CAPITOL CONNECTION

August 2016

Capitol Connection with Gov. David Ige is a regular e-newsletter that provides you with updates from the fifth floor of the State Capitol. As the governor's office works to become paperless, the newsletter will be available on-line and via subscription. Check out the governor's website at governor.hawaii.gov to subscribe to this newsletter. Also, follow the governor on Twitter and Instagram @govhawaii and check www.facebook.com/GovernorIge for daily activities.

From the Governor: Crossroads in education, environment

This is a crucial and historic time for Hawai'i — a chance to take the lead in both education reform and protecting our planet. The ***Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Summit*** *July 9 and upcoming town hall meetings as well as the* ***Sept. 1 - 10 IUCN World Conservation Congress*** *are giving people a real voice and a way to help chart Hawai'i's future.*

Q. What do you want people to know about the Every Student Succeeds Act meetings across the state?

A. The July 9 ESSA Summit was a wonderful first step with more than 1,000 people giving us their feedback. Now we want more people to add their voices at the follow-up community meetings in developing a 21st century blueprint for Hawai'i's public schools. We all have a stake in the future of our students, and we're inviting the entire community to be part of the process. ESSA gives the state a chance to envision new possibilities for our schools so we can prepare our students for an ever-changing world. (See meeting schedule on Page 2.)

Q. What is your vision for Hawai'i's public education system?

A. My vision is future-focused because we know that many of the top jobs today didn't exist 10 years ago. I'm a proud graduate of Pearl City High School and have seen our students compete nationally and globally and win. We need to ensure that all of our students have the opportunity and skills to compete with anyone in the world. I know that our public school system can be the best in the country, but we need to empower those closest to the children to make the best decisions. It's really about being change agents, to give our students the opportunities to succeed.

Q. Speaking of change agents, why is the IUCN World Conservation Congress so important for Hawai'i — locally and globally?

A. This is the first time the United States is hosting the IUCN World Conservation Congress — a historic moment for Hawai'i that showcases our leadership in protecting our environment. It acknowledges the state as a world leader in renewable energy, marine conservation, watershed protection, biosecurity and community-based initiatives. Our hope is that the community will get involved in some of the discussions and visit the exhibits at the Hawai'i Convention Center — to learn and share ideas with others who want to take care of our islands and our planet.

IUCN World Conservation Congress Hawai'i 2016

(top) Board of Education chair Lance Mizumoto, Gov. Ige and Department of Education superintendent Kathy Matayoshi join the 1,000-plus students, teachers, parents and community members at the July 9 ESSA Summit. (above) Protecting the Earth's endangered species is one of the many topics at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawai'i Sept. 1-10 — the first time the global event is being held in the United States.

ESSA Summit calls for 'change agents' for state's education

TEAMWORK: Governor Ige and first lady Dawn Amano-Ige (center) with members of the ESSA support team at the July 9 education summit.

More than 1,000 students, teachers, administrators and community members came to the governor's education summit last month to share their ideas for transforming Hawai'i's public schools. "We've been waiting a long time for this," said Kathy Murphy, executive director of the Hawai'i Association for the Education of Young Children. "It's so exciting. This event truly belongs to all of us who just want to do what's best for the kids."

"We all have a stake in what we're here to talk about today."

— Governor David Y. Ige

The milestone July 9 event at the Hawai'i Convention Center was organized by a 19-member Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) advisory team, led by retired principal Darrel Galera, to develop a 21st century "blueprint" for the state's public schools. Feedback and recommendations from the summit will be taken to a series of town hall meetings (see schedule) and shared with the Department of Education and its board before the state submits its ESSA plan for federal approval in the spring.

"We're expanding the team from 19 to 1,019," Governor Ige said in his keynote address to the crowd in attendance. "Our public school system touches all of us. A strong education system is the foundation for strong families, strong communities and strong economies. We all have a stake in what we're here to talk about today."

The team was formed in response to the passage of ESSA, a landmark piece of federal legislation that gives states more control over their own school systems. Governor Ige said he sees the new law as a chance for Hawai'i to build on current efforts and reimagine new kinds of meaningful classroom experiences for students.

"How do we create a public education system that prepares graduates for their futures — not our past?" he asked. "My vision for public education is future-focused, empowered school communities that inspire innovation, creativity and leadership in a healthy and safe learning environment."

The cross-section of summit participants spent the day listening to policy experts and sparking their own discussions for how to improve the schools. Michael Sarmiento, vice principal of Ka Waihona public charter school in Nanakuli, said his school teaches appreciation for Native Hawaiian culture. "But it's hard to capture what 'success' means on a standardized test." Bernadette Howard, state director of Career and Technical Education, said she wanted to learn about the potential of the new law. "We need to prepare students to handle real-world problems."

In closing remarks, Stephen Parker of the National Governors Association praised Governor Ige and his team for"bringing everyone to the table." He said other states will be watching Hawai'i as a model for community engagement. First lady and former school vice principal Dawn Amano-Ige echoed the sentiments of McKinley High student emcee Jade Raquel when she urged summit participants to feel empowered by the new ESSA law and work with the schools in their communities to "go for it."

(top) Members of the high school student panel Frank Pang, Naomi Franklin, Grace Leon and Victoria Cuba; (above) It was standing room only in many sessions, ranging from early learning to school empowerment.

ESSA Town Hall Community Meetings*

Aug. 17 – Kealakehe High, Kailua-Kona 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

- Aug. 10 – Kalani High, 6 – 8 p.m.
- Aug. 24 – Waiakea High, 4:30 –6:30 p.m.
- Aug. 24 – Chiefess Kamakaheli Middle, Lihue, Kaua'i, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.
- Aug. 27 – Moloka'i High, Ho'olehua, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.
- Sept. 7 – Maui High, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.
- Sept. 7 – Castle High, 6 – 8 p.m.
- Sept. 14 – Moanalua High, 6 – 8 p.m.

* July 27 meeting held at Kapolei High

IUCN World Conservation Congress: Planet at the Crossroads

Imagine hundreds of the world's top leaders from government, business and United Nations agencies, along with environmental experts and indigenous, grassroots groups, converging in Hawai'i to find ways to save the planet. Now add thousands of students, teachers, scientists, community volunteers and everyday citizens who care about big issues such as climate change, forests and healthy ecosystems. This momentous gathering is the 2016 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Congress Sept. 1-10 at the Hawai'i Convention Center — the first time it will be held in the United States.

SPEAKERS: Oceanographer Sylvia Earle, Gov. David Ige, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and Prince Albert II of Monaco.

"IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global conservation network," said Governor Ige. "It can drive policy and provide a catalyst for local and worldwide change." Sometimes called "the Olympics of conservation," the Congress meets every four years to find answers to the most pressing environmental challenges.

The good news for the public is that everyday citizens can experience the Congress at various levels and costs. Free exhibit pavilions on the first floor of the convention center will be open Sept. 2 – 7 and Sept. 9 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For youth and kama'āina who want to participate in workshops, "knowledge cafes" and poster sessions, there are discounted registration fees and local kama'āina day passes. For details, go to iucnworldconservationcongress.org.

In addition, Maui County will present the first Indigenous Crop Biodiversity Festival, Aug. 24 -30 with activities on Maui, Moloka'i and even Kaho'olawe. The festival will feature talks, tours and workshops on everything from indigenous Hawaiian foods, species and habitat preservation to food security and renewable energy. For more details, visit ICBF-Maui.com.

The choice of Hawai'i to host the Congress is iconic. "Hawai'i and other island communities are on the front lines of climate change and conservation issues," said Suzanne Case, director of the Department of Land and Natural Resources. "We can take everything we've learned about how to protect what makes Hawai'i special and share that with people all over the world. The best outcome would be Hawai'i and our planet make a big leap forward in caring for our environment."

Randy Tanaka, executive director of Hawai'i's host committee, added, "This is our moment to be in the world spotlight. As an island community we're all in the same canoe, and the driving force is our Hawaiian culture. We have a chance to do something in this generation to help the next generation. That's what it's all about."

Malama 'Āina: Showcasing the islands

The following is a sampling of events at the Hawai'i-Pacific Pavilion that are free and open to the public. For more details, go to the Congress Portal.

Hōkūle'a's worldwide voyage.

Friday September 2

-Ignite Conservation: Hope Spots across the Hawaiian Islands

-Nature's Benefits for Community Health and Well-Being

- Lawai'a Pono:Ancient Fishing Practices in Modern Contexts

Saturday September 3

-Bio-cultural Creativity and Traditional Knowledge Documentation

-The Power of Art in Conservation: Art and marine conservation

Sunday September 4

-Bio-cultural Indicators from a Pacific Perspective

-Island Commitments: Opportunities Moving Forward

-The Outdoor Circle: 100 years of Urban 'Greening'

-Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation

Monday, September 5

-Standing on Sacred Ground: Aloha 'Āina Around the World

Hawai'i Youth Challenge 2020

First lady Dawn Amano-Ige is encouraging all Hawai'i middle and high schools to bring at least one team (three students and one teacher) to the Hawai'i Youth Challenge 2020 Tuesday, Sept. 6 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Hawai'i Convention Center.

Students and teachers will learn from international experts about real environmental challenges and develop legacy conservation projects for their schools. "This is the first time the IUCN World Conservation Congress has developed specific programs for youth," the first lady said. "The Youth Challenge is one way students can get involved in projects to preserve the future of Hawai'i and get involved in projects to protect our planet."

A limited number of travel scholarships are available. To register, go to http://tinyurl.com/registerhyc2020. The event is part of the IUCN Congress Students' Day, Sept. 6. For details on all youth activities, go to www.iucnworldconservationcongress.org and select "Youth Organizations" from the "Keyword" filter.

Governor signs bills backed by Women's Legislative Caucus

New laws relating to women and children in Hawai'i were enacted through bill signing by Governor Ige. Rep. Della Au Belatti said at a ceremony last month, "Today is about when women lead, people collaborate and communities win." Sen. Rosalyn Baker called it a "banner year" for the women's caucus, which spearheaded the bills.

The measures included policies to expedite testing of "backlogged" and new rape kits, tighten sex trafficking laws, expand health coverage for women, address sexual violence on college campuses, improve data reporting on children's and women's deaths, and expand support for female and other veterans.

Governor Ige signs bills spearheaded by members of the Hawai'i Women's Legislative Caucus.

State announces homeless plan for $12 million appropriation

Affordable Housing
- Gov. Ige is committed to a goal of 10,000 new housing units by 2020.
- The Rent Supplement program provides shallow subsidies for homeless households.
- Landlord summits have been convened statewide to incentivize use of existing inventory.

Health & Human Services ($9.45M)
- Increase funding for homeless outreach.
- Expand Housing First and Rapid Re-Housing statewide.

Public Safety ($1.9M)
- Provide funding to address encampments on state lands and to keep public spaces safe.
- Ensure property storage and access to housing services for unsheltered persons.

Data & Infrastructure ($650K)
- Build data capacity for evaluation and outcome monitoring.
- Invest in repair and maintenance for state-owned shelters.

A plan focusing on the chronically homeless as well as families with children will be implemented with $12 million from the 2016 Legislature. "We know homelessness has reached every community," said Governor Ige at a press conference with homelessness coordinator Scott Morishige and Department of Human Services director Rachael Wong.

"This plan provides services across the state and focuses on the long-term," said the governor. It targets three areas: affordable housing, health and human services and public safety. Of the $12 million, $9.45 million will go to homeless outreach, a Family Assessment Center in Kaka'ako and housing initiatives statewide. Another $1.9 million is for encampment enforcement, with the remaining $650,000 for shelter repair and data systems.

"This plan builds on the hard work service providers do every day in our community," said Morishige. The strategy is part of the multigenerational 'Ohana Nui (extended family) approach being taken by the state departments of health and human services. Wong explained, "It's about moving people out of toxic stress environments and focusing on health care, education, safety, employment and housing."

Next steps after NextEra

With the Public Utilities Commission's rejection of the Hawaiian Electric-NextEra merger, Governor Ige said there needs to be a broader discussion built into the planning process for the state's clean energy future.

"This ruling gives us a chance to reset and refocus our goal of achieving 100 percent renewable energy for electricity by 2045," he said. "The next task for the PUC is to think about how we can get a broader conversation than just HECO looking at an appropriate suitor. It should be a decision about what's the benefit to the broader community."

The governor said planning and discussions will continue about various utility models. "No matter who owns the company, the energy vision for Hawai'i remains very clear: 100 percent renewable energy with a customer-centered utility focusing on smart meters, smart grid, distributed local solutions and as much consumer choice as possible," he said.

'Code Challenge' kicks off Aug. 27

If you're into coding, the Hawai'i Annual Code Challenge wants you. The event, Aug. 27 to Sept. 24, is open to anyone — from students to professionals — who want a chance to apply their skills to help improve government services.

A kick-off event is set for Aug. 27 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Aloha Tower Marketplace, Multi-Purpose Room 3. The event will include sessions for participants to select from a list of state issues, then develop solutions over the next month. For registration and challenge ideas, visit HACC.hawaii.gov.

Governor's Hilo Community Connection Forum

Tuesday, Aug. 9, 5:30-7:30 p.m., University of Hawai'i – Hilo

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