

Ke Ala Hou

A New Path Forward

Ke Ke'ena O Ke Kia'aina | Office of the Governor • July 2025

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE



Governor Josh Green, M.D.

Summer offers exciting opportunities for connection within the community. Recently, we unveiled the Ala Moana walkway, which provides a new pedestrian bridge linking Ward Village to Ala Moana Regional Park, allowing people to traverse safely between the busy Kakaako area and the nearby beach park.

In June, we also celebrated Pride Month by raising pride flags at the Hawai'i State Capitol for the first time. Aloha is meant to be embraced by everyone without exclusion. We were honored to spread the aloha throughout all our communities in celebration of the month.

The work and research dedicated to making Hawai'i's communities safer from future wildfires is far from over, but we are eager to welcome Dori Booth as Hawai'i's first State Fire Marshal in nearly 46 years. Her expertise will guide us in our ongoing efforts to protect against wildfires and we are grateful to have her lead us in this important work.

We are also excited to welcome our summer interns across various offices, including Communications, Housing, the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions and Constituent Services. It is wonderful to have new energy in our offices and we cannot wait to see what bright endeavors they will pursue in the Office of the Governor and beyond.

As we move forward, let's continue to celebrate our achievements and remain dedicated to our ongoing work to pursue kindness and caring, and cultivate a thriving environment that benefits all of Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Josh Green M.D.

Hawai'i Introduces New State Fire Marshal: Continuing the Protection of our Islands



Governor Green announced the appointment of Dori Booth as Hawai'i's new State Fire Marshal on June 2, marking the revival of a critical public safety position that has been vacant for nearly 46 years. This appointment is more important now than ever after the devastating 2023 Maui wildfires.

Booth holds a Master's degree in Public Safety Leadership Administration and a Bachelor's in Sustainable Tourism Development and Management, both from Arizona State University. She brings more than two decades of leadership in fire safety and public service, and also serves in a national leadership role with the International Code Council, chairing the Fire Sprinkler Exam Development Committee.

"Dori Booth steps into this role at a moment of incredible urgency — and with a mission that's nothing short of transformative," said Governor Green. "We are rebuilding an entire fire safety infrastructure at the state level, and Dori is at the center of it. She'll need to navigate the complex division of responsibilities between the counties and the state, set up a new operational structure and immediately implement top-priority reforms to protect our communities. It may sound like bureaucracy — but the goal is simple: save lives, protect property and keep Hawai'i safe."

Continued on page 2

Ke Ala Hou intends to elevate, recognize, and celebrate the hard work done by our state departments. Our goal is to share top achievements from our state employees, emphasize aloha and kindness in action and demonstrate caring leadership at the state level. It is our hope that by sharing these stories, we build trust and understanding in what we do everyday in service to you.



Scan the QR code to view our digital newsletter.

New State Fire Marshal Continued from page 1

Fire Marshal Booth has familiarized herself with the wildfires investigation reports by the Fire Safety Research Institute and will be leading the charge on executing the 10 priorities identified in the Phase II report.

“The lessons from the Maui wildfires are still fresh and our responsibility is clear: We must do everything in our power to prevent future tragedies,” said Booth. “That means stronger

coordination, smarter planning and a relentless focus on community safety. And when wildfires or other disasters cannot be prevented, we must be resilient — to protect Hawai‘i’s most precious resources: its people, history, culture and places of deep significance. I’m committed to working with community members, county, state and federal partners — as well as our first responders — to build a fire protection system that reflects the strength and resilience of Hawai‘i’s people.”

Bridging Land and People: Creating Connections for a Better Tomorrow



Photo courtesy: Ward Village

A new elevated walkway was officially opened on May 22 on Ala Moana Boulevard. “From our perspective, this quintessential pedestrian bridge literally connects Kaka‘ako Mauka to Kaka‘ako Makai, extending the safe walkability of this well-planned live, work, play community for kama‘āina and visitors alike,” said Hawai‘i Community Development Authority Executive Director Craig Nakamoto.

The Hawai‘i Department of Transportation (HDOT), with its contractors, built the \$26 million bridge with a \$17.8 million federal grant and \$6 million from Howard Hughes. The state covered the balance.

“Connecting our community has always been at the heart of Ward Village, which is why the new elevated walkway is such a meaningful step forward,” said Doug Johnstone, president of the Hawai‘i region for Howard Hughes. “Our collaboration with the state DOT and the Federal Highway Administration has helped create a welcoming, safe link between Ward Village and Ala Moana, expanding access to public parks and improving the pedestrian experience.”

The site was selected, in part, because the Hawai‘i region for Howard Hughes was willing to dedicate land on the mauka side of Ala Moana Boulevard to construct an elevated walkway, and HCDA owns the land on the makai side.

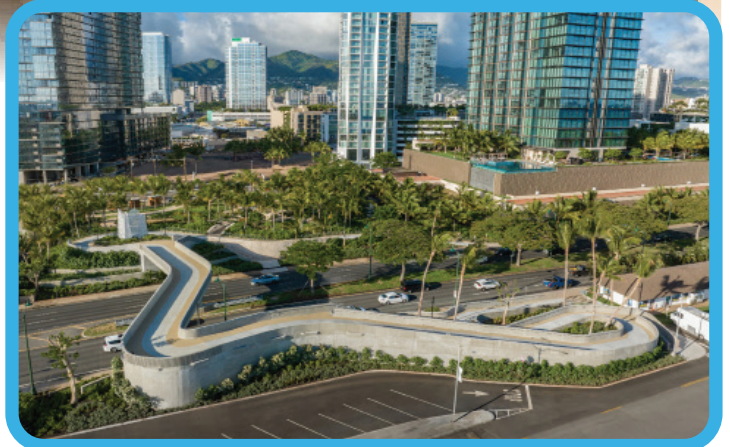


Photo courtesy: Ward Village

“You know, they say it takes the village. No! It doesn’t take a village. It takes committed partners,” said Senator Sharon Moriwiki. “So, thank you, Howard Hughes, thanks to the state DOT. Thank you, Ed, for taking the initiative to get Federal Highway money so that we paid just a small portion.”

Jon Nouchi, deputy director of the City and County of Honolulu Department of Transportation Services said, “Our federal, state, city and community partners are aligned and unwavering in their commitment, in our commitment to safety and projects which enhance already great communities.”

Construction of the elevated pedestrian walkway began in May of 2022. It was completed and opened on May 22, 2025.



Matt Elliott to Serve as Next UH Mānoa Athletics Director

The University of Hawai'i (UH) Board of Regents unanimously approved the appointment of Matt Elliott as UH Mānoa's next athletics director during a special meeting on June 16. Elliott was selected by UH President Wendy Hensel following a national search that drew more than 110 applicants. Elliott officially started in his new role on June 30.

"To the people of Hawai'i, to the community, to the coaches, the staff, and the student-athletes, I'm honored to be your next director of athletics," Elliott said. "I've been a fan for many years and I'm so excited to now be part of the team. Together, we will build a department that operates on integrity. We will create the best possible student-athlete experience and we will set our teams up for success."

Elliott brings more than a decade of Division I athletics administration experience, including 13 years at UCLA, where he most recently served as chief strategy officer. He led the department's move to the Big Ten and helped develop a five-year strategic plan. His previous roles included oversight of sports, legal affairs, name, image, and likeness policy, compliance and athletic performance. He also helped negotiate a record \$280 million apparel deal.

Since 2024, Elliott has worked as the senior director of policy and public affairs at Hawai'i Community Foundation. He and his family moved back to Hawai'i in 2022. Elliott previously clerked in Hawai'i after law school and has long-standing personal ties to the islands.

"I personally spent an incredible amount of my time getting to know the candidates," Hensel said. From understanding the challenges of the athletics department and thinking about where we need to go in the future, to supporting our student-athletes to the highest possible levels. Our goal is to help them be competitive while also ensuring that they leave with an excellent experience. Matt simply stood out from the competition right from the beginning."

To learn more about Elliott, visit www.hawaii.edu/news/2025/06/16/elliott-approved-by-bor-uh-manoa-ad/.



Photo courtesy: UH

Hawai'i Green Business Program Recognizes Businesses Commitment to Energy

The Hawai'i Green Business Program recognized 45 Hawai'i businesses, offices and events on June 27 for their commitment to energy and water efficiency, waste reduction, pollution prevention and community involvement as well as cultural and natural resource preservation.

Governor Josh Green, M.D., recognized the award recipients representing six different islands at the annual awards ceremony, which was hosted for the first time at the historic Washington Place.

Governor Green praised awardees for their commitment to sustain the ecological, cultural and economic health of Hawai'i, saying, "At a time when environmental protections are being repealed at the federal level, Hawai'i will not falter in its commitment to a more resilient, clean economy. The businesses and organizations we recognize today honor a statewide commitment to malama 'āina — to steward our precious natural resources for future generations."



Governor Green, HSEO Chief Energy Officer Mark Glick and Board of Water Supply Manager and Chief Engineer Ernie Lau pose for a photo with some of the award recipients.

The Hawai'i Green Business Awards emphasize energy efficiency as a key solution in accelerating Hawai'i's transition to renewable energy. In just one year, the energy efficiency measures of the 2024/2025 awardees resulted in 38.8 million gallons of water saved, 6.5 million kWh of electricity saved, 22.7 tons of green waste diverted, 12,372 tons of waste recycled, 119,110 therms of gas saved, (1 therm = 100,000 BTUs), 6,725 metric tons of CO2 equivalent for electricity kWh reduced and 945 metric tons of CO2 equivalent for gas reduced. These efforts contributed to a substantial positive impact on the environment.



SUN Bucks Supports Hawai'i Families

The Hawai'i Department of Human Services (DHS) is helping families provide nutritious food for their keiki through the 2025 SUN Bucks program. Eligible children are receiving \$177 in food benefits to support their nutritional needs during the summer break.

Benefits started being issued in late May. So far, more than 79,000 children have received SUN Bucks, totaling over \$13.9 million in support for families across the state. These funds can be used to purchase food at local retailers that accept EBT.

SUN Bucks is a summer food assistance program for households with school-aged children. Eligibility must be confirmed each year. The program is funded by the state of Hawai'i and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Families approved for SUN Bucks in 2025 will receive a newly branded EBT card in the mail. Cards issued in previous years are no longer valid. If you were approved, you should have also received a notice from DHS.

If your child was approved for free or reduced-price school meals for the 2024–2025 school year or if your household already receives SNAP benefits, your child is automatically enrolled. No application is needed.

DHS Director Ryan Yamane said, "Through our partnership with the Department of Education, the SUN Bucks program will again help provide healthy meals to more than 100,000 school-aged children statewide, ensuring no child goes hungry during the summer."

The application deadline is August 3, 2025.

To learn more, visit sunbucks.dhs.hawaii.gov, call 1-888-975-7328.



**SUN
BUCKS**

**Find out if your children
are eligible for SUN Bucks
grocery benefits.**

Photo courtesy: USDA.gov/summer

DHS Rapid Response Event Supports Waimānalo Community



The BESSD Team at a Rapid Response event. Photo courtesy: DHS

The Department of Human Services (DHS), through its Med-QUEST Division and the Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division, joined We Are Oceania and other state partners in a Rapid Response event to support individuals impacted by job layoffs.

Conducted in Waimānalo, a community deeply rooted in resilience and connection, this outreach effort provided vital information about programs such as Medicaid (via Med-QUEST), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, financial assistance, and child care subsidy and employment opportunities within DHS. These Rapid Response events are coordinated by the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Workforce Development Division, to deliver timely assistance and resources where they are most needed.

A particularly heartwarming moment came when one of the We Are Oceania representatives, a former Hawai'i Job Corps student, returned to give back to the very community that helped shape their future. Events like these reflect the values that ground our public service: compassion, kōkua and kuleana.

Many of the DHS team members who participated have personal ties to the Waimānalo community and understand the critical role that Hawai'i Job Corps plays — not just in Waimānalo, but across the state. Their presence was both professional and personal, reflecting a shared commitment to uplift community members during uncertain times.

The recent federal court ruling allowing Hawai'i Job Corps to continue its operations has brought great relief and hope back to the community. Feedback from DHS employees at the event was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing how honored they felt to stand with and serve the people of Waimānalo.



Ke Ala Hou is a monthly publication of the Office of Governor Josh Green, M.D.

We invite you to stay connected with us!



808-586-0034



gov.communications



[@hawaii.gov](https://www.hawaii.gov)



[governor.hawaii.gov](https://www.governor.hawaii.gov)



[@govjoshgreen](https://www.facebook.com/govjoshgreen)



[@govjoshgreen](https://www.instagram.com/govjoshgreen)



[@govjoshgreenmd](https://twitter.com/govjoshgreenmd)