practice are closely connected. Filiga Taukiei Nelu, Founder and General Secretary of Tuvalu Women for Change (‘Fatu ‘Lei), will share experience from Tuvalu, including work at the intersection of violence against women and girls and climate change.

“Civil society has been at the heart of this movement from the start, particularly through both prevention and response work with communities, and increasingly at the intersection of climate change and violence especially against women in all their diversities, children and persons with disabilities. Being at SVRI gives us an opportunity to bring that community experience into the wider evidence conversation,” said Nelu.

Evidence is also informing national policy and action. Laisani Petersen, Coordinator of the Fiji National Action Plan to Prevent VAWG Unit, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection, Fiji, will present Fiji’s experience implementing its National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against All Women and Girls (2023–2028).

“The Fiji National Action Plan brings together government, civil society and other sectors around a shared approach to prevention. We will be sharing what we are learning from this experience and contributing to the global conversation on how prevention can work in practice,” said Petersen.

The Pacific Partnership is also supporting approaches that work through trusted institutions and community spaces. Said Rev. Dr. Cliff Bird, Pacific theologian from Solomon Islands, whose work on the intersection of sports and faith-based prevention will be presented at the Forum:

“Sports and faith are trusted spaces in our communities. Bringing this integrated approach from Solomon Islands on Project Golkipa pilot to SVRI shows how prevention can be grounded in institutions and relationships that people already know and trust,” said Rev. Dr. Bird.

None of this is possible without the generous support of Pacific Partnership’s funding partners who have supported the programme for the last eight years.

“Australia is proud to stand alongside Pacific partners through the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls. Together, we will elevate Pacific leadership at SVRI and showcase Pacific-grown approaches to preventing violence against women and girls,” said Clemency Oliphant, Assistant Secretary, Pacific Development Branch.

“The European Union stands firmly to prevent and respond to gender-based violence - supporting survivor-centred services, challenging harmful social norms, and working with communities and institutions to build lasting change for women and girls. Guided by the EU’s fundamental values of human dignity, equality and human rights, we see gender equality not as a stand-alone issue, but as central to sustainable development and inclusive societies,” said Carine Hanssens, First Counselor - Head of Section Global Gateway - Enabling Environment, European Union to the Pacific.

Beyond its formal presentations, the delegation will engage in knowledge exchange, advocacy and networking throughout the Forum, bringing global learning back to the Pacific while sharing the region’s own experience and evidence with an international audience. The exchange will help shape the next phase of violence prevention in the Pacific - from national policy and financing to the approaches being implemented in communities.

U.S. Army Pacific builds mental health resilience and community empowerment across the FSM

By Staff Sgt. Marlene Perezsilva,
U.S. Army Pacific

Sept. 21, 2026

Federated States of Micronesia — The U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) Oceania Engagement Team (OET) and USARPAC Chaplain Directorate recently completed a two-week community mental health and religious leader engagement across all four states of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), working with local leaders to strengthen community resilience.

Traveling to Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae, the USARPAC Team met with religious leaders, U.S. military veterans, youth groups and community stakeholders to discuss mental health, resilience and ways trusted community leaders can better support individuals and families. The engagement was built around a simple principle: enduring partnerships begin with listening and presence.

"The strength of this engagement came from being present in each community and listening to the people who serve them every day," said Col. J.P. Smith, USARPAC Command Chaplain. "Religious leaders often know their communities at a deeply personal level. Our role was not to replace that knowledge, but to share tools that can complement what they are already doing."

The training focused on helping leaders recognize distress, encourage healthy coping strategies, strengthen community connections and identify when individuals may benefit from additional professional assistance.

The engagement also provided opportunities to connect with the FSM's U.S. military veteran community. Generations of Micronesians have served in the U.S. Armed Forces, creating personal ties between the United States and FSM that extend beyond formal agreements. Engagement with veterans allowed the team to better understand challenges facing veterans and their families while strengthening connections to existing community support networks.

"The most valuable thing we can do is continue to show up, listen and demonstrate credible action," said Capt. Samantha Lacroix, OET-FSM Team Leader. "The FSM is made up of distinct states, islands and communities. OET's persistent presence across all four states allows

us to build relationships over time rather than through a single engagement."

Religious institutions occupy an important place in many Pacific communities. Clergy and lay leaders may serve simultaneously as spiritual advisers, mentors, counselors, educators and trusted community figures. The engagement sought to strengthen these existing community networks so religious leaders, veterans and community stakeholders can carry those lessons forward within their congregations, families and communities.

For the OET, a USARPAC Civil Affairs Company sourced from the 351st Civil Affairs Command and deployed across Oceania to support regional security, these engagements follow a string of programs successfully conducted in the FSM, ranging from Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) tutoring in Pohnpei, promoting physical fitness in Kosrae schools, and first-aid instruction in Yap.

"Many new interfaith coalitions are forming across the FSM, enabled by conversations with the USARPAC Chaplain Team, and town halls are becoming a forum for these issues and opportunities to be communicated," said Capt. Lacroix. "Our goal is to be there consistently, listen to what communities are telling us and help strengthen the relationships and local networks that already exist. That's how we build partnerships that last."



POHNPEI, Federated States of Micronesia — U.S. Army Pacific Command Chaplain, Col. J.P. Smith and USARPAC Chief Religious Affairs Non-Commissioned Officer, Sgt. Maj. Andrew Hagemann, participate in a local sporting event to promote physical fitness and mental health awareness in Pohnpei, Sept. 22, 2026. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Myles Luera)



POHNPEI, Federated States of Micronesia — U.S. Army Pacific Chief Religious Affairs Non-Commissioned Officer, Sgt. Maj. Andrew Hagemann, receives a traditional ceremonial head wreath from congregation members following a local religious service in Pohnpei, Sept. 22, 2026. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Myles Luera)



KOSRAE, Federated States of Micronesia — Members of the U.S. Army Pacific Oceania Engagement Team, alongside USARPAC Deputy Command Chaplain, Lt. Col. Brian Satterlee, and Chief Religious Affairs Non-Commissioned Officer, Sgt. Maj. Andrew Hagemann, engage with local youth during Kosrae's first ever International Youth Day. The USARPAC Chaplain Directorate shared messages highlighting the importance of education, mental health, and career planning. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Logan Heisler)

President Simina discusses continued cooperation with East-West Center and PIDP

FSM Information
Services

October 13, 2026

HONOLULU, Hawaii

— On October 9, His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM),

met with East-West Center President Celeste Connors and Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP) Deputy Director Jaimee Neel during his official



visit to Honolulu.

In his capacity as Chair of the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders (PICL), a regional forum bringing together leaders from Pacific

Island countries and territories, President Simina discussed ongoing efforts to strengthen regional cooperation. The discussions built on the recent PICL Talanoa held in Palau and

focused on continued preparations for the next formal PICL convening. PIDP, which serves as the PICL Secretariat and is a member of the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP), plays an important role in supporting the forum's coordination, policy dialogue, and regional engagement.

President Simina expressed appreciation for the East-West Center's continued partnership with the FSM and reaffirmed the importance of sustained cooperation in advancing shared priorities for the Pacific region.



President Simina Holds Outreach with FSM Community in Honolulu

FSM Information Services

October 13, 2026

HONOLULU, Hawaii — His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), met with FSM citizens residing in Honolulu on October 10, during his official visit to Hawaii, which included meetings with the United States Command (PACOM), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and the East-West Center. The outreach reflects the Simina-Palik Administration's continued priority of maintaining close engagement with FSM citizens living abroad.

The gathering provided an opportunity to update citizens on the National Government's ongoing programs and initiatives to improve the livelihoods and well-being of FSM citizens both at home and abroad.

During the outreach, members of the President's delegation delivered presentations on key national priorities and developments, including updates on the Compact of Free Association, infrastructure development, health, education, workforce development, and other government initiatives.

In his remarks, President Simina highlighted the Administration's efforts since 2023 to advance national development, strengthen infrastructure, and improve public services. He acknowledged the progress made and the challenges that remain, emphasizing that serving the people remains the Government's foremost priority and that national development must translate into tangible benefits for all FSM citizens.

"And this is why we're here today. To share with you updates on what your government is doing, to answer your questions, and most importantly, to listen," President Simina said.

The President and his delegation also heard directly from community members, who raised questions and shared concerns on issues affecting FSM citizens residing in Hawaii. The delegation acknowledged the concerns raised and reassured community members of the National Government's continued efforts and commitment to addressing their needs.

President Simina reaffirmed the importance of maintaining strong connections with FSM communities overseas, keeping citizens informed of national developments, and ensuring that their voices and concerns continue to be heard.

The Honolulu gathering builds on President Simina's previous outreach engagements with FSM communities across the United States and its territories, including Kansas City, Missouri (March 2024); Corsicana, Texas (September 2024); Honolulu, Hawaii (October 2024); Saipan and Guam (February 2025); and Aurora, Colorado (June 2025), among others. These engagements reflect the Simina-Palik Administration's continued commitment to maintaining direct dialogue with FSM citizens abroad.



Pohnpei Tourism Office & PATA Micronesia Chapter: Customer Service Training

Pohnpei Tourism

October 8, 2026

Pohnpei - On October 8–9, the Pohnpei Tourism Office, in collaboration with the PATA Micronesia Chapter, hosted a two-day Customer Service Training at the Pohnpei State Governor's Conference Room. The workshop was open to the general public and brought together participants from government agencies, commerce and industry, and private businesses, reflecting the importance of customer service across all sectors.

Led by Glenn Weber, PATA Micronesia Chapter member and experienced tourism and service industry professional, the training focused on practical skills and knowledge to strengthen customer service standards throughout Pohnpei. Participants explored effective customer greetings and assistance, problem-solving and conflict resolution, and strategies for addressing customer concerns. The workshop also provided a platform for dialogue on the current state of customer service in Pohnpei and the steps needed to make it a greater priority across all industries.

The Pohnpei Tourism Office recognizes that quality customer service is essential to creating positive experiences, strengthening public trust, and supporting the growth of Pohnpei's tourism industry and broader economy.

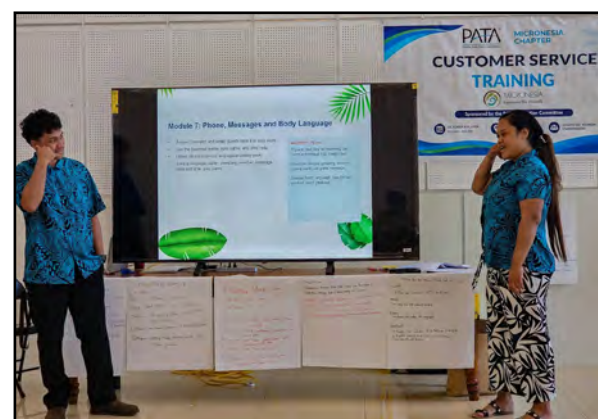
Special thanks to the following organizations for their support and contributions in making this workshop possible:

- PATA Micronesia Chapter
- Pohnpei State Government (Pohnpei State Public Information, Office of the Governor)

- Pohnpei State Legislature
- V6AH
- FSM Telecommunications
- Kaselehlie Diner
- Meena's Catering
- Aubrey's Catering

If you missed this workshop or are interested in future training opportunities, contact the Pohnpei Tourism Office for inquiries and information on upcoming programs.

Together, let us continue building a culture of quality service and hospitality across Pohnpei.



Movick calls for better travel connections across Micronesia

Pohnpei Public Information

October 5, 2026

PEI LAPALAP, Pohnpei — Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and Lieutenant Governor Herolyn S. Movick attended the General Meeting for the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Micronesia Chapter, held in the Governor's Conference Room at Pei Lapalap.

PATA Micronesia serves as a regional chapter of the global Pacific Asia Travel Association, dedicated to promoting, developing, and sustaining tourism

across the Micronesian region. Bringing together government bodies and private sector leaders, the organization plays a vital role in destination marketing, capacity building, and addressing common regional economic goals.

Lieutenant Governor Herolyn S. Movick delivered opening remarks on behalf of the Pohnpei State Government, warmly welcoming delegates, regional tourism leaders, and partners to Pohnpei. During her address, she candidly addressed the core obstacle impacting regional growth.

"Micronesia's main challenge for tourism is our remoteness, which makes transportation difficult and expensive," Lt. Governor Movick noted. She urged all attendees to join forces in addressing these barriers, asking participants to "explore innovative solutions to enhance connectivity, making travel to and within our islands more accessible for visitors and locals alike."

Reflecting on past efforts, Lt. Governor Movick observed that these accessibility issues are not new and

have frequently been met with short-lived solutions by both government and private entities. She challenged the room to rethink historical approaches, posing the question: "How can we be more sustainable in our approach to our solutions?"

Lt. Governor Movick concluded her remarks by expressing gratitude to all participants, thanking the Chief of Tourism and the organizing team, and acknowledging everyone involved in bringing the meeting together at Pei Lapalap.



Australian grant supports greenhouses for 10 Kosrae families

The Kaselehlie Press

October 8, 2026

KOSRAE — Ten families in Kosrae will receive mini greenhouse starter kits through a \$19,600 Australian-funded project aimed at improving access to fresh vegetables and reducing household food costs.

Australian Ambassador Grant visited a Lelu Farmers Association mini greenhouse supported through Australia's Direct Aid Program's 2025–2026 funding round, according to a Facebook post from the Australian Embassy to the FSM.

The project will assist households including retirees, people with disabilities, single female-headed households and families experiencing financial hardship.

It builds on earlier Direct Aid Program greenhouse projects first established in 2017. The embassy reported that more than 25 family greenhouses have already

been constructed and that a growing number of households are waiting to participate.

By helping families grow vegetables locally, the initiative aims to improve nutrition, reduce reliance on imported produce and strengthen food security. The embassy said the project also supports climate resilience and community-led development.

"By supporting households to grow their own food, we are helping improve food security, strengthen resilience, and create opportunities for people to provide for their families," Grant said.

Grant also welcomed the continued success of the earlier greenhouses and the strong community demand for the initiative.

The embassy reaffirmed Australia's support for partnerships with local organizations that improve livelihoods through practical community projects.



Australian ambassador visits Pohnpei weather office, highlights forecasting support

The Kaselehlie Press

October 14, 2026

POHNPEI — Australian Ambassador Grant visited Pohnpei's National Weather Service Office, where staff demonstrated Australian-funded climate monitoring tools and released a weather balloon used to collect atmospheric data.

According to a Facebook post from the Australian Embassy to the FSM, the meteorological team showcased software provided through the Australian Government-funded Climate and Oceans Support Program in the Pacific, known as COSPPac.

The program supports Pacific national meteorological and hydrological services, along with land and survey departments, by developing data, tools

and technical skills.

During the visit, Grant also received a briefing on a Continuous Global Positioning System donated by Australia. The system measures tectonic plate movements and operates alongside the tide gauge at Pohnpei Port.

The weather balloon release demonstrated another aspect of the office's work, gathering atmospheric information to support forecasting and monitoring.

"Thank you to the team for sharing the important information and insights that help us better understand our weather conditions," Grant said. "The information you provide is essential to keeping our communities informed and prepared."



The embassy reaffirmed Australia's commitment to working with the FSM and other Pacific countries to make climate and ocean services accessible, inclusive and culturally relevant.

President Simina meets with FAA officials in Honolulu

FSM Information Services

October 10, 2026

HONOLULU, Hawaii — His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), met with officials and staff of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in Honolulu, Hawaii, to discuss the agency's ongoing work with the FSM and personally express appreciation for their continued support.

President Simina acknowledged the longstanding partnership between the FSM and the FAA and thanked the agency for its continued financial and technical assistance for airport improvements across the FSM. This support includes improvements to Kosrae International Airport valued at approximately \$60 million, with an anticipated additional investment of \$20 million, as well as the recently completed runway resurfacing project at Yap International Airport, valued at approximately \$33 million. He also recognized the FAA's work with Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) services in the FSM to strengthen airport emergency

response capabilities

Both sides recognized the important role of aviation infrastructure in strengthening connectivity and supporting economic development across the FSM.

During the discussions, President Simina and members of his delegation emphasized the importance of continued cooperation in training and capacity building to strengthen local expertise and ensure compliance with FAA requirements and aviation safety standards.

The meeting reaffirmed the shared commitment to strengthening cooperation and advancing safe and reliable air transportation in the FSM.



Medical internship program proposed for Pohnpei State Hospital

Pohnpei Public Information

PEI LAPALAP, Pohnpei — Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and Lt. Governor Herolyn S. Movick received a delegation of visiting medical specialists from Fiji National University (FNU) at the Governor's Office on Thursday. The visiting delegation included Dr. Mai Ling S. Perman, Head of School of Medical Sciences at the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences; Dr. Vikash Sharma, Internal Medicine Specialist; Dr. Julia Sign, Obstetrics and Gynecology Specialist; Dr. Shivani Shailin, Emergency Medicine Specialist; and Dr. Haikiu Taukave, Surgeon. Accompanying the visiting team were Dr. Payne Perman and Dr. Ratu Cakobau, Acting Chief of Medical Services, who participated in discussions focused on building sustainable healthcare infrastructure and expanding medical education opportunities in Pohnpei. Dr. Mayleen Ekiek, Representative from the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs, also joined the group.

The official visit represents a crucial advancement in long-term strategic planning to establish a structured medical internship program at Pohnpei State

Hospital. The visiting FNU medical specialists are currently conducting on-site evaluations to assess hospital capacity, caseloads, clinical supervision structures, and existing operational capabilities required to host a robust residency and internship pipeline.

During the meeting, state leadership and visiting experts addressed critical structural gaps in local physician career pathways, specifically identifying a missing entry-level internship tier for newly graduated medical professionals. To support the execution of the program, a supplementary budget dedicated to supporting medical interns is being established, backed by complementary financial assistance from the FSM National Government.

Dr. Mai Ling S. Perman, Head of the School of Medical Sciences at Fiji National University, emphasized that Pohnpei State Hospital possesses the necessary foundation to run a successful clinical training program, citing sufficient patient caseloads, qualified medical supervisors, and support mechanisms from regional partners such as the Pacific Community (SPC), which will assist with



short-term specialized courses.

The proposed training framework will prioritize competence, clinical safety, and accreditation standards. In addition to technical medical training, the initiative emphasizes essential professional skills, including bedside manner and direct patient communication. The program will also extend training opportunities to nursing staff, establishing clear career progression routes to transition to Physician I roles.

"We are happy to see light at the end of the tunnel for building the capacity

of our newly graduated physicians," said Governor Stevenson A. Joseph. He further noted that establishing a structured, accredited internship program right here at home ensures our healthcare professionals receive the training they need while serving our community with high-quality, compassionate care.

The Pohnpei State Government Department of Health and Social Services and FNU specialists will continue collaborative assessments over the coming days to finalize the program structure, curriculum requirements, and operational roadmap for implementation.

FSM leaders reflect on stronger ties with Australia as Ambassador Grant departs

FSM Information Services

October 16, 2026

PALIKIR, Pohnpei — His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), received Her Excellency Jenny Grant, Australian Ambassador to the FSM, for a farewell meeting on October 15, marking the conclusion of her posting.

President Simina thanked Ambassador Grant for her service and contributions to strengthening relations between the FSM and Australia. He reflected on key developments in the bilateral relationship, including his first state visit to Australia, the first by an FSM President in over 30 years, and the opening of the FSM Embassy in Canberra. He reaffirmed the FSM's commitment to continued cooperation between the two countries.

Later that evening, the Honorable Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the FSM, joined partners and friends for a farewell dinner at Ambassador Grant's residence, where he delivered remarks on behalf of the FSM leadership and the people of the FSM.

Vice President Palik highlighted the practical benefits

of the FSM-Australia partnership, from improved connectivity through the East Micronesia Cable to expanded education and scholarship opportunities, and cooperation on renewable energy across all four states. He also expressed appreciation for Australia's support for the FSM Contingent Emergency Response Project, underscoring the importance of continued cooperation in strengthening disaster preparedness and response.

Reflecting on the friendships and people-to-people ties underpinning the partnership, Vice President Palik extended best wishes to Ambassador Grant in her future endeavors.



United continues Starlink rollout with installations underway on Boeing 737 MAX 8 fleet on Guam

United Airlines

October 13, 2026

CHICAGO and HAGÂTÑA, Guam – United Airlines® is continuing to rollout fast, free Starlink Wi-Fi for MileagePlus® members, with installations now underway on the airline's Boeing 737 MAX 8 fleet.

United has completed installation on two of its Guam-based MAX 8 aircraft, among the first of the airline's MAX 8 fleet to receive Starlink. United Chief Customer Officer David Kinzelman traveled to Guam to announce the milestone today at a press conference at Antonio B. Won Pat International Airport.

The addition of Starlink comes as United confirms it has completed the transition of its Guam-based fleet to newer Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft ahead of schedule, delivering a more modern onboard experience for customers traveling throughout Guam, Micronesia and the broader Pacific region.

"Guam is where two of our biggest customer investments come together," said David Kinzelman, United's Chief Customer Officer. "We said we would replace the entire Guam fleet with MAX 8 aircraft by the end of this year, and we've finished early. Now those same aircraft are among the first MAX 8s in our fleet to get Starlink. Starlink is a game changer for our customers, delivering the fast, reliable connectivity they expect, and we're proud that our Guam-based aircraft are among

the first of our MAX 8s to receive it."

Bringing Starlink to Guam

Starlink uses low-Earth orbit satellites to deliver fast and reliable internet connectivity, including over oceans and in remote regions that have traditionally been difficult to reach with conventional inflight Wi-Fi. The technology is particularly impactful across United's Pacific network, where many flights operate over long stretches of open ocean and connect remote communities.

United customers using Starlink can stay connected with family and friends, access information and services online, work remotely and enjoy entertainment throughout their journey, with a faster, more responsive internet experience in flight than traditional broadband services available in many parts of Micronesia.

United has been rapidly expanding Starlink and expects to complete installations throughout its fleet before the end of 2027. Since launching Starlink Wi-Fi last spring, United has flown more than 36.6 million passengers on Starlink-equipped aircraft across more than 527,000 flights, powering 14.4 million devices — and Wi-Fi customer satisfaction scores on those airplanes nearly doubled during that time. Starlink is now available on about 46% of United's daily flights.

Starlink is free for MileagePlus members in every class of service and allows customers to connect multiple devices

at the same time. Customers will receive a notification before their flight if it's equipped with Starlink. Visit united.com/starlink for additional information.

United Completes Guam MAX 8 Transition Ahead of Schedule

United has also completed the replacement of its Guam-based Boeing 737-800 fleet with ten newer Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft, ahead of its previously announced schedule. The MAX 8 aircraft feature United's signature interior with seatback entertainment at every seat, larger overhead bins, more extra-legroom seating, USB charging and wireless Bluetooth connectivity.

The airline first unveiled its Guam-based MAX 8 fleet in March this year, with the aircraft progressively introduced on routes throughout the region. The MAX 8 aircraft now operate all United's narrowbody flying from Guam, including service throughout Micronesia and to destinations across Asia.

United's Guam-based narrowbody fleet serves 15 destinations from Guam, including the airline's unique Island Hopper service. United also operates extensive service between Guam and Japan and flights throughout the region.

United's Boeing 737 MAX 8s have 164 seats, including 14 United First® seats, and feature 13-inch high-definition screens in United First and 10-inch HD screens in United Economy®. The aircraft are also

specially configured to support the needs of communities across Micronesia; the front rows of Economy can be converted when necessary to accommodate a medical stretcher for patients requiring medevac transportation.

Investing in Guam

The introduction of Starlink is the latest in a series of significant investments United has made in Guam over the past 12 months.

In addition to introducing the new MAX 8 fleet, United has refreshed its check-in lobby at Antonio B. Won Pat International Airport, including new next-generation kiosks and a redesigned layout intended to create a more streamlined experience and reduce congestion for customers.

Together, the investments are designed to provide a more consistent, modern experience for customers from the moment they arrive at the airport through their time onboard.

United is one of the largest private employers in the region, with more than 1,000 employees throughout Guam and Micronesia, many of whom have worked for the airline for more than 30 years. As Guam's hometown airline, United also supports numerous nonprofit organizations across the region through annual donations and hundreds of volunteer hours from local employees.

Woleai residents accelerate water tank installations as drought conditions worsen

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlle Press

October 13, 2026

WOLEAI, Yap — Residents of Woleai Atoll are working to complete the installation of water storage tanks provided through the FSM Adaptation Fund Project as El Niño-related dry conditions and an ongoing drought increase concerns about the community's water supply.

According to a Facebook post from the Yap State Government, the community has already installed numerous water tanks but remains concerned that the available water storage capacity

will not be sufficient if the drought continues for an extended period.

Vincent Urumar, the Adaptation Fund Project Coordinator on Woleai, reported that residents have increased the pace of installation work in response to worsening dry conditions.

The tanks are intended to improve the community's ability to store water and maintain supplies during periods of limited rainfall.

Water security is a particular concern for remote atoll communities such as Woleai, where freshwater resources are limited and extended dry periods

can place considerable pressure on household water supplies.

The ongoing installation work is part of the Adaptation Fund Project's efforts to help communities prepare for climate-related challenges and strengthen their ability to withstand changing weather conditions.

Although the project has already provided additional water storage capacity, the government's update indicates that more work is necessary to ensure the community can meet its needs during a prolonged drought.

The report did not specify how many

tanks have been installed, how many remain to be completed, or the total water storage capacity that the project is expected to provide.

The Yap State Government said the project continues to support improvements in community resilience and access to water as remote island communities face the effects of climate variability.

For Woleai residents, completing the remaining installations has become an immediate priority as the community works to prepare for the possibility of continued dry weather.

Yap Governor meets World Bank representatives on road and bridge projects

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

October 12, 2026

Yap, FSM—Yap Governor Francis Itimai met with representatives of the World Bank on October 12 to discuss the commencement of infrastructure projects intended to improve roads and bridges and strengthen the state's transportation network against climate-related damage.

According to a Facebook post from the Yap State Government, the meeting took place at 9:30 a.m. at the Governor's Office. Itimai was joined by the Director of the Office of Administrative Services and the Deputy Director of the Department of Public Works and Transportation.

Discussions centered on two World Bank-supported initiatives: the Prioritized Road Investment and Management Enhancements (PRIME) Project and the Strengthening Climate Resilience of Secondary Roads (SCORE) Project.

The PRIME Project focuses on improvements to primary roads and bridges, while SCORE targets strategic

secondary roads, with an emphasis on improving transportation access and strengthening infrastructure against climate-related impacts.

Among the projects discussed was the Manta Ray Twin Bridge project, which falls under PRIME, along with proposed road improvements in the Western Loop area.

The projects are intended to improve connectivity between communities and provide more reliable transportation infrastructure, particularly in areas vulnerable to flooding, erosion, and other weather-related damage.

Road and bridge improvements are especially important in Yap, where residents depend on the transportation network for access to schools, healthcare facilities, businesses, and government services.

The World Bank-supported projects are part of broader efforts to improve transportation infrastructure throughout the Federated States of Micronesia while addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

During the meeting, Governor Itimai



expressed appreciation to the World Bank representatives for their continued support of infrastructure development in Yap State.

The Yap State Government said the courtesy call provided an opportunity to discuss the commencement of the projects and continued coordination among the organizations responsible for their implementation.

The government's announcement did not identify the World Bank representatives who attended, provide

estimated construction costs, or specify when work on the Manta Ray Twin Bridge and Western Loop road improvements would begin.

It also did not provide anticipated completion dates for either project.

The meeting nevertheless indicated that the state government and World Bank representatives are continuing preparations for transportation improvements intended to provide safer and more dependable road access for Yap's communities.

Yap youth representative completes UN disaster preparedness training

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

October 7, 2026

Yap — Fauna Gimots, a representative of the Yap State Department of Youth and Civic Affairs, has completed a four-week United Nations online training program focused on tsunami awareness, disaster preparedness, and youth leadership in disaster risk reduction.

According to a Facebook post from the Yap State Government, Gimots received a Certificate of Participation on October 7 after successfully completing the Youth Leaders for World Tsunami Awareness Day 2026 Online Course, organized by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

The self-paced program ran from September 1 through September 30 and brought together young people between the ages of 14 and 25 from across the Asia-Pacific region.

Participants completed four online learning modules and related activities designed to improve their understanding of disaster risks and the measures communities can take to reduce their vulnerability to natural hazards.

The course introduced participants to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, an international agreement that provides guidance for reducing disaster risks, protecting lives, and strengthening community resilience.

Participants examined disaster case studies from across the Asia-Pacific region to identify lessons that could help communities improve preparedness and respond more effectively to emergencies.

The training also addressed the importance of early warning systems, evacuation procedures, and timely communication in reducing the loss of life and damage caused by disasters.

Another component focused on inclusive, community-based disaster risk reduction and the concept of "Building Back Better," which encourages communities to improve resilience during recovery and reconstruction following disasters.

The program emphasized the role young people can play in preparing their communities for emergencies, sharing information, and participating in local disaster risk reduction activities.

As part of the course requirements, participants developed personal Disaster Action Plans covering risk assessment, preparedness, early warning, and recovery.

The exercise was intended to help participants apply the knowledge gained during the training to practical disaster preparedness activities.

The Yap State Department of Youth and

Civic Affairs said opportunities such as the UNITAR course help young people develop skills and knowledge that can contribute to safer and better-prepared communities.

The department recognized Gimots's successful completion of the program as a contribution to strengthening youth participation in disaster risk reduction and tsunami awareness efforts.

The government announcement did not provide details of Gimots's Disaster Action Plan or indicate whether she plans to use the training to develop specific disaster preparedness activities in Yap.

Her completion of the course adds to efforts to encourage young people to participate in community preparedness and develop a better understanding of the risks posed by tsunamis and other natural disasters.

Pacific Pre-COP31 meetings reflect a legacy of climate leadership

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

October 5, 2026

NADI, Fiji - As the Pacific commences its hosting of the Pre-COP31 meetings in Fiji and Tuvalu, Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders are drawing on decades of climate leadership and advocacy to drive greater global ambition, keep 1.5°C within reach, and ensure that Pacific priorities and solutions are at the heart of global climate action.

Pacific countries were among the first to ratify the Paris Agreement contributing to its historic milestone as the fastest international environmental agreement to come into force, less than a year after it was agreed upon. It is fitting, therefore, that the world's spotlight is focused on the Pacific as the ten-year anniversary of the Paris Agreement's entry into force draws near.

"The Pacific has never been a bystander in the global climate conversation - we have been leaders in shaping it. As we come together for the Pre-COP discussions in Fiji and Tuvalu, we carry that legacy of leadership with a clear purpose: to keep 1.5°C within reach, advance Pacific-led solutions, and ensure global climate action delivers for the communities on the frontlines of this crisis," said PIF Secretary General, Baron Divavesi Waqa.

The COP31 Türkiye and Australia partnership modality, with the Pacific a key player, is a unique and unprecedented opportunity to place Small Island Developing States, particularly Pacific priorities and issues, at the forefront of climate discussions and actions. This is an important opportunity to continue to demonstrate

Pacific leadership in climate action, extending beyond advocacy to Pacific-led solutions.

The establishment of the Pacific Resilience Facility further demonstrates the region's determination to shape financing solutions that respond to Pacific priorities and realities, with the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent providing a long-term regional framework for collective action and resilience.

The Pre-COP meeting provides an opportunity to build on a powerful sequence of Pacific-led political commitments. Through the B.E.L.A.U. Declaration, Pacific Islands Forum Leaders issued a clear call for urgent and inclusive action to keep 1.5°C within reach. The Pre-COP31 Leaders' events in Tuvalu and Fiji bring the

realities of climate change into the discussions, further reinforcing the Pacific's unified call for stronger global climate action, and ambition that must now be matched by implementation.

The Pacific's call remains clear - keep 1.5°C within reach, accelerate the transition to a resilient and low-emissions future, scale up accessible and predictable climate finance, and ensure that those on the frontlines of the climate crisis are not left behind.

As the Pacific has consistently demonstrated, climate leadership is not only about speaking to the world about the challenges facing the Blue Pacific region. It is also about bringing solutions, building partnerships, and turning commitments into action.

Simina discusses security cooperation, Yap defense project with U.S. officials

FSM Information Services

October 10, 2026

HALAWA, Hawaii — His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), met with Deputy Commander Lieutenant General George B. Rowell of the United States Pacific Command (USPACOM), at the Command's headquarters in Hawaii to discuss ongoing defense cooperation and regional security priorities.

President Simina and his delegation received a briefing on USPACOM's operations and strategic priorities, including efforts to strengthen regional security, enhance defense partnerships, and maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Discussions also covered opportunities

to strengthen cooperation in maritime security, cybersecurity, climate-related security challenges, and capacity building. These areas are important to protecting the FSM's maritime resources, strengthening national resilience, and safeguarding the security and well-being of its citizens. President Simina also encouraged continued close communication and coordination between both sides on matters of mutual interest and concern.

President Simina expressed the FSM's appreciation for the United States' longstanding defense and security partnership under the Compact of Free Association. He also acknowledged the ongoing cooperation on the Defense Site Project in Yap State, emphasizing the importance of continued coordination among the FSM National Government, Yap State Government, and the United States as the project moves forward.

The meeting reaffirms the strong and enduring FSM-U.S. partnership and the shared commitment to advancing peace, security, and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.



Palik hears concerns of FSM citizens during three-city visit

FSM Information Services

PALIKIR, Pohnpei — The Honorable Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), has concluded a series of outreach visits to FSM citizens in Sacramento, Seattle, and Vancouver while en route back to the FSM following his participation in the 81st United Nations General Assembly in New York. The visits formed part of the Simina-Palik Administration's continued engagement with FSM communities abroad.

The gatherings provided opportunities to hear directly from citizens, answer questions, and discuss issues affecting FSM citizens residing in the United States. Vice President Palik acknowledged the growing FSM communities abroad and emphasized the importance of maintaining communication so that their experiences and concerns are heard and taken into account by the National Government.

Discussions covered REAL ID requirements, I-94 documentation,



dual citizenship, and access to services. Additional topics included medical referral funding, U.S. naturalization and its implications for land ownership in the FSM, passport updates, and employment documentation. Citizens also raised human trafficking concerns related to non-domiciled commercial



driver's licenses, travel screening involving past criminal histories, Social Security benefits, and scholarship eligibility.

Vice President Palik encouraged citizens to remain responsible and law-abiding members of their host communities while maintaining strong ties to the FSM. He also encouraged young Micronesians to contribute to national development, whether by returning home or supporting the FSM from abroad.

The Vice President thanked the communities for their warm reception and expressed appreciation to the church leaders, community leaders, and organizers who helped bring citizens together.

Vice President Palik was accompanied by Jackson Soram, FSM Ambassador to the United States; Iven Yaropiy, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs; Ari Skilling, Special Assistant to the Vice President; and FSM Embassy staff.

Fiji pledges US\$10 million as Pacific climate finance drive gains momentum ahead of COP31

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

October 9, 2026

NADI, Fiji - Pacific Leaders and global partners are advancing a shared regional commitment to strengthen access to climate and disaster resilience financing, with new contributions towards the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF) announced during the Pacific Pre-COP31 meetings in Nadi, Fiji.

At the high-level event, Turning Climate Finance into Community Resilience, the Prime Minister of Fiji, Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka, announced a US\$10 million contribution to the capitalization of the PRF.

The Government of Denmark also announced a US\$2.3 million contribution, while the Government of the Netherlands pledged a further US\$1 million, with both contributions supporting the operationalization of the Pacific Resilience Facility.

The commitments reinforce growing

international support for the Pacific's efforts to establish a financing mechanism designed by and for the region, ensuring that climate finance reaches communities and people on the frontline of climate change.

Pacific Islands Forum Leaders reaffirmed the PRF as the pre-eminent climate investment priority for the region at their annual meeting held in Palau in early September. The PRF represents a significant expression of Pacific climate leadership, with an initial capitalization target of US\$500 million, working towards US\$1.5 billion to support a 1.5°C world.

Established by the Pacific Islands Forum members, the PRF is designed to mobilize accessible, predictable and sustainable financing for climate and disaster resilience, placing Pacific priorities, ownership, and decision-making at the center of regional climate finance.

Welcoming the further contributions to

the Pacific Resilience Family, Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General, Baron Divavesi Waqa said, "The Pacific has long been at the forefront of the global climate agenda, not simply calling for action, but advancing Pacific-led solutions. The Pacific Resilience Facility is a clear expression of that leadership, putting Pacific priorities, Pacific ownership, and Pacific solutions at the heart of building a more resilient region.

"I warmly welcome the continued leadership of the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders and members, as well as the vital support of our partners for the Pacific Resilience Facility."

With the latest commitments, total pledges to the PRF now stand at US\$190 million, adding further



momentum towards fully capitalizing the Facility and strengthening its capacity to deliver practical support to communities across the Pacific.

As the Pacific moves towards COP31, the PRF provides a clear pathway from climate advocacy to implementation, strengthening Pacific-led solutions, mobilizing climate finance, and ensuring that global commitments respond to the realities and priorities of Pacific communities.

Pohnpei governor calls for mental health support shaped by lived experience

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlle Press

October 11, 2026

KOLONIA, Pohnpei — Governor Stevenson A. Joseph has called for people affected by mental health challenges to have a greater voice in shaping services and policies, issuing a World Mental Health Day proclamation that urges action beyond awareness.

Signed October 10, Executive Proclamation No. 26-11 carries the theme “Lived Experiences Heard, Real Voices, Real Change.” It calls on families, schools, workplaces, public officials, health professionals and community leaders to listen without judgment and help people access

appropriate support.

The proclamation identifies stigma, discrimination, social isolation and barriers to timely services as continuing difficulties for people living with mental health challenges, their families and caregivers.

It emphasizes that their experiences are essential to understanding community needs, improving services and developing effective, lasting responses. The voices of young people, families, caregivers, advocates and affected communities should be incorporated into decisions that influence their lives,

the proclamation states.

Joseph also calls for people with lived experience to participate meaningfully in mental health planning, policy development, service delivery and decision-making.

The proclamation describes mental health as an essential part of overall well-being and the strength of individuals, families and communities. It stresses that lasting progress requires sustained work on prevention, early intervention, access to care, recovery and inclusion.

Among its calls to action are challenging

discrimination, encouraging respectful discussion of mental and emotional well-being, and supporting individuals and families seeking assistance.

Sharing personal experiences can strengthen understanding and encourage others to seek support, the proclamation states, while affirming that no one should face mental health challenges alone.

It concludes by calling for listening to lead to practical improvements in community support and for every person to be heard, respected and treated with dignity.

Pohnpei honors former Congressman Onlino Lawrence with three days of mourning

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlle Press

October 16, 2026

KOLONIA, Pohnpei — Governor Stevenson A. Joseph declared three days of mourning in honor of former FSM Congressman Onlino Lawrence, who died October 13 at Pohnpei State Hospital. He was 75.

Executive Proclamation No. 26-12, signed October 16, designated October 16–18 as the mourning period and directed all flags to be flown at

half-staff.

Lawrence represented Pohnpei's Election District 2, comprising Madolenihmw and Kitti, in the FSM Congress. His public service also included work as a teacher, an FSM Personnel staff member, an officer at the FSM Development Bank, manager at the Pohnpei Social Security Administration, and executive director of the Pohnpei Housing Authority.

At the community level, Lawrence served as a delegate to the Kitti

Constitutional Convention and as an elected member of the Isokohnedi, later serving as its speaker.

Born in Pohnpei on August 26, 1951, Lawrence was remembered in the proclamation for serving the people of Pohnpei and Micronesia with dignity, respect and integrity.

Joseph extended condolences to Lawrence's family and described his death as a great loss to the people of Pohnpei.



Opinion Editorial

It is deeply concerning that our schools are facing a lack of school bus services while some teachers in Pohnpei are still waiting to receive their salaries for Pay Period 21. Behind every delayed paycheck are families struggling to meet their basic needs, pay bills, put food on the table, and provide for their children. Teachers and their families deserve respect, financial security, and timely compensation for the services they provide to our communities.

At a time when our people need solutions, cooperation, and decisive

leadership, it is discouraging to see government directors debating mistakes and pointing fingers at one another over who should be blamed rather than working together to correct the financial management mistake. Leadership is not about proving who made a mistake; it is about taking responsibility, finding solutions, and ensuring that essential public services continue without unnecessary disruption.

Our students deserve reliable transportation to school, our

teachers deserve to be paid on time, and our families deserve leaders who understand the real-life consequences of administrative mistakes. Government positions carry responsibilities, and those responsibilities must always be guided by service, accountability, teamwork, and compassion for the people.

The people should never have to bear the burden of disagreements among those entrusted to serve them. Instead of focusing on blame, our leaders should focus on solutions. Instead of

defending positions, they should work together. And instead of disregarding the livelihoods of families, they must remember that every decision made in government affects real people, real homes, and real futures.

Pohnpei deserves leadership that works together, takes responsibility, and puts the welfare of its people first. Public service is not about protecting one's reputation; it is about fulfilling one's duty to the people.

Dennis Poll

Yap officials warn residents of health risks from regional smoke and haze

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

October 13, 2026

Yap —The Yap State Disaster Coordinating Officer has issued a public health advisory warning residents to take precautions against smoke and haze drifting into the state from fires elsewhere in the Western Pacific region.

According to an announcement shared by the Yap State Government, the advisory was issued on October 13 following weeks of reduced visibility and deteriorating air quality on Yap Main Island. Haze has been affecting the island since September and became increasingly dense in early October.

The advisory attributed the conditions to widespread drought associated with a strong El Niño weather pattern, which has contributed to wildfires and agricultural fires in parts of Indonesia, particularly Sumatra and Borneo, as well as Papua New Guinea.

Smoke from those fires has been carried across the region by prevailing winds and persistent weather patterns, reaching Yap and affecting air quality.

The Disaster Coordinating Officer urged residents to reduce their

exposure to the smoke, particularly during periods when the haze is especially heavy.

Residents were advised to limit strenuous outdoor activities and keep doors and windows closed to reduce the amount of smoke entering their homes.

People who must spend extended periods outdoors were encouraged to wear properly fitted protective masks, preferably N95 respirators or equivalent protection, to reduce their exposure to fine particles carried in the smoke.

The advisory placed particular emphasis on protecting children, older adults, and people with asthma, heart disease, or other respiratory conditions, who may be more susceptible to health problems caused by poor air quality.

Smoke from vegetation fires contains fine airborne particles that can irritate the respiratory system and aggravate existing heart and lung conditions. Prolonged exposure can pose additional risks, especially for people with underlying health problems.

Health officials urged anyone experiencing difficulty breathing, chest pain, or other severe symptoms

to seek medical attention promptly.

Residents were also encouraged to monitor official government announcements for updated information about air quality and additional public health recommendations.

The advisory did not provide specific air quality measurements or indicate when the smoke and haze might clear.

The Yap State Government encouraged residents to remain vigilant and follow official guidance while regional smoke continues to affect the island.



Joseph, Sports Commission review preparations for 2027 FSM Games

Pohnpei Public Information

October 9, 2026

PEI LAPALAP, Pohnpei — Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and Chief of Staff Patterson K. Shed met with Pohnpei State Sports Commission leadership and members to review preparations for the upcoming Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Games, scheduled for July 2027.

The delegation, led by Sports Commission Chair Johnny David Jr. and Sports Development Officer Ramsie Joab, presented key planning and policy documents for executive review. Commission members Elden John, Jerry Booth, Anderson Ponapart, Toshio

Akinaga, and Jerome Silbanuz joined them, along with Acting Chief of the Division of Social Services PJ Etnol.

The documents submitted outline foundational action steps, operational frameworks, and projected outcomes to ensure Pohnpei is fully equipped to host athletes, officials, and visitors from across the nation.

Governor Joseph and Chief of Staff Shed reaffirmed the administration's commitment to supporting the commission's efforts, noting that public updates, scheduling details, and venue preparations will be shared in the coming weeks and months as momentum builds toward July 2027.



Yap Governor calls for greater fraud awareness and accountability in government

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlle Press

October 12, 2026

Yap — Yap Governor Francis Itimai has issued a proclamation declaring November 15–21, 2026, as International Fraud Awareness Week in Yap State, calling attention to the financial and institutional damage caused by fraud and the importance of preventing, detecting, and reporting fraudulent activities.

According to a Facebook post from the Yap State Government, Itimai issued the proclamation on October 12, joining governments, organizations, and communities around the world in recognizing the annual awareness campaign.

The proclamation emphasizes that fraud involving public resources imposes costs on citizens and businesses, reduces government revenues, and damages public confidence in government institutions.

Itimai cited estimates from the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE), an international organization dedicated to reducing fraud, that a typical organization loses approximately five percent of its annual revenue to fraudulent activities.

The proclamation also identifies government institutions as frequent targets of fraud and warns that misconduct by individual employees can damage the reputations of public servants who perform their responsibilities honestly.

"Instances of fraud in state government undermine the good work and reputation of all state employees who complete their assigned duties with integrity and honesty and decrease confidence in public officials," the proclamation said.

The Governor further emphasized that fraud against the state creates financial burdens extending beyond the immediate loss of public funds.

According to the proclamation, those

costs include lost government revenues and resources, increased expenses for investigations and prosecutions, and the costs associated with incarcerating individuals convicted of fraudulent activities.

The proclamation places particular importance on the role of government employees in identifying and reporting suspected fraud.

It notes that information provided by employees is consistently the largest source through which fraudulent activities are detected.

The Governor called for greater employee awareness of the extent of fraud and improved education on methods for preventing, detecting, and reporting misconduct.

Such measures, the proclamation said, are essential to reducing fraud both against the Yap State Government and within its operations.

The declaration also draws attention to the broader consequences of fraud for public administration, including the loss of resources that could otherwise support government programs and services.

International Fraud Awareness Week is an annual initiative associated with the ACFE that encourages organizations to educate employees and the public about fraud risks, prevention measures, and reporting procedures.

The Yap State Government's announcement did not identify any specific fraud cases or indicate whether the state plans to conduct training sessions, public awareness activities, or other events during the November observance.

The proclamation formally establishes Yap State's participation in the international campaign and calls attention to the responsibility of government institutions and employees to protect public resources and maintain public trust.

Yap completes four projects to restore traditional cultural structures

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlle Press

October 9, 2026

Yap — The Yap State Historic Preservation Office (YHPO) and the Department of Youth and Civic Affairs (DYCA) participated in four closing ceremonies held October 6–9 to recognize the completion of cultural restoration projects in communities across Yap State.

According to a Facebook post from the Yap State Government, the projects were completed in September and involved repairs and restoration work on traditional houses, dancing platforms, and meeting places that have cultural and historical importance to their communities.

The four projects included repairs to the roof of a traditional house in Makiy, restoration of traditional dancing platforms in Riken, restoration of a meeting platform in Nimar, and roof repairs to a traditional house in Chool, Maap.

The restoration work was intended to preserve traditional architecture and maintain cultural spaces that continue to serve as gathering places for community activities and the practice of Yapese customs.

YHPO Officer Aloysius Guchbuw attended the ceremonies along with DYCA Acting Director John Waayan Fillmed, Public Information Officer Arlene Namar, and Gender Support Officer Jessica Fas.

The ceremonies provided opportunities for government representatives and community members to recognize the completion of the work and the importance of maintaining traditional structures for future generations.

Traditional houses, meeting platforms, and dancing grounds are important elements of Yap's cultural heritage. Beyond their

physical structures, these places provide settings for community gatherings, cultural activities, and the continuation of traditional practices.

The restoration projects reflect continuing efforts by the Historic Preservation Office and its partner agencies to protect sites of cultural significance while supporting the communities that maintain and use them.

According to the Yap State Government, cooperation between government agencies and local communities was an important part of completing the four projects.

The government said the initiatives demonstrate the value of continued collaboration in preserving traditional architecture and cultural spaces for present and future generations.

The announcement did not identify the source or amount of funding for the restoration work, the contractors or craftspeople involved, or the specific activities conducted during each closing ceremony.

With the four projects completed, the restored structures will continue to serve their respective communities and contribute to the preservation of Yap's cultural heritage.



Yap workshop helps Micronesian communities access climate adaptation funding

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

October 13, 2026

Yap — Representatives participating in the Resilient Communities Micronesia Workshop in Yap explored ways to strengthen local organizations, improve access to climate financing, and develop community-led projects that use natural ecosystems to reduce the impacts of climate change.

According to a Facebook post from the Yap State Government, the two-day workshop took place October 12–13 at iBoom and focused on building the organizational skills needed to develop and implement ecosystem-based adaptation projects throughout Micronesia.

The workshop was part of the Resilient Communities Micronesia program, which supports ecosystem-based adaptation in the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

Ecosystem-based adaptation, commonly known as EbA, uses the protection, restoration, and sustainable management of natural ecosystems to help communities respond to climate change.

For Pacific Island communities, such approaches can include protecting mangrove forests that reduce coastal erosion, conserving coral reefs that help buffer shorelines from wave action, and maintaining seagrass beds that support marine ecosystems and fisheries.

The three participating countries face growing threats from rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and increasingly severe weather events. These challenges threaten infrastructure, food security, and livelihoods, particularly in coastal communities that depend heavily on marine resources.

The Resilient Communities Micronesia program seeks to address those challenges by making climate adaptation financing more accessible to local organizations and communities through country-based small grant programs.

Rather than relying entirely on larger national or international projects, the initiative is intended to help communities identify their own priorities and develop practical solutions suited to local environmental and social conditions.

During the workshop, participants

examined the program's funding opportunities and the administrative, financial, and technical requirements organizations must meet to qualify for support.

Activities included organizational capacity assessments designed to identify strengths and areas needing improvement, as well as exercises to determine which funding tiers would be appropriate for different organizations.

Participants also reviewed the types of ecosystem-based adaptation activities eligible for financing and practiced preparing Expressions of Interest, an initial step in seeking project funding.

The workshop provided opportunities for participants to develop action plans, evaluate program tools, and recommend improvements to the application and implementation processes.

Regional cooperation was another focus of the discussions. Participants explored ways for organizations across the FSM, Marshall Islands, and Palau to share knowledge, experiences, and approaches to common climate challenges.

The program also recognizes the value

of combining traditional environmental knowledge with scientific research when developing climate adaptation measures.

In many Micronesian communities, generations of experience managing coastal and marine resources can contribute to projects intended to protect ecosystems while supporting local livelihoods.

According to the Yap State Government, the workshop was designed not only to introduce funding opportunities but also to strengthen the ability of local organizations to manage projects, meet financial and reporting requirements, and sustain adaptation efforts over time.

The government's announcement did not identify the participating organizations, specify the amount of grant funding available, or indicate when applications would open.

Through its small grant programs, organizational training, and regional networking activities, Resilient Communities Micronesia aims to give local communities a greater role in developing climate adaptation projects while protecting the ecosystems on which they depend.

Diarrheal illnesses remain on alert in Yap as dengue-like cases increase

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

October 15, 2026

Yap, FSM—Health officials in Yap State reported that diarrheal illnesses remained above the established alert threshold for the eighth consecutive week, while an increase in dengue-like illnesses prompted a new alert during Epidemiological Week 41 (EpiWeek 41).

According to a public health surveillance update shared by the Yap State Government, health facilities documented 561 patient encounters during the reporting period. Although the number of diarrheal cases declined, the illness continued to exceed the threshold used by health officials to identify potentially concerning disease activity.

Nine diarrheal cases were reported during the week, including four at the Yap Main Hospital outpatient department, two at Gagil Community Health Center, and one each at Nimgil Community Health Center, Mogmog Dispensary, and Lamotrek.

Laboratory testing identified intestinal pathogens in three patients. One patient had a co-infection involving Adenovirus and enteropathogenic *Escherichia coli* (EPEC), while another tested positive for enteroaggregative *E. coli* (EAEC). A third patient tested positive for Rotavirus.

The continued alert follows several weeks of heightened monitoring of diarrheal illnesses in Yap, although the latest figures indicate a decline in newly reported cases.

Meanwhile, health officials placed

dengue-like illness (DLI) on alert status after recording six cases at the Yap Main Hospital outpatient department during the reporting week. The increase exceeded the established alert threshold.

However, laboratory testing did not confirm dengue infection. Health officials reported that all 14 samples tested for dengue and leptospirosis returned negative results.

The distinction is important because dengue-like illness refers to symptoms consistent with dengue fever rather than laboratory-confirmed cases of the disease. The surveillance report did not identify the causes of the six reported illnesses.

Influenza-like illness (ILI) also increased for the fourth consecutive week, although the number of cases remained below the alert threshold.

Health facilities reported 24 cases across seven surveillance sites. Five were recorded at the Main Hospital outpatient department, four each at Gagil Community Health Center and Ifalik, three each at Ulithi, Elato, and Satawal, and two at Mogmog.

No respiratory laboratory tests were conducted during the reporting period.

The surveillance figures indicate that diarrheal illness remains a continuing public health concern in Yap, while health officials are also monitoring increases in dengue-like and influenza-like symptoms.

Although both diarrhea and dengue-like illness have reached alert status, the report does not indicate that health authorities have declared an outbreak of either disease.

Yap election officials assist Guam residents with voter registration and absentee ballots

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlle Press

October 8, 2026

Yap — Yap State officials are working with election board members in Guam to address voter concerns and provide registration and absentee ballot assistance ahead of the November 3 election.

According to a Facebook post from the Yap State Government, representatives of the 11th Yap State Legislature, the State Attorney General, and the Election Commissioner participated in several virtual meetings with election board members in Guam to discuss election procedures, voter eligibility requirements, and concerns raised by Yapese citizens living there.

The meetings were intended to clarify voting requirements and help ensure that eligible voters residing outside Yap

have the information and assistance necessary to participate in the election.

In addition to the virtual discussions, election officials are providing in-person assistance in Guam for new voter registrations, re-registrations, and absentee ballot requests.

Students from Yap who are currently attending educational institutions in Guam may register as new voters. According to the government announcement, students seeking registration must present a valid FSM passport or birth certificate along with an enrollment letter from their school.

Officials are also assisting previously registered voters whose names have changed and no longer match the information recorded on the election master list.

Those voters can receive help resolving

discrepancies and completing the requirements necessary to update their registration information.

Assistance is also available for voters who need guidance in requesting absentee ballots or completing related election procedures.

The Yap State Government advised individuals seeking assistance to bring their FSM passports and any other supporting documents needed for their particular circumstances.

The initiative is intended to address concerns among Yapese constituents living in Guam, where residents who remain eligible to vote in Yap elections may face additional challenges completing registration requirements and obtaining absentee ballots.

By coordinating with election board members in Guam, Yap officials

hope to provide clearer information about voting procedures and reduce administrative difficulties that could prevent eligible voters from participating.

The government's announcement did not specify the dates or locations of the in-person assistance sessions, identify registration or absentee ballot application deadlines, or indicate how many voters have received assistance.

It also did not specify which offices or positions will appear on the November 3 ballot.

The Yap State Government said the coordination between the Legislature, Attorney General, Election Commissioner, and Guam election board members is part of continuing efforts to assist eligible Yapese voters living outside the state as Election Day approaches.

Yap shares cervical cancer screening experience as FSM develops national elimination policy

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlle Press

October 9, 2026

Pohnpei, FSM—Three health representatives from Yap State participated in a national workshop in Pohnpei aimed at developing the Federated States of Micronesia's first National Cervical Cancer Elimination Policy and operational guidelines.

According to a Facebook post from the Yap State Government, Kassandra Lelman, Rolmy Hasugoiram, and Martina Reichhardt represented Yap at the FSM Cervical Cancer Elimination Policy Development Workshop, held October 5–9 at the Island Palms Hotel in Pohnpei.

The workshop brought together representatives from FSM national and state health departments, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Kirby Institute, and other organizations involved in women's health and cancer prevention.

Yap's participation was particularly important because it is currently the only FSM state with an established cervical cancer screening program that uses human papillomavirus (HPV) DNA testing as its primary screening method, allows women to collect their own samples, and conducts laboratory testing on-island.

The Yap representatives shared their experiences operating the program and discussed lessons that could help the other three FSM states establish similar screening services.

HPV is a common virus, and persistent infection with certain high-risk types can lead to cervical cancer. HPV DNA testing identifies these infections, allowing health providers to identify women who may need additional examination or follow-up care.

Self-collection sampling can also make screening more accessible by allowing women to collect their own samples rather than requiring a healthcare provider to perform the collection procedure.

During the five-day workshop,

participants examined gaps in existing services, including HPV vaccination, cervical cancer screening, diagnosis, referrals, and treatment.

They identified several priorities for the proposed national policy, including standardized healthcare protocols, better coordination among participating organizations, and the development of a national strategy and action plan consistent with WHO cervical cancer elimination targets.

The workshop was intended to help establish a coordinated national approach while allowing individual states to develop screening programs suited to their healthcare systems and available resources.

The initiative received support through the Government of Japan-funded Improving Maternal Health in FSM project.

In its announcement, the Yap State Government expressed appreciation to UNFPA, the FSM

national health authorities, and the Government of Japan for their continued assistance in improving women's health services.

Yap's representatives also extended their best wishes to the other state teams as they work toward establishing their own cervical cancer screening programs.

The development of a national policy would provide a common framework for expanding prevention, screening, and treatment services throughout the FSM. However, the government announcement did not specify when the proposed policy and operational guidelines would be finalized or formally adopted.

