November 2017

From the governor: Keeping Hawai‘i moving on all fronts

Highways and bridges . . airports. . . harbors. As the nation’s only island state, Hawai‘i needs to maintain these vital arteries that many of us take for granted. This issue of Capitol Connection focuses on how Gov. David Ige and the state Department of Transportation (HDOT) are delivering on his promise to improve roadways, launch major modernization projects for harbors and airports and maximize federal dollars to help communities statewide.

Q. What do you want people to know about the progress we’re making on major transportation projects?

A. This is the core infrastructure of our state. I made it a priority to get projects moving that had been stalled for years. Most of the goods we need for survival come through our harbors. The airports drive tourism and create thousands of jobs. Roads are among the top concerns for every community. We’re finding cost-effective ways to improve traffic flow. Many people are surprised to learn HDOT doesn’t receive any state taxpayer funds to operate. They depend on user fees such as the gas tax and vehicle registration fees. The same is true of harbors and airports that rely on user fees, leases and other charges for revenue.

Gov. Ige praises major progress on Maui at Kahului Airport’s new Consolidated Rent-a-Car facility.

Q. Why are the harbor and airport modernization projects especially significant?

A. These projects are fundamentally important because they create jobs and allow us to make investments in two of the state’s most vital facilities. As a legislator, I voted to support harbor and airport modernization back in 2008, but the projects stalled. Now for Honolulu Harbor, we can look forward to more modern facilities with fair competition among shipping companies (Matson, Pasha and Tote). This means more shipping options for the business community, more jobs and more benefits for consumers.

Q. And what can we look forward to with the airlines and airports?

A. We’re moving forward with major projects at Kahului Airport and Daniel K. Inouye International Airport for long-overdue modernization, customer convenience and energy efficiency — especially for the terminals and car rental facilities, due to be completed by 2020. Southwest Airlines’ recent announcement that it plans to fly to the islands is the latest good news to expand travel options for kama‘aina and visitors, along with new routes for Hawaiian Air and Japan Airlines.

Q. What are you focused on when it comes to improving roads? (More HDOT news on Pages 2 and 3)

A. Our emphasis has been on preserving the roads we have, finding cost-saving ways to relieve traffic congestion and completing projects faster so we can continue to receive federal dollars. When we first came into office, the backlog of federally approved projects for Hawai‘i was too long so the federal government reduced our allocation. I asked HDOT to focus on projects we can implement more quickly because that directly impacts people’s quality of life. This partnership is important because the state’s share of a project is typically 20 percent of the cost, while the federal government pays 80 percent. Now HDOT is actually ahead of schedule in reducing the “pipeline” of funded work and recently received $41 million in additional federal funding.

Teamwork at the state's Department of Transportation

Consider the numbers: 15 airports, 10 commercial harbors, 2,500 miles of highway and 2,600 employees. That's the Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT). Now add the airlines, shipping companies, big and small local businesses and thousands of residents who want to know when their road is going to be fixed. **Welcome to HDOT's world.**

Former HDOT director Ford Fuchigami (center) with deputies Darrell Young, Ed Sniffen, Ross Higashi and Jade Butay.

For the past six years, this also has been **director Ford Fuchigami's** world — managing projects and listening to concerns. Starting this month Fuchigami will apply those skills in a new role — as Gov. David Ige's administrative director — a job that includes working with departments and stakeholders to develop recommendations. **HDOT deputy Jade Butay** has been named the new director, subject to Senate confirmation.

Hawaiian Air travelers arrive at Kona International Airport after re-opening of Federal Inspection Service for international flights.

Before Fuchigami left his director's post, he talked candidly about the multiple projects currently under way statewide for highways, harbors and airports and praised HDOT deputies and employees for delivering on **Governor Ige's priorities**, including:

- **Reducing** the backlog of highway projects in the federal "pipeline" to keep funds flowing to the state and its counties
- **Moving forward** on airport and harbor modernization
- **Re-establishing** the Federal Inspection Service facility at the Ellison Onizuka Kona International Airport to receive travelers from other countries
- **Opening** new airline routes, such as with Hawaiian Air and Japan Airlines
- **Attracting** new carriers such as Southwest Airlines and others

What is the most important thing people should know about HDOT? "What we can do for each island is directly affected by funding," Fuchigami explained. "HDOT doesn't receive any general fund state taxpayer dollars. We're self-supporting and depend on "user fees" such as the fuel tax and car registration fees for our state roads. The same is true for airports and harbors, for fees and leases. For highways, we've been out talking to communities to explain we're doing what we can with the money we have."

FAC: A year of providing hope to homeless families

From a broken-down storage shed to a place of hope — that sums up the success story of the Family Assessment Center in Kaka'ako, which celebrated its 1st anniversary Oct. 3. The event brought together Gov. Ige, members of his homelessness leadership team, legislators and officials from the state's Department of Human Services and Catholic Charities, the organization that staffs the center and connects families to the services they need "to thrive, not just survive."

FAC 1st ANNIVERSARY: Gov. Ige celebrates with the homelessness leadership team and service providers.

"The FAC is a game-changer that is making a difference in the lives of unsheltered families and helping provide the stability they need to improve their lives," the governor said. He cited the 90 percent success rate — 35 out of 38 families — who have been helped and housed in less than 90 days through FAC.

But long-term stability, not speed, continues to be the goal, said state coordinator on homelessness Scott Morishige. "Many of the FAC families have been homeless for a really long time," he said. "When they're placed into permanent housing, it's a real transformation to see young children who have never had a roof over their heads be in a place that's safe and stable." He added the FAC families have also been connected to jobs with almost two-thirds increasing their incomes.

Making progress: HDOT counts the ways statewide

What has the Ige administration accomplished so far in transportation? Aging infrastructure is being addressed, and state Department of Transportation officials say the proof of progress is in some of the milestones reached in the last few months for highways, airports and harbors. "We know more needs to be done, but I do feel good about what we've accomplished so far, based on our strong bond ratings and solid management," said the governor. Here's an update on some of the projects:

1 Finished more highway projects for easier commutes – HDOT has done restriping and repaving to create contraflow and extra lanes in Windward and Leeward Oʻahu to alleviate traffic congestion. On the neighbor islands, projects such as the Lahaina Bypass on Maui is 60 percent finished, and the long-awaited final phase of the Daniel K. Inouye Highway, also known as Saddle Road, on Hawaiʻi island was completed last month. Faced with limited funds, HDOT is focusing for now on preserving existing roads. Although the state receives federal funds for projects, it still has to provide 20 percent of the cost. HDOT has proposed raising some of the user fees, such as the fuel tax, to fund more road projects.

2 Reduced federal "pipeline" backlog - Governor Ige's number one priority is to reduce the backlog of federally approved projects and focus on highway projects that can be finished more quickly to help traffic flow and improve safety. As a signal HDOT is on the right track, the federal government recently awarded the state $41 million in additional federal funds because the department had a list of "shovel-ready" projects on Hawaiʻi, Kauaʻi and Oʻahu. The department also helped Kauaʻi County win a $13.5 million federal highway grant for the Lihue Town Core Mobility and Revitalization Project.

(top) Officials gathered for the Oct. 10 dedication of the Daniel K. Inouye Highway's final phase on Hawaiʻi island, including (center) Mayor Harry Kim, Gov. Ige and U.S. Sen. Mazie Hirono. HDOT's Darrell Young and the governor tour Honolulu Harbor.

3 Solidified HDOT's federal-state partnership - The Central Federal Lands Highways Division has partnered with HDOT for up to $350 million in combined federal and state projects. This includes 13 bridges and highway improvements on several islands such as Saddle Road (now the Daniel K. Inouye Highway) on Hawaiʻi island and the Lahaina Bypass on Maui. The Halona Bridge project went from groundbreaking to completion in nine months, on time and on budget. Also valuable is the "peer-to-peer" program where they work with HDOT engineers to train them in the latest technologies to streamline projects.

4 Launched the long-awaited Honolulu Harbor modernization project – The Kapalama Container Terminal (KCT) project set to begin this December expands cargo capacity for three major carriers: Matson, Pasha and TOTE Maritime. "This means more shipping options for the business community and lower consumer costs, added jobs and millions of dollars invested in the community," said Governor Ige. "I met personally with the shippers, and they were all very happy we're finally moving ahead."

5 Moved airport modernization forward - Some of the most visible ongoing projects are the car rental facility at Kahului Airport with an electric tram to deliver travelers and the Daniel K. Inouye International Airport's new central rental car facility so passengers can jump on a universal shuttle instead of waiting for separate buses. Both energy-saving projects are funded through customer facility charges paid by rental car customers, not taxpayer funds. The Kahului project is planned for completion in 2019 and HNL in 2020.

Check the map for projects near you

If you're wondering how HDOT decides what road to fix when, now there's a map for that. It's the **Highway Project Status Map** at hidot.hawaii.gov with some important new features, thanks to a trio of HDOT employees. They turned thousands of data sets on road conditions, traffic count and fatal crashes into something visual and understandable for the average person.

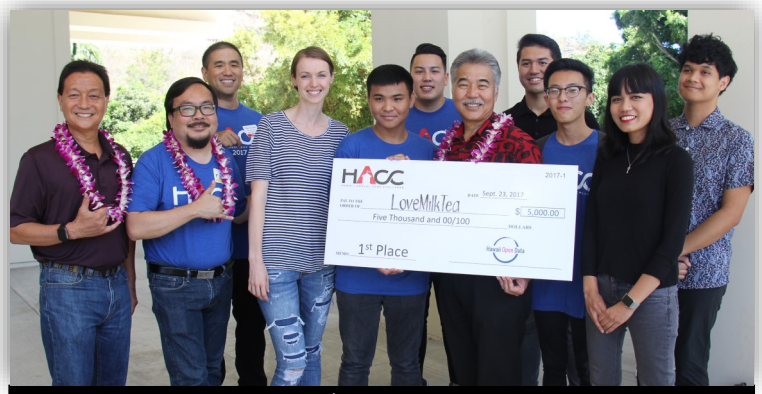
The map, color-coded for red (poor), yellow (fair) and green (good) conditions, is meant to help the public see how HDOT makes scheduling decisions on road projects statewide. "Highways deputy director Ed Sniffen wanted to show we're making decisions based on the greatest need," said Gina Belleau, who worked on the mapping with HDOT staffers Ron Dedrick and Goro Sulijoadikusumo. "HDOT wants to focus first on our worst areas for pavement conditions and roads used by a lot of people. Sharing this information with the public helps us be more accountable for how we're using it."

PUTTING HDOT ON THE MAP: Gina Belleau and Ron Dedrick work on details to help the public understand decisions for road repair.

Local tech talent shines at Hawai‘i Code Challenge

Take a roomful of talented young coders. Match them with state departments who want to improve services. Then give them a month to produce practical solutions the state can actually use to benefit the whole community.

The result is — drumroll, please — the **Hawai‘i Annual Code Challenge (HACC)**, the brainchild of Governor Ige, and implemented by Todd Nacapuy, the state’s chief information officer, and his Enterprise Technology Services staff. The Sept. 23 event drew 20 teams who presented their solutions for real-life civic issues and competed for several thousand dollars in prize money. Sponsors included local businesses, the tech community and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.



Gov. Ige with the UH students who won $5,000 for taking 1st place at the Code Challenge.

“The HACC proves we have the talent and imagination right here in the islands to find solutions to government challenges,” said the governor, who served as one of the judges. “It’s a way to shape the next sector of Hawai‘i’s economy by connecting the next generation to future tech careers.” The winners included:

First place – “LoveMilkTea,” a UH student team who created a UH Mānoa campus wayfinding mobile app.
Second place – “FidgetSpinners,” another UH student team who developed a mobile-friendly Hawaii Revised Statutes app.
Third place – “The Progress Bars,” a community team who devised a user-friendly solution for Office of Hawaiian Affairs’ grants.
Top High School Team – “No Internet,” a Waipahu High team that wanted to help the Office of Elections with volunteer scheduling.
Top College Team – “ArchiTechs,” a team that also developed a scheduling solution for the Office of Elections.

At the event, Nacapuy also made a recruitment pitch for local talent to fill tech jobs in state government — one of the governor’s priorities to improve public access to services and information. “This is becoming the biggest hack-a-thon in the state,” Nacapuy said. “We’re making history!” For more details, visit hacc.hawaii.gov.

State builds goodwill in Hiroshima and the Philippines

Governor Ige and first lady Dawn Amano-Ige affirmed Hawai‘i’s long-standing relationship with Japan and the Philippines in visits last month to promote cultural, economic and education exchanges.

Mrs. Ige traveled to Hiroshima Oct. 2 to represent the state in commemorating the 20th anniversary of Hawai‘i’s sister state relationship. She and a delegation of legislators and business representatives were hosted by Hiroshima Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki.

Following that trip, Governor and Mrs. Ige embarked on a goodwill and trade mission with the Filipino Chamber of Commerce Oct. 14-22. Gov. Ige was the first Hawai‘i governor in a decade to visit the Philippines. Among the significant events was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation to establish a partnership between Hawai‘i and all Philippine provinces.

The MOU calls for establishing a working group to plan joint initiatives and recognizes that Filipinos constitute Hawai‘i’s largest ethnic group.

From top: 1) The Iges talk with Gov. Ryan Singson of the League of Provinces of the Philippines and Consul General Gina Jamoralin. 2) The governors shake hands after signing the historic MOU for future cooperation. 3) First lady Dawn Amano-Ige and Hiroshima’s Gov. Hidehiko Yuzaki portray samurai forging a lasting bond.

Contact us at governor.hawaii.gov
Executive Chambers, State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 586-0034 | Fax: (808) 586-0006

Hilo Office (808) 974-6262 | Kona Office (808) 323-4542 |
Maui Office (808) 243-5798 | Kaua‘i Office (808) 274-3100

Capitol Connection with Gov. David Ige is a regular e-newsletter that provides updates from the State Capitol. As we work to become paperless, the newsletter is available online and via subscription. Check out the governor’s website at governor.hawaii.gov to subscribe. Also, follow the governor on Twitter and Instagram @govhawaii and check facebook.com/GovernorDavidIge.
(Print copies by Hawai‘i Correctional Industries)