

Four charged in theft of weapons and other items from FSM National Police

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

October 20, 2017

Chuuk, FSM—Four young men were charged today with a total of 10 felonies filed by the FSM National Government today in Weno. The charges are related to the theft of firearms, ammunition, a laptop and other items from the Chuuk headquarters of the FSM National Police on October 12.

Morgan Alex Serious, Kthree Mataichy, Limo Elimo, and a 16 year old defendant are charged with the crimes. Police arrested the defendants, one of whom is the son of the Chuuk Governor, yesterday. The State and National Leadership Conference was taking place in Chuuk at the time.

The Affidavit of Probable Cause by the investigating officer says that fingerprint evidence, eyewitness reports and confessions by some of the defendants support the Criminal Information filed by the National Government.

The Affidavit claims that on the evening of October 12, Elimo drove the three others to the complex where the National Police have an office. The three others allegedly jumped over a retaining wall behind the complex and opened a sliding glass window and unlocked the back door. Once inside they broke into locked cabinets and through locked doors. They stole a laptop computer, handguns, ammunition, "long guns" (.22 caliber rifles), police uniform items, a satellite phone, handcuffs, car keys to police vehicles, and other items. Some of the

weapons are used by National Police for the discharge of their duties. Some were being stored as evidence for outstanding criminal cases.

The affidavit claims that Elimo drove the three others who broke into the building. Those three carried some of the stolen goods to Elimo's "black Trailblazer" SUV, loaded them into the vehicle and left. It claims that later on that night or early the next morning three of them returned again with Elimo driving to the building and made another trip to get the rest of the items they intended to steal.

Jessy Mefy told police that at about 9:00 on October 12 he was at his house in Penia when Elimo and three other males came to his house. He said that Elimo offered him rifles that were in his car in exchange for a

whole marijuana plant. Mefy told police that he agreed to the deal. He surrendered 12 .22 caliber rifles to the police with serial numbers that matched those that were locked in the cabinet at the National Police Office.

Three witnesses reported that on October 14 they had heard gunshots from the Mechitiw Causeway and saw the muzzle flashes coming from the black car that belongs to Elimo.

Other witnesses retrieved the spent cartridges that had been fired and turned them over to police.

According to the affidavit, Serious and the minor defendant said that they witnessed Elimo fire a black handgun from inside the car. They also confessed to other elements of the crimes as did Mataichy.

Two convicted and three cleared of Human Trafficking crimes in Chuuk

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

Weno, Chuuk—On October 6, the FSM Supreme Court in Chuuk ruled that Cortez Benedicto and Rieta Eram were guilty of crimes related to human trafficking. It was the FSM's first successful human trafficking conviction.

The charges had asserted that Tataichy Punan had participated in the crimes but he has been found to be not guilty.

During the same week the court found Hercules Jonatan Siega and Johnone Manaky to be not guilty of human trafficking crimes related to another alleged young victim.

Benedicto was convicted of Human Trafficking for taking a fourteen-year old girl to his GPPC construction campsite in 2015, where he engaged in various forms

of sexual conduct with the young girl with the knowledge of Rieta Eram. The court ruled that the Benedicto made payments of money and other material benefits to Rieta Eram. Benedicto faces up to 15 years in prison and or a fine of up to \$25,000 for that crime.

He was also convicted of the crime of Trafficking in Children for the same activities. He faces up to 30 years or a fine of \$50,000 for that crime.

Rieta Eram was also convicted of Human Trafficking for allowing her fourteen-year old sponsor girl to sleep with and have repeated sexual intercourse with Benedicto in exchange for cash and other material benefits. She faces up to 15 years in prison and or a fine of up to \$25,000. She was also convicted of Trafficking in Children which carries a penalty of up to 30 years or a fine of \$50,000.

The court will hold a telephonic sentencing hearing at 2:00 on October 27.

Tataichy Punan was cleared of all charges.

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U ensures management of its natural resources

The U Municipal Government (UMG) continues to demonstrate its leadership and commitment to managing their natural resources for the betterment of its residents and environment. Over the past year, with assistance from various financial and technical partners such as Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP), Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), Rare, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Pohnpei State GEFR2R project, and others; the UMG accomplished critical milestones toward improving and strengthening natural resource management, but additional staff is needed to implement the municipality's objectives. It's most recent initiative includes creating a permanent position, a Natural Resource Management Coordinator (NRMC), within their local governmental structure to spearhead conservation and management efforts in U. This new position will help coordinate and undertake efforts such as implementing the recently adopted U Municipal Fisheries Management Plan, the Nanwelin Rohi Forest

Stewardship Plan, and other municipal level activities. The individual hired will also help coordinate activities among State and National level agencies, U government units, and the communities of U.

Initial funding support for the recruitment and employment of the coordinator will be provided by the German BMUB funds and FSM CIP through a consortium of the U Municipal Government, the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), the Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP), and Rare. On October 16th, 2017, a small signing ceremony was held between UMG, MCT, and CSP to officially endorse this partnership. It is envisioned that the U Municipal Government will assume responsibility for the funding of this position through municipal budget allocations, state allocations, and other appropriate sources.

It is hoped that such staffing will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of management

efforts within the municipality, since it is often difficult for State agencies to respond quickly, "Our community has always been the traditional stewards of U's natural resources, but today marks a historical moment for our municipal government", said Dahker Abraham, Chief Minister of U Municipal Government, as we embark on this journey to lead the establishment of a management system that allows for a more sustainable and

long-term approach to improving our natural resources".

The U Municipal Government would like to acknowledge all partners who helped make this all possible and hopes to continue to work together to build more sustainable communities and effective agencies within Pohnpei that can respond to emerging needs and opportunity.



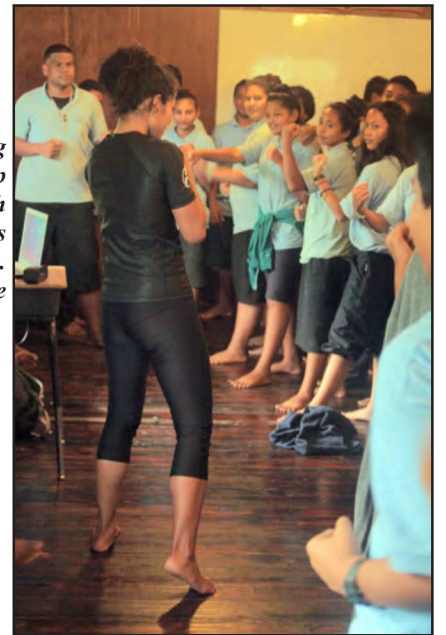
Olympian and International Olympic Committee member visits Yap

Colonia, Yap. Yap's native daughter, Olympic boxer Jennifer Chieng, and Baklai Temengil who holds the titles of Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs for Palau, Secretary General of the Palau National Olympic Committee Board, the first woman Vice President for the Oceania National Olympic Committee and member of the International Olympic Committee, were in Yap for a weeklong visit recently as a lead up to the 2018 MicroGames. They met with government officials, local high school and college students, members of the Yap Women's Association and the Neighboring Islands Women's Association, as well as community-based women's and youth associations to promote opportunities for women and girls in sports and sports leadership roles and encourage everyone to volunteer for next year's MicroGames. Funding was provided by the FSM National Olympic Committee.



Jennifer Chieng teaches Yap Catholic High School students to shadow box. ©Joyce McClure

Baklai Temengil, Jennifer Chieng welcomed by members of Tomil Youth Association, Yap ©Joyce McClure



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Chairman Panuelo welcomes Rear Admiral Chatfield to Congress

Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia

PALIKIR, POHNPEI

On October 09, 2017, Senator David W. Panuelo received, on behalf of Speaker Wesley W. Simina, the United States of America Ambassador Robert Riley and the new U.S. Pacific Command Representative, Rear Admiral Shoshana Chatfield.

Rear Admiral Chatfield took over command from Rear Adm. Babette "Bette" Bolivar as the U.S. Pacific Command representative to Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Republic of Palau. She is also Commander of the U.S. Naval Forces, Marianas and Commander, Joint Region Marianas. The Rear Admiral's visit was to meet with the leadership of the National Government and the Pohnpei State government for familiarization.

Senator Panuelo who is also the Chairman of the Pohnpei Delegation in Congress welcomed the Rear Admiral and thanked her for her role in the U.S continuing security efforts in the islands. Their discussion touched on a variety of issues ranging from politics to fisheries and port security to veterans affairs.

Rear Admiral Chatfield and Ambassador Riley were accompanied by Deputy Chief of Mission Joanne Cummings, Captain Thomas Price and staff from the Embassy.

Speaker Simina meets Sector Commander Chase of US Coast Guard

Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia

PALIKIR, POHNPEI

On September 27, 2017, a delegation from the U.S. Embassy led by Ambassador Robert Riley and D.C.M. Joanne Cummings accompanied Captain Christopher M. Chase, Guam Sector Commander- U.S. Coast Guard, along with an entourage of Coast Guard personnel to meet with Speaker Wesley W. Simina.

Captain Christopher M. Chase took over command from Captain James Pruett as the new U.S. Coast Guard, Guam Sector Commander. One of the Coast Guard's Guam Sector responsibilities includes the FSM and the purpose of the visit was to introduce the new Sector Commander to the leadership of the Nation. Captain Chase met with Speaker Simina to share his concerns and also his forthcoming plans on the collaborative efforts between the U.S. Coast Guard FSM and to improve the areas of importance such as search and rescue, law enforcement, Ports Waterways and Coastal Security (PWCS), marine inspection, mariner's licensing and documentation, port safety and marine environmental protection.

Speaker Simina stated that a major portion of goods being shipped to Micronesia, namely FSM is through its ports and understands the gravity of maintaining its ports. The Speaker thanked the U.S. Ambassador and Captain Chase for the visit and assured him of FSM's commitment to do its part in maintaining the country's seaports.

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Additional information regarding this proposal can always be obtained from the Pohnpei Port Authority Marketing Division at Dekehtik, Pohnpei State, Federated State of Micronesia or by contacting phone no: (691)-320-2793/2682, email 1485sano1957@gmail.com or by contacting us on our website: www.ppa.fm.

Why REPAC stopped donations to Chuuk

By The Fourth Branch

October 14, 2017

Founded in 2004, "Reach Out Pacific" (REPAC) has repackaged donated goods into containers and shipped them to Micronesia.

Their mission: "to improve healthcare and education throughout the Pacific".

For over a decade, REPAC has managed to donate much needed hospital equipment and school supplies to less fortunate Micronesian communities. Many residents of Honolulu are familiar with REPAC through the Friends of the Library of Hawaii, which donates unsold books to REPAC every year.

REPAC has helped countless persons and strengthened relationships across the Pacific. However, we noticed that REPAC discontinued donations to Chuuk State in the FSM since 2012. So we reached out to REPAC founder, senator Glenn Wakai of Hawaii for clarification.

Senator Wakai has shown his commitment to continuing this service of goods reaching the islands. He has successfully rallied groups of volunteers annually and poured his time into sustaining this effort. In response to his many contributions, Palau president, Tommy Remengesau Jr. appointed senator Wakai as Palau's honorary consul to Hawaii.

Under Wakai, REPAC has grown into a successful and beneficial nonprofit organization. However, it has also had some bad experiences.

From 2005 to 2012, REPAC has shipped four containers of donated school and medical supplies to Chuuk. Two of which reached Chuuk without complications. The other two containers have basically disappeared. Senator Wakai explained that

his contacts in Chuuk have yet to confirm if the two shipments of donations have reached their intended recipients. The fate of these two containers remain a mystery. He explained that similar issues occurred in the RMI.

Senator Wakai expressed frustration over the irresponsibility. REPAC will continue to help Micronesia, but has halted donations to Chuuk and the RMI.

"I know that Chuuk has the greatest needs in Micronesia. It's unfortunate that it's plagued by leadership and a system that is not accountable. As Chuuk languishes, the rest of the world and REPAC is moving forward." Hawaii State Senator, Glenn Wakai.



SENATOR WAKAI (2ND FROM BOTTOM LEFT) WITH A GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS AFTER FILLING A CONTAINER OF DONATED GOODS BOUND FOR CHUUK.



MCKINLEY HIGH SCHOOL, HONOLULU "FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY OF HAWAII" HOSTS AN ANNUAL BOOK SALE. UNSOLD BOOKS ARE DONATED TO REPAC AND SHIPPED TO MICRONESIA.

1st GCC Regional Marine & Terrestrial Conservation Law Enforcement Academy Completion Ceremony

Guam Community College

History was made on Friday, October 6, 2017, when the 16 participants of the inaugural Marine Terrestrial Conservation Enforcement Academy held their completion ceremony at 4:00 p.m. at the Pacific Star Hotel in Tumon. Wesley Simina, Speaker of the FSM Congress, and Esmond Moses, Vice Speaker, were in attendance, as well as Guam Consul General Vic April of Palau, Chuuk Attorney General Sabino Asor, and other dignitaries from regional agencies across Micronesia.

Law enforcement officials from police departments, attorneys general offices, and regional Environmental Protection Agency offices from Guam, Palau, Marshall Islands and the FSM States of Pohnpei, Kosrae, Chuuk, and Yap participated in this first regional academy, which began on July 24, 2017.

"The goal of this inaugural MTCE Academy is to enable law enforcement professionals from around the region to study methods of enforcing conservation of precious marine and land resources throughout the Pacific," according to cadre Lt. Mark Aguon, Officer-in-Charge, Law Enforcement Section, Guam Department of Agriculture. GCC partnered with the Micronesia Conservation Trust, the Pacific Islands Managed & Protected Areas Community, and Guam Dept. of

Agriculture to conduct the academy, which covers protection of wildlife, marine life, and efforts to halt human trafficking in the region.

The concept of a regional MTCE academy began nearly eight years ago, according to Jose Munoz, GCC Associate Professor of Criminal Justice & Social Sciences. "Regional officers approached GCC and saying, 'No one is doing this – can you guys do this?'" Munoz says he and Donna Cruz, CJSS Professor, began developing

the curriculum, "because we knew tourism was going to be a huge economic driver in the region, and we had to develop ways to protect our environment, because it is our livelihood."

Pete Roberto, current GCC Criminal Justice & Social Sciences Department chair, says the MTCE Academy will have far-reaching effects. "Protecting our environment from a regional perspective allows law enforcement officials to work collaboratively, sharing resources and information that will afford us a much broader law enforcement presence than if we just work as individual entities," he said.

Funding for this charter academy was obtained from NOAA, DOI-OIA, US Forest Service – PIPTIEM Program, USAID – Project Ready Program, the FSM Congress, Raymond James and Ernst & Young, through the Micronesian Conservation Trust.



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Governor Elimo approves Protected Areas Network bill for Chuuk State

Chuuk Conservation Society

October 17, 2017

On the 17th of October, Chuuk State Governor Johnson S. Elimo signed into law the Protected Areas Network bill for Chuuk State at the latter part of the second and final day of the eleventh Federated States of Micronesia State and National Leadership Conference held in Chuuk.

The Governor's approval action capped lobbying efforts by various government and non-government entities the past thirteen months with a sense of success.

Seconds before signing the bill, Governor Elimo said the PAN legislation would "strengthen the stewardship of natural resources by rightful owners" and add to the successes of enduring customary resource protection practices. In addition, he believed the PAN effort would create opportunities for gainful collaboration involving resource owners and protected areas management partners.

A forerunner of the bill was first introduced in August 2016 at the House of Senate during the Thirteenth Legislature following joint efforts between the Chuuk State Attorney General's Office and legal technical assistance from the Nature Conservancy Pohnpei-based office and the Micronesia Conservation Trust. Review and coordination support were rendered by local entities, mainly the Department of Marine Resources, the Department of Agriculture, and the Chuuk Conservation Society. In spite of broad coordination, that initial bill ran out of time at the House of Representatives as the March 2017 election preparation intensified.

A little after the Fourteenth Legislature got underway, the Chairman of the House Committee on Resources and Development, Rep. Wisney Nakayama, reintroduced the PAN bill at the House with some added provisions relating to the protection of "intellectual property" and "benefit sharing" assertions for resource owners. Additionally, the new version added tougher penalties for intentional infractions and repeated violations committed by individuals or business operations.

May 24-25, Pohnpei State Governor Marcelo Peterson visited Chuuk along with Mr. Willy Kostka from MCT and Mr. Ricky Carl from TNC partly to engage with Chuuk leadership and publicly advocate for passage of the PAN bill. During that visit, House Speaker Inocente Oneisom and Senate President Mark Mailo affirmed their support of the bill. Likewise,

Governor Elimo assured his visiting peer his readiness to support the measure when it is turned over to the Executive Branch.

The PAN campaign took its impetus from the region-wide Micronesia Challenge (MC) and was designed to create pathways for sustainable financing of conservation efforts that would advance the FSM State's commitment to the protection of twenty percent of their land-based resources and thirty percent of marine resources. In particular, an endowment fund has been set up as part of the Challenge to manage financial support from development partners, donors and matching funds from local governments.

The FSM National Government is to put in place a PAN policy framework and Country Program Strategy which will define uniform criteria for PAN sites. The framework will also formulate a sustainable finance mechanism allowing PAN sites to receive technical and funding support from various sources including the Micronesia Challenge endowment.

The States of Pohnpei and Kosrae have exercised PAN legislations that preceded the MC conservation initiative.

According to a Yap State legislator attending the SNLC, Yap's PAN bill has been submitted to the Legislature and may undergo committee hearing soon.

The passage of the PAN bill once again raised the par for conservation and resource stewardship planning undertaking in Chuuk following the adoption of the Shark bill in 2014, the passage of the Kuop Atoll protection bill early 2016, the adoption of the resolution urging the closure of 10 percent of FSM water from commercial fisheries (which is now a FSM law) in 2016, and the passage

of the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act in November 2016.

In reaction to Governor Elimo's action on the bill, the group of resource management organizations and government partners present at the meeting acknowledged – "now the real work has just begun" – hinting at the mandate to collaborate strongly with communities that should benefit from the PAN arrangements in a more integrated and binding process.

For further information, contact the CCS office at 330-7227 or email either markapito@gmail.com or Shirley Ann Pelep from MCT via grantsofficer@ourmicronesia.org, or DMR Director Curtis Graham abcpenia@mail.fm.

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FSM Vice President George watches as Governor Elimo signs the PAN bill. Standing are FSM Secretary of Resources and Development Marion Henry (left) and Micronesia Conservation Trust Director Willy Kostka witnessing the action at the Chuuk High School gymnasium.

Session outcome includes national budget and financial assistances

Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia

PALIKIR, POHNPEI – October 8, 2017-

The 20th Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia adjourned its Second Regular Session on September 29th with the passage of measures for a new national budget and a new national department, among many others.

As convened on September 14, the 2nd Regular Session was to foremost pass the fiscal year 2018 operations budget for the National Government and address other matters pending before the body. With the Amended Compact funds zeroed out to the state government, the Congress passed Congressional Act (CA) 20-47, to appropriate a national budget of \$67,903,100 to address operations of all branches of the National Government, its agencies, various programs, grants, subsidies and contributions and Capital and Human Resources Development.

Also for FY 2018 budget cycle, the Congress passed CA 20-51, to appropriate \$8,500,000 to fund priority infrastructure projects in the states of Chuuk, Kosrae and Pohnpei. The state of Yap opted to maintain its funding for state priority infrastructure in the National Government FY-18 budget. The Congress had, during FY-2015, initiated a national government contribution of \$10 million to fund the states priority infrastructure projects.

On a budget related matter, Congress had passed CA 20-39 for \$160,000 to supplement the FY-2017 budget and CA 20-46 to extend the lapse date for the funding for the Joint Committee on Compact Review and Planning (JCRP) which is also in the FY17 budget.

A measure of note was the passage of (CA) 20-41, which appropriated \$350,000 for purposes of humanitarian relief efforts for the victims of the Hurricanes Harvey and Irma in the United States, Cuba, Antigua and Barbuda, and for the Chiapas Earthquake in Mexico.

The final appropriation from the FY-2017 funds was CA 20-43, for an amount of \$1,030,000 as additional contribution to the FSM Trust Fund and for payment for past due expenses related to the proposed Constitutional Amendment on Dual Citizenship.

Among the many pending matters was the creation of a new national department to

address the issues of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management. The matter was first raised and passed during the May session but was vetoed by the President. Considerable discussions have since been held on the matter, which resulted in the passage of CA 20-42, for an additional National Department of Environment, Climate Change and Environment Management. The Act also dissolved the Office of Environment and Emergency Management, Climate Change and Environment Management. The Act also dissolved the Office of Environment and Emergency Management, Climate Change and Environment Management, Climate Change and empowered the President to transition the functions of the dissolved office.

The remaining Acts were for grass root level projects and social programs in the four states to make either changes to the use of funds previously appropriated or to make changes to the allottees of those funds.

CA 20-40, begins the Acts and called to changes the use of funds previously appropriated therein to fund public projects and social programs in all the four states while CA 20-44, called for changes to lapse dates of existing public projects and social programs in the all four states;

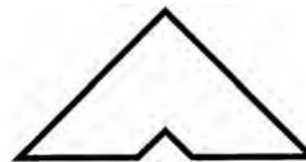
CA 20-48, called for the change of use and allottee of certain funds previously appropriated for priority infrastructure projects and programs in the states of Chuuk and Pohnpei;

Specific to the State of Yap was CA 20-45,

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Specific to the State of Pohnpei were CA 20-49, CA 20-50; CA 20-52; and CA 20-53, to either change the use of funds previously appropriated or to make change the allottees

All the Congressional Acts have been transmitted to the President to be signed into law.

Japan donates Search and Rescue boat to Pohnpei

The government of Japan donated a new, powerful search and rescue boat to the Pohnpei Department of Public Safety. During a short ceremony at DPS on October 6, Ambassador Ryoichi Horie presented the boat to Governor Marcelo Peterson. Governor Peterson said that it is an important function of DPS to be able to provide for public safety in its own waters and that the new boat would make that possible.



US Coast Guard donates soccer supplies to Pohnpei Soccer Association

The US Coast Guard cutter Kiska made a brief port stop in Pohnpei. The intention had been for the crew to stage an exhibition soccer match with members of the Pohnpei Soccer Association but mechanical difficulties made it impossible. During their stop they donated soccer gear to the Pohnpei Soccer Association.



Resolutions adopted during the 2nd Regular Session of Congress

Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia

PALIKIR, POHNPEI

October 6, 2017- The Second Regular Session of the Twentieth Congress adjourned on September 29 with the adoption of resolutions on various nomination and the various programs and services facilitated by the National Government, among others.

On the nominations, the Congress adopted Congressional Resolution (CR) 20-22 to confirm Sihna Neth Lawrence as the Nation's representative and member on the Joint Trust Fund Committee.

Other board representation measures included CR 20-37 which confirmed Pelma Johnson Mingii as the National Government representative on the Board of Regents for the College of Micronesia and CR 20-44 for Tony M. Tareq as the Yap State representative on the MiCare Board of Directors.

For national representation on the international platform the Congress adopted CR 20-45 to confirm Jackson Soram to serve as the Nation's Deputy Chief of Mission to the United States of America at the FSM Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Three resolutions were adopted to convey condolences from the Congress to the families of recently departed public servants who had invested and spent most of their lives in service to their people:

CR 20-25, expressed sadness and condolences to the family of the late Ready E. Johnny who had spent over 30 years of services in the field of law for both state and national governments. His final years of service were rendered on behalf of the Nation's highest court as an Associate Justice of the FSM Supreme Court. The FSM has benefited from his strong leadership in the field of law and his commitment to promoting the rule of law and his mentorship for the Nation's next generation of attorneys;

CR 20-31, expressed sadness and condolences to the family of the late Tony deBrum and to the government and people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands for a leader who was a voice of the Pacific region on the international stage. The late deBrum had served over 50 years in his government in various leadership capacities. The FSM has benefitted from his strong leadership in the western Pacific and his commitment to protecting and promoting the health and welfare of island people; and

CR 20-38, expressed sadness and condolences to the family of the late Clement G. Mulalap who spent half his lifetime in service to the people of the State of Yap both in the private sector and the government in the field of law. The FSM has benefited from his strong leadership in the field of law and his integrity in politics as well as his mentoring of the next generation of leaders in the Nation.

As a budget session, the Congress had adopted measures for budget ceilings to cap the amount of estimated funds available for appropriation from the general fund and adopted CR 20-32 to set \$108,780,694 as the ceiling for funds available for the FY-2017 ending on September 30, 2017.

A similar intent was adopted through CR 20-39, to cap the ceiling of funds estimated to be available for appropriation from the general fund for the national government for FY-2018 budget ending September 30, 2018. The breakdown of estimated funds for the current fiscal year was set at \$77,185,224 of which \$70,320,354 would be from domestic revenue and the remaining funds available through the amended Compact: \$5,252,250 for the College of Micronesia - FSM and \$1,612,620 from Supplemental Education Grant.

For the continued improvement of the Nation's various development sectors, the Congress adopted the following resolutions to support and to bring to fore those efforts:

CR 20-21, approved a grant of \$8.3 million from the Asian Development Bank to fund a project titled "Improving the Quality of Basic Education in the FSM." A project designed to improve the quality of teaching through the improvement of primary education learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

The Congress had approved two grants for the states of Kosrae and Yap from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) made available under its Airport Improvement Program (AIP). The \$500,000 grant was specific to "Improving Airport Miscellaneous Improvements - Design Electric Vault," to which the Congress approved CR 20-35 for the Kosrae International Airport and CR 20-47 for the Yap International Airport.

Also for the Yap International Airport was CR 20-42, which approved another FAA grant of \$1 million to fund the state's Rehabilitate Runway 7/25-Design project.

Specific to the State of Pohnpei, the Congress adopted CR 20-40 and approved

a grant of \$1 million from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to fund the construction and installation of a 400KW Solar Project in the state and for technical assistance to the Pohnpei Utilities Corporation.

A \$9 million grant from the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) was approved to fund a project entitled "Enhancing the Climate Change Resilience of Vulnerable Island Communities in the FSM." The grant was approved through the adoption of CR 20-51.

The Congress approved a grant from the World Bank in the amount of SDR 12,000,000 as additional funding for the FSM's Connectivity Project. The grant would enable the State of Kosrae to participate in a regional fiber optic cable system with the Republic of Kiribati and the Republic of Nauru and the enabling mechanism was through the adoption of CR 20-53.

The remaining resolutions addressed the various national programs in the sectors of health and education funded through grants from the United States of America as available through the amended Compact.

CR 20-18, approved a grant of \$ 250,000 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to support and fund the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs Opioid State targeted response project;

CR 20-28, approved a grant of \$ 853,081 from the US DOE, Division of Special Education under Part B of its Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for its FY 2017 cycle;

CR 20-30, approved a grant of \$164,968 from the US DHHS-Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to fund the FSM Maternal and Child Health Services program for the budget period October 01, 2016 through September 30, 2018. The grant is geared towards the improvement of Mothers and Children's health in the Nation;

CR 20-33, approved a grant of \$337,000 from the US DHHS - Public Health Service, to support and fund the FSM Family Planning program;

CR 20-43, approved a grant of \$284,160 from the US DHHS - Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to fund the implementation of the FSM Comprehensive Cancer Control (CCC) plan to reduce cancer burden in the FSM;

CR 20-48, approved a grant of \$151,750 from the US DHHS - SAMHSA, to fund and support the FSM Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health (LAUNCH) project;

CR 20-49, approved a grant of \$276,806 from the US DHHS - CDC, to fund the FSM Public Health and Healthcare Emergency Preparedness project;

CR 20-50, approved a grant of \$106,175 from the US DHHS - Health Resources and Services Administration to support and fund the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening and Intervention project; and finally

CR 20-54, approved a grant of \$665,810 from the US DHHS - SAMHSA, to provide funding for prevention and treatment services related to substance abuse.

The Congressional Resolutions, like the Congressional Acts, have all been transmitted to the President for information and dissemination to the designated recipients.



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Spring 2018 Registration

Event	Date
Spring 2018 Early Registration	October 30 to November 2, 2017
Spring 2018 Regular Registration	January 10 to 12, 2018
<i>First Day of Instruction</i>	<i>January 15, 2018</i>

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Marshall Islands trust fund defrauded of \$1M

By Giff Johnson
Marianas Variety

MAJURO — Nearly one million dollars was illegally removed from the Marshall Islands government's United States-based trust fund and only a portion of the money has been recovered, said officials in Majuro Friday.

A series of 12 unauthorized withdrawals from the Marshall Islands Trust Fund "A Account" at State Street Bank and Trust Company during June and July sent \$982,265 to accounts at banks in Ireland and Malaysia. State Street Bank is a major U.S. bank headquartered in Boston. While the \$273,883 sent in four withdrawals to an account in Dublin, Ireland was recovered, the \$708,382 sent to accounts at the Standard Chartered Bank in Selangor, Malaysia has not been returned, said Marshall Islands Finance Secretary Maybelline Bing.

"State Street Bank and Trust Company, the former Trust Fund's Custodian, released the funds in error and did not follow established processes and protocols," said Anthony Costanzo, the Executive Administrator of the Marshall Islands Trust Fund. "State Street was informed that the A Account transactions were possible fraud on July 13 after exchanges of information regarding questionable cash account fluctuations." The trust fund, which as of April had \$320 million, is being capitalized to provide funding to the Marshall Islands government after U.S. grant assistance largely halts in late 2023, when the current 20-year funding agreement expires.

The trust fund agreement with the bank required that any withdrawal from the A Account — which holds the bulk of the trust fund's money — needed a signature from the Marshall Islands Trust Fund Committee Chairman. The person in the chair position is U.S. Interior Department's Director of Insular Affairs Nikolao Pula. A separate account, known as the D Account, can be tapped by the Marshall Islands when it has over \$10 million. Required signatures for D Account withdrawals are Marshall Islands trust fund committee representatives Bobby Muller and David Paul or Finance Minister Brenson Wase.

However, the 12 withdrawals from the A Account in question were not authorized by Pula. Instead, said Bing, documents containing the signatures of Wase, Muller or Paul were somehow obtained and then used to forge withdrawal requests that were successfully processed by the bank despite the fact that this violated the A Account signature requirements.

"The Trust Fund has an authorization form with the approved authorizers and

verifiers," said Costanzo. "No authorizer approved the removal of the funds and the fund removals were not approved or verified as established."

The 12 fraudulent withdrawals between June 6 and July 17 this year ranged from a low of \$68,470 to a high of \$117,637. Bing said that all of these withdrawals were in amounts significantly higher than the usual amount of withdrawals the RMI has made in recent years from the D Account.

Documents also show that there were two "inter-fund" transfers from the D Account to the A Account, one of which notes the reason as "cover short." Bing speculated that the people behind the illegal withdrawals were apparently attempting to reimburse the A Account from the D Account, possibly in an effort to cover their tracks. A total of \$734,819 was transferred from the D Account to the A Account as part of the series of fraudulent transactions in June and July.

These fraudulent withdrawals were not detected until the Ministry of Finance in mid-July submitted a legitimate drawdown request to its D Account fund manager, Investor Solutions, Inc. When Finance received a reply from Investor Solutions inquiring about Finance initiating "another withdrawal," alarm bells went off, triggering an investigation that discovered the improper withdrawals sending money to Ireland and Malaysia, according to Bing.

"It took several days to discover the origin of the (12 withdrawal) transaction authorizations," said Costanzo. "I had informed the Marshall Islands members and staff by e-mail and phone on July 18 to verify if they were legitimate transactions. They were not."

Costanzo added that the Boston-based bank "has the necessary documents to reconcile both the Compact Trust Fund Cash account and the D account. They are going through their approval process to reconcile both funds."

"State Street has taken total responsibility for the lapse in their procedures leading to the account's loss," said Frank Armstrong, who is President of the Florida-based Investor Solutions, Inc., which manages the D Account for the Marshall Islands. "State Street is well along in the process of making the accounts whole, pending only receipt of original affidavits from the government. They are acting with the highest level of integrity to correct the situation."

The Ministry of Finance submitted a withdrawal for \$3 million from the D Account based on the FY 2017 Supplemental Budget adopted by Nitijela

(parliament) during the session in the first half of this year. Two million dollars was to be re-invested into the A Account, while \$1 million was for the government's General Fund to meet spending needs authorized by the Supplemental Budget. The discovery of the fraudulent withdrawals, however, derailed the legitimate withdrawal, which still has not been processed to date, said Bing.

A Majuro law enforcement official said the FBI had been engaged to investigate the theft of funds from the account. Marshall Islands officials in the Attorney General's office, Auditor General's office, Banking Commission, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been engaged in attempting to investigate the situation and get money taken returned to the trust fund.

The government's internal investigation led officials here to conclude that documents containing the signatures of Marshall Islands trust fund officials were illegally accessed to create fraudulent withdrawal documents to steal money from the government's trust fund. Whether these documents were obtained by computer hackers or in some other way is not known.

Pohnpei Sports Commission taking applications for coaches

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

October 20, 2017

Pohnpei—The Pohnpei Sports Commission is currently seeking coaches to help Pohnpei athletes to prepare for the 9th Micronesian Games that will be held in Yap in July of 2018. The Committee will take applications beginning on October 30 and finishing on November 30.

They are looking for coaches for Athletics, Baseball, Basketball, Canoeing, Football, Micro All Around, Open Ocean Swimming, Spear Fishing, Table Tennis, Volleyball, Weightlifting, and Wrestling.

The committee can be reached by email at pohnpeisports@hotmail.com or by phone at 320-6278.



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Meet a Muslim event held in Pohnpei

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community FSM

Muslims of Micronesia held a very unique event in Pohnpei this past month called “Coffee, Cake and True Islam”. It aimed to remove misconceptions about their faith. “More than 60% of Americans have never met a Muslim, that is dramatically higher for people in Micronesia, so we wanted to make a comfortable platform for people to come and meet Muslims, ask us questions, and become at ease when they find that our teachings are peaceful. The biggest misconception is that our beliefs teach terrorism, but that is completely false”, said Kauser, the Imam (Religious Minister) of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of FSM, currently the only Muslim denomination established in the FSM. There was a popular youtube advertisement that was seen more than 25k times all across Micronesia inviting people for this event. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community commented that they wished to use a common platform to advertise for their event and especially something that was not used before. “Some people met me with great fear thinking that perhaps I had hacked their computers to show our advertisement. I reassured them that this is a common way to advertise in USA,

its through Google’s advertisement services. Others however were ecstatic and very appreciative of the message and attempt. Some people recognized my name, while others would say ‘we saw your video, Islam means peace!”, said Imam Kauser further describing the overall experience. The event was attended by more than 50 people from different faiths and backgrounds. The US Ambassador Robert Riley was among those in attendance in addition to teachers, professors, businessmen and others. This event was the first of its kind to formally introduce the religion of Islam, more popularly known as Muslim, to the people of Pohnpei. It was also delightful to see the local Micronesian Muslims at the event. Tours were arranged at the Cliff Rainbow Hotel Conference Hall conducted by two visiting Imams from the Marshall Islands and Kiribati. Imam Fahad from Kiribati mentioned that “there were a handful of people who entered our program with great anger, but once they understood our message, received answers to their questions, and realized our purpose was simply to remove

misunderstandings about our own faith, they left with smiles on their faces”. Amidst the difficulties faced by this Muslim Community in Kosrae, it was a great stride forward to have such a peaceful and lively event in Pohnpei to simply share the teachings of their faith with others. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is currently established in more than 200

countries and holds regular interfaith, Peace conferences and Meet a Muslim events across the globe. Earlier this year a Peace Conference arranged by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Kosrae Chapter was held where more than 100 people participated from four different islands.



Vacancy Announcement: Programme Assistant (PA) UN Joint Presence Office, Federated States of Micronesia GEF Small Grants Programme

VACANCY DETAILS:

Post Title	SGP Programme Assistant
Post Level	SB-3
Contract Type	Service Contract
Duty Station	Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia
Duration	Initially twelve months, renewable subject to satisfactory performance and availability of funds

The GEF-Small Grants Programme is looking for a Programme Assistant to provide effective day-to-day substantive, administrative and financial support to the national SGP team and the National Steering Committee to ensure the smooth operation and management of the GEF-SGP in Pohnpei.

All applications must be accompanied by a UN P11 Personal History form obtained from <http://www.pacific.undp.org/content/pacific/en/>

home/operations/jobs.html or picked up from the UN Joint Presence Office. Applications must also include a Results-Oriented Curriculum Vitae with full contact details of three referees. To be submitted no later than 31st October 2017 either electronically to vacancies.fj@undp.org or addressed under confidential cover to:

Vacancy – SGP Programme Assistant
c/o GEF Small Grants Programme (FSM)
P.O. Box 2466
Pohnpei, FM 96941

For complete job description, please obtain from the UN Joint Presence office at Kevin Pelep Building 2nd floor, or at Telephone # 320-4192

Only nationals of the Federated States of Micronesia will be considered for this position.

Kosrae veterans meet to discuss resolution

On September 2nd, a group of Kosraean US Military Veterans and their families met with Paul Hadik, CEO of Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) to discuss HCR 176 which was originally introduced in the Hawaii State Legislature by Rep. Ken Ito, addressing COFA Veterans and their benefits.

The resolution, which has since been submitted at the National Conference of State Legislatures which met in Boston, Massachusetts, seeks to address gaps in Veteran Benefits and accessibility to those benefits for COFA citizens.

“It is one thing to have health benefits, quite another to afford an airplane ticket to Hawaii to access those benefits” said Hadik. “This resolution is an attempt by the Hawaii State Legislature, led by Rep. Ito to better understand how to address and fix these gaps in light of the distinguished service by so many COFA citizens in the US Military”

Robson Henry who heads the Kosrae Veterans Association after 24 years serving in the Military stated "Now that we are engaging in this Dialogue with the US Government on Veteran's Issues, we need to be relentless in the pursuit and put our National Government on the forefront

of this fight.”

A follow up meeting was held in Hawaii Representative Ken Ito's office on October 4th. Rep. Ito, a Veteran himself, heard first-hand the issues that COFA veterans are facing and stated that he is hoping to get down to Kosrae and Pohnpei in November to meet with National Leadership in an effort to continue the discussion.

“We are hoping to connect with even more Veteran's groups in Pohnpei and the Marshalls over the next few weeks. With the public screenings of the documentary “Island Soldier” by Nathan Fitch, this is the perfect time to unite behind this issue” Hadik concluded.

Below is the National Conference of State Legislatures Resolution in full:

LABOR AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
2017 NCSL Legislative Summit
Boston, Mass.

COMMITTEE: LABOR AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY:
COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION RESOLUTION
TYPE: NEW RESOLUTION

SPONSORS: REP. KEN ITO (HAWAII); REP. DAN FLYNN (TEXAS)

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) urging Congress and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to work together to develop a program or pass legislation to provide veterans from Compact of Free Association nations with access to high-quality medical care within their respective communities.

WHEREAS, the United States government entered into a Compact of Free Association (COFA) agreement with the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; and

WHEREAS, citizens of COFA nations are eligible to enlist in the United States armed services, and over the years, the United States has vigorously recruited Pacific Islanders from COFA nations to serve in the United States military; and WHEREAS, Pacific Islanders from COFA nations have a long and distinguished history of military service stretching back to World War II; and

WHEREAS, upon completing their

military service and returning to their respective communities, veterans from COFA nations are unable to secure Department of Veterans Affairs services, especially Department-approved basic medical services, which are non-existent in their own communities; and WHEREAS, veterans from COFA nations must fly to Hawaii, at enormous cost to their personal financial well-being, to obtain proper medical care at Tripler Army Medical Center; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that NCSL urges Congress and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to work closely to develop a program or pass legislation to provide veterans from Compact of Free Association nations with access to high-quality medical care within their respective communities








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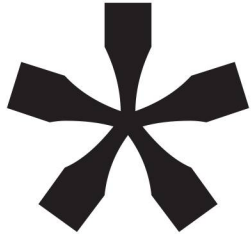
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7:00 am, Saturday, November 11th

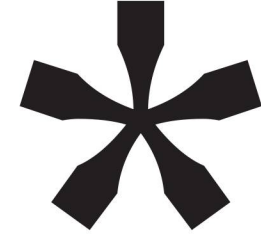
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Classification
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Estimated Start Date: As soon as possible
Closing Date: Nov 6th, 2017



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Context:

Under the overall supervision of the Chief of Mission for Micronesia and under the direct supervision of the Resource Management Officer, the incumbent will be responsible in assisting the Resource Management Officer in implementing of Information Technology strategy to address the operational and information requirements of IOM Mission in Micronesia and the Republic of Marshall Islands.

Core Functions / Responsibilities :

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- Monitoring and troubleshooting of the LAN (performance, capacity and security);
- Installation of WAN components (routers, modems , firewalls etc.);
- Monitoring access to the WAN (performance and connection to remote locations);
- Maintaining up to date network system diagrams for each duty station;
- Suggest and implement actions to improve network capacity and capability.

Internet access

- In coordination with ITC Helpdesk, negotiating and implementing internet access according to check list provided (to be provided by ITC Helpdesk);
- Liaising with the ISP to review and submit requests for changes, removals and additions to services;
- Implementing security walls against intrusion (firewalls, routers) and non-authorized outgoing access (e.g. radios and other consuming resources);
- Monitoring access to Internet to ensure correct use and compliance with the Organization 's policies;
- Suggest and implement actions to reduce bandwidth usage in each office in order to improve network capability;
- Reviewing, implementing and communicating to staff all security and policy updates

Workstations

- Installing and configuring workstations;
- Troubleshooting and fixing of defects ;
- Installing and upgrading all IOM standard software.

Assistance and support

- Providing first level assistance , advise and support to end-users both locally and remotely for IOM's corporate applications , Windows, and all IOM standard software;
- Developing and implementing IT training to end-users to ensure productive use of the IT, telecommunications and information systems

- in the mission;
- Provide specialized support for the continuing implementation , training and support of all Office365 applications;

Other devices

- Installing, configuring, maintaining other IT devices (printers, scanners, all telecommunication & office equipment PABX including intercom, copiers, V HF/ HF Radios & satellite phones and other modern office equipments;
- Troubleshooting and fixing defects.

Administration

- Participate in planning future upgrades of systems, computers and software;
- Liaising with IT services at IT HQ and ITC Helpdesk;
- Coordinating and establishing a relationship with local partners and suppliers for procurement, warranty and repair of IT assets;
- Procuring IT equipments and software;
- Managing software licenses;
- Providing incident and monthly reports on activities to the Resource Management Officer and ITC Helpdesk;
- Tracking resource usage and expenditure for printing equipment and comms devices to ensure continuing availability and functionality ;
- -Documenting the topology of local IT systems implementation ;
- -Facilitate assignment, inspection, and returning of IT assets.

Miscellaneous

- IT Support Administrator for IOM Micronesia and RMI;
- Ensure effective coordination with other UN agencies in Micronesia and RMI in order to maximize possibilities of inter-agency collaboration in the field of IT & telecommunication ;
- Mitigation and reporting of any potential foreseeable or immediate issues with IT resources;
- Regular communication with each Head of Sub-Office to confirm that adequate assets are in place for the needs of all offices;
- Perform other duties as may be required.

Required Qualifications and Experience

- University degree in Information Technology, Computer Science, or computer-related major;
- High school degree with six (6) years' experience , bachelor's degree or equivalent or higher with four (4) year experience ;
- Experience in Network Performance Tuning, LAN Knowledge, Network Design and Implementation, Knowledge of Cisco network hardware and software.

How to apply:

Completed applications, including a cover letter (not more than one page), curriculum vitae highlighting the required education and experience , School credentials and the names and contact details of 3 referees, etc. may be delivered to the IOM Head Office in Pohnpei, FSM or submitted electronically to

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Health Corner

Knowing more about Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

The four main NCDs are: Cancer, Cardiovascular Disease, Diabetes and Chronic Lung Diseases. The NCD rates are higher and rising among lower income countries and populations.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines Chronic Respiratory Diseases (CRD) as chronic diseases of the airways and other structures of the lung. The most common are: asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), occupational lung diseases and pulmonary hypertension.

These diseases have a high morbidity rate, as well as disability and premature mortality, specifically asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Risk factors include: tobacco smoke (either active smoking or secondhand smoke), air pollution, occupational chemicals and dusts, and frequent lower respiratory infections during childhood.

CRDs are not curable; however many cases of COPD are preventable by avoiding or stopping smoking. Treatment can relieve symptoms, improve quality of life and reduce the risk of death.

According to the latest WHO estimates (2004):

- 64 million people have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).
- More than 3 million people die each year from COPDs, an estimated 6% of all deaths worldwide.
- More than 90% of COPD deaths occur in low-income and middle-income countries.
- 235 million people suffer from asthma, a common disease among children.

If you want to try an exercise to breathe like a person with COPD does, take a straw, close your lips around it, pinch your nose and breath only through the straw in your mouth... inhale... and exhale... inhale... and exhale... You have the privilege to take the straw away and breath in and out to all your healthy lung capacity; 64 million of people in the world cannot.

How can I prevent, or help my family prevent, Chronic Respiratory Disease? Let's review the risks factors:

- Tobacco smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, including hundreds that are toxic and about 70 that can cause cancer*. If you are a current smoker, find the support needed to stop smoking. According to the CDC, the only way to fully protect nonsmokers is to eliminate smoking in all homes, worksites, and public places. We are responsible to reinforce the law and make those spaces clean.
- Air pollution: indoor air pollution, resulting from solid fuel used for cooking and heating and outdoor air pollution. Maintain ventilated spaces, avoid smoke from cooking or wearing a mask if you can't avoid them. Plant trees that will help the environment.
- Occupational chemicals and dust: people working in these conditions should wear special protection.
- Avoid Frequent respiratory infections during childhood: Having a good immune system as a result of a healthy lifestyle will help prevent and fight respiratory diseases at any age, especially during early years.

Mabel Loján, MD
Integrative Medicine

From the perspective of Integrative Medicine, if we consider the element air in this topic, we could say that air marks the start and end of our life, since the first breathing allows us to live and the last one takes us to death. We all share the air with humans and other species.

PS: The last article said "sake" when it should have said "sakau" (kava).

The air is related to breathing. Breathing is the beat of the Universe. We inhale and exhale as the Universe expands and contracts. Breathing connects us with the universe.

*: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014 [accessed 2017 Oct 18]).

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

The four States in the Nation constituting what is so called the Federated States of Micronesia are facing financial challenges while the parenthood is extravagantly enjoying an unprecedented surplus ever recorded in the history of this Nation. Even before reaching this unprecedented surplus level, numerous attempts have been made by the leaders of this federation to salvage the states from further slipping into insolvency and yet none has worked out up to this point in time.

One of the attempts was on tax reform to essentially establish a Unified Revenue Authority (URA) which would in essence centralize the revenue and tax divisions of the national and states into a single entity and placing it as a component unit of the National Government. This was one that I truly favor as it has a potential to work out well for all concerned. Even more so the States will benefit a little more compared to the current tax structure where the National level receives more share of the pie. The National Government has more sources of revenue coming into its treasury plus the fact now that the fishing fees and the corporate tax are drastically pouring in more monies lately.

The Mori Administration officially engaged in the implementation of the tax reform by establishing the URA to test it out. Although it was short lived, we have not had the fullest potential to test out its workability. But within a short testing period, there was a significant progress in the collection of our taxes. A sunset clause built into the National statute was expired and here we are at square one again maintaining the status quo of the old tax regime. The most critical reason why it is a must to reform our current tax structure was that the five governments were not and are still not able to collect forty percent of every one dollar supposedly due to our treasuries. This was not a made up story; it was a reoccurring finding audit after audit by external auditors. Reforming our tax laws at the state and national levels will enable our governments to collect the uncollectable (forty percent) under the current tax structure. The State of Pohnpei alone is projected to collect no less than five million dollars annually.

In a meeting held at the Legislature chamber arranged by the new Administration attended by the Vice-President of the Nation, this issue of tax reform was raised. Yes, it was clear that the sunset clause was lapsed but it does not necessarily mean that the National Government cannot revisit the issue and to revive it to assist the States with their financial constraints.

In the last States and National Leadership Conference held in the State of Kosrae, the

issue of tax reform was brought up again by the State governments. I am grateful to acknowledge the strong support of the SNLC in its commitment to continue pursuing our efforts in this area of tax reform. The States look forward to its prompt implementation as this is a matter that is in our best interest as was revealed by a survey made by then a Statistic, Budget and Office of Compact Management economist.

The State governments are in dire need of generating more revenue streams to avoid further accumulation of deficit and at the same time support the necessary services our people deserve to receive. We have no choice at this juncture but to increase our current sales tax rates and/or the imposition of a new service tax. These are works in progress. This is the authority we have control over as it is within our jurisdictions. The consequence of this action by the States will translate to higher costs on all imported goods and services provided in the States. This action will burden all walks of life especially our disadvantaged citizens. I do not want this scenario to happen as it will severely have an impact on our disadvantaged citizens.

I am praying and hoping that our current FSM President and our current FSM Congress revitalize the tax reform namely the Unified Revenue Authority agreed to by the leaders of this Nation in 2003 to replace the existing tax system. This is an equitable tax scheme for all stakeholders which include the customers, businesses and of course our governments.

Did you know that the component of this tax reform applying to the businesses of the land has become a law of the Nation for about three years now?

After this component became law, our businesses started to pay their taxes based on their net profits. They previously paid their taxes on the gross receipt tax. This is a disadvantage for our governments because it means our businesses pay less amount of money on their taxes whereas it is an advantage for them as they are paying lesser amount of money on their taxes. So if the businesses have gotten their good share of the tax reform, when will the advantages apply to the customers and our governments be realized? It is only through the comprehensive implementation of the tax reform not a portion of it.

Revisiting the tax reform through its revival at the Nation level is a must do for the States. I have a strong conviction that the States will do their part in passing their legislations because we have no other option other than to pass sales tax increase in rates and/or establishing a new service tax for

our survivability. I understand some of the States have already done some of it out of desperation not because they wanted to do so. I strongly believe that the most viable option for all of us to collectively undertake at this time and not to heavily burden our citizens most especially the disadvantaged ones is for our responsible leaders to revive the full context of the tax reform for the benefits of the people and governments of

this Nation through the establishment of the Unified Revenue Authority.

The URA performed progressively well within such a short period of time. What is at stake in not having the other components of the URA become law of the Nation? Respectfully,

Ausen T. Lambert

FSM Continues to combat waste management issues through JICA project

The FSM Office of Environment and Emergency Management (OEEM) in collaboration with the Japanese Technical Cooperation Project for Promotion of Regional Initiative on Solid Waste Management in Pacific Island Countries (J-PRISM) conducted its first Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) meeting through its phase two program on September 28, 2017 at the OEEM Conference Room. The half-day meeting, chaired by OEEM Assistant Director Cindy Ehmes, brought together State counterparts from the respective Environmental Protection Agencies and Transportation and Infrastructure/Public Works Office in each of the states, national government representatives, JICA, and the Japan Ambassador to discuss the results of a recent waste baseline survey, strategy development, and container deposit legislation systems. The Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Ryochi Horie, presented to the meeting services and funding schemes available to the FSM. As a result of this meeting, the relevant key agencies signed their Plan of Operation (PO) and Project Design Matrix (PDM) to continue collaborative efforts in combating

waste management issues under the J-PRISM II Project.

Prior to the JCC meeting, J-PRISM II and the Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) conducted a Solid Waste Management Workshop on September 27, 2017 to provide guidance on strategy development in reference to the Regional Cleaner Pacific Strategy. A more detailed strategy development session, led by a SPREP Solid Waste Management Advisor, was conducted on the 28th of September after the JCC meeting.

J-PRISM is a five-year project implemented and funded by JICA that is aimed to provide technical assistance in areas of Solid Waste Management. The project is in its second phase and the areas of focus include Collection and Disposal, Strategy Development, and the Container Deposit Legislation. During phase one of the project, the areas of focus included Policy development, Awareness, Landfill Management, Collection and Disposal, and Recycling.



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