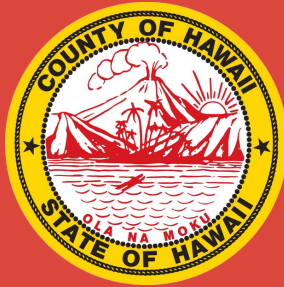


2021

ANNUAL REPORT



HAWAII COUNTY SISTER CITIES

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Aloha!

Our Sister City relationships have always been integral to our identity, diversity, and vibrancy here on Hawai'i Island. Yet, amidst a global pandemic, they have become so much more than that. They, instead, have become a symbol of hope. A symbol of togetherness and solidarity. A symbol of aloha and the spirit that binds us.

The COVID-19 pandemic has proven just how close we all are and reminded us that we are all one 'ohana.

As we begin our island's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, let us not forget to look to our Sister Cities to seek solutions, examples, and understanding. To discuss with each other our failures while celebrating our successes. To talk about what brings us together while showcasing what makes us unique.

There is no one right way for us to reopen and return to "normal," but there is a way for us not to do it alone.

So, I would like to challenge our county to remember that, although we are located on the most isolated landmass in the world, we can draw upon the ideas and experiences of France, Chile, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines to find global solutions for our local problems. By leveraging our relationships and working with one another, we can and will return to a thriving and vibrant Hawai'i Island – faster and more prepared.

Together we are stronger and more resilient. Together we are Sister cities.

Mahalo,

Mitch D. Roth

Mayor

County of Hawai'i



MISSION:

Promote friendship, goodwill, and understanding between global communities by providing opportunities for the residents of Hawai'i Island and our sister cities to experience different cultures through education, social and economic interaction.

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide opportunities for local government, business leaders, and the wider community to experience and explore other cultures through long-term community partnerships.
- Promote and develop economic, trade, cultural, educational, technical, social, and other beneficial exchanges.
- Foster international understanding and the exchange of information.



County of Hawai'i

SISTER CITIES

The County of Hawai'i's new sister-city logo is a representation of all that connects us. Bound by a triangle, the strongest and most durable shape, are varying mountain peaks representing the unique and distinct differences between our homelands. Though different in appearance, the peaks are all part of the same mountain - much like our cities and counties. Together we make up a global network of partnership and collaboration that will exist far past our time and be revered far longer. Though the sun rises in the East and sets in the West, it is the same sun felt by each of us. A constant reminder of our connection and shared purpose. As we continue to solve the problems of our home, let us remember that we are not alone. We are connected as siblings, as one 'ohana (family). Forever we will be sister-cities.





HISTORY

The U.S. sister city program formally began in 1956 when President Dwight D. Eisenhower proposed a people-to-people citizen diplomacy initiative. It was originally a program of the National League of Cities, and Sister Cities International became a separate corporation in 1967 due to the growth and popularity of the U.S. program.

ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

Article 31, Section 2 of the Hawai'i County Code institutes the criteria and formal procedures for forming a sister city relationship. It states the County of Hawai'i may consider the establishment of a sister city relationship with a city or county that:

- shares a historical, cultural, or ethnic relationship with the people of our county;
- offers reciprocating educational, technological, or economic benefits, including special knowledge, know-how, or expertise that is beneficial to our businesses, industries, and labor force;
- is similar in population size or character, which makes for analogous problems and concerns and the opportunity to exchange meaningful ideas and applicable solutions for either or both places or;
- recognizes other common bonds that are mutually beneficial to the citizens of both places and serves as a liaison for exchanging information and other lifestyle and practical values.

A sister city relationship is established by adopting a council resolution and the signing of a formal agreement between the mayor of the County of Hawai'i and the appropriate public official of the proposed sister city that ties exist.

CONNECTING HAWAI'I ISLAND TO THE WORLD

HAWAI'I COUNTY'S 11 SISTER CITIES ACROSS THE PACIFIC AND BEYOND



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OSHIMA, JAPAN

Izu, Oshima, which means "Big Island", is home to waterfalls, valleys, black sand beaches, hot springs and Mt. Mihara, an active volcano standing at 2,507 feet.



NAGO CITY, OKINAWA, JAPAN

The first place in Japan where the cherry blossoms bloom, and home to a Cherry Blossom Festival similar to Waimea's. Teams from Nago participate in Hilo's annual Haari Boat Race.



YURIHAMA, JAPAN

A Hawaiian festival takes place every July with hula hālau from all over Japan Hawai'i. Also, students from Yurihama and Hilo Intermediate School participate in an annual student exchange.



LA SERENA, CHILE

La Serena is the second oldest city in Chile and is home to the southern twin telescope of Mauna Kea's Gemini North.



SHIBUKAWA, JAPAN

Just as Mauna Kea is considered the piko of the Pacific, Shibukawa is the bellybutton of Japan. The annual Ikaho Hawaiian festival features winning hālau from Hilo's Merrie Monarch.



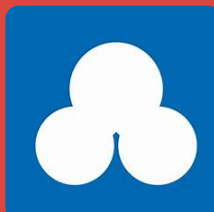
ORMOC CITY, PHILIPPINES

Ormoc hosts the biggest geothermal plant in Southeast Asia. The city enjoys economic growth because it supplies a large part of the country's power needs with its abundant geothermal power resources.



LA RÉUNION

a French island located east of Madagascar, Réunion's environment is both unique and similar to Hawai'i island. Like Kīlauea, their Piton de la Fournaise volcano is a World Heritage Site.



SUMOTO, JAPAN

Students from Sumoto and Hilo High School have participated in a student exchange every summer since 2000. Sumoto City is famous for its Kobe beef, Naruto oranges and Awaji onions.



GOKSEONG, SOUTH KOREA

Gokseong is the center of nature-friendly agriculture devoted to restoring the environment. A Mountain View piggery was the first to adopt the Korean Natural Farming methods in the U.S.



CABUGAO, PHILIPPINES

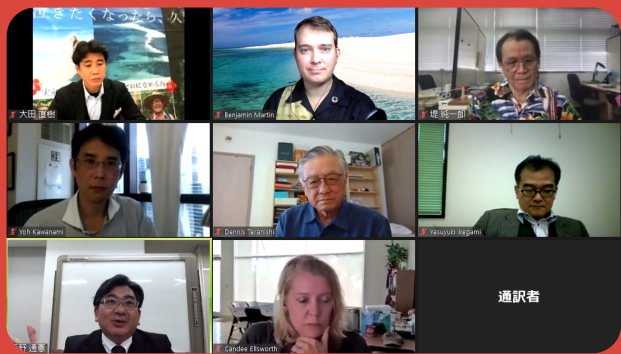
The Salomague Port in Cabugao was the place of departure for over 100 Sakadas (migrant workers) destined to work in the sugarcane fields of Hawai'i in the 1930's -40's.



KUMEJIMA, JAPAN

Kumejima has a deep-sea water pipe like the Kona's Natural Energy Lab, and the development of ocean thermal energy conversion there occurred in tandem with similar development here.

SISTER CITIES ACTIVITIES



Attendees to the online "Hawai'i Okinawa Clean Energy Workshop" included representatives from Kumejima and Candee Ellsworth, Executive Director for Keahole Center for Sustainability



Screenshot of Sumoto Mayor Takeuchi's video message to the people of Hawai'i Island.



Virtual meeting with sister city protocol officer Jane Clement and representatives from Nago, Japan. Noriko Sauer from West Hawaii Planning Dept. helped with translation and interpretation.



Screenshot of Mayor Roth's video message to the people of Nago City, Japan

AUGUST 2020

- Sumoto and Hawai'i County celebrated its 20th anniversary of the sister-city relationship. Mayor Michihiro Takeuchi sent a video greeting to commemorate the event.

DECEMBER 2020

- Mayor Roth received letters of congratulations from Oshima Island mayor Toshihiro Mitsuji, Sumoto City mayor Michihiro Takeuchi and Kumejima Mayor Haruo Ota.
- Kumejima hosted an informal online year-end meet-up between friends in Hawai'i County and Kumejima on December 19, 2020.

JANUARY 2021

- Okinawa Prefecture hosted a virtual workshop with the broader theme "Hawai'i Okinawa Clean Energy Workshop," from January to February 2021. The online format included pre-recorded presentations and real-time discussions. As in the past, participants from Hawaii County, such as HATCH, HNEI, and Keahole Center for Sustainability, and Kumejima Town, presented on various energy-related topics.
- Shibukawa, Japan, virtually participated in the Japanese Community Association of Hawaii's 46th Annual Shinnenkai and Installation of Officers and Directors on January 27, 2021.
- Mayor Roth received a congratulatory letter from Yurihama mayor Masamichi Miyawaki.

MARCH 2021

- Hawai'i County renewed its membership with Sister City International. Sister Cities International (SCI) is a nonprofit citizen diplomacy network that creates and strengthens partnerships between communities in the United States and those in other countries, particularly through the establishment of "sister cities."

APRIL 2021

- Mayor Roth delivered a video message to Mayor Taketoyo Toguchi and the people of Nago City to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the Hawai'i County and Nago City sister-city relationship.
- Revamped the sister-city page on the County's website to include timely and relevant information.
- Mayor Roth received a congratulatory letter from Ormoc City mayor Richard Gomez.
- Began planning for the first annual sister-city virtual concert.

MAY 2021

- Invited the Hawai'i County-Japan sister cities host organizations to a Reaffirmation Signing Ceremony on May 10, 2021. Hawai'i County has six sister-cities in Japan and is supported by five local organizations. They are the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industries of Hawaii, the Japanese Association of Hawai'i, the Kiwanis Club of East Hawai'i, Hui Okinawa, and the Keaohole Center for Sustainability.
- Received a copy of Sumoto Mayor Michihiro Takeuchi's letter to the Kiwanis Club of East Hawaii acknowledging the cancellation of the scheduled October 2021 student exchange visit to Sumoto due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- Hosted meet and greet virtual meetings via zoom with representatives from Ormoc City, Kumejima, Nago City, and Oshima Island.

JUNE 2021

- Completed the creation of "Sending Aloha," an original song composed by local musician Brandon Nakano made especially for the sister-city virtual concert.
- Started filming and production of "A Whole New World," Hawai'i County's first annual sister-city virtual concert.
- Mayor Roth received a congratulatory letter from Cabugao mayor Edgardo Cobangbang, Jr.
- Hosted a meet and greet virtual meeting with government representatives from La Serena, Chile, and Cabugao City, Philippines.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6...



Hawai'i County-Japan sister cities Reaffirmation Signing Ceremony
Front: Aaron Chung, Candee Ellsworth, Art Taniguchi, Maile David, Jane Clement, Robert Kaneshiro
Back: Lee Lord, Ross Birch, Tommy Goya, Mayor Mitch Roth, Bobby Command, Dwayne Mukai, Doug Adams



Virtual meeting with sister city protocol officer Jane Clement and representatives from Sumoto, Japan. Noriko Sauer from West Hawaii Planning Dept. helped with translation and interpretation.



Virtual meeting with sister city protocol officer Jane Clement and representatives from La Serena, Chile



Virtual meeting with sister city protocol officer Jane Clement and representatives from Ormoc City, Philippines

VIRTUAL CONCERT SPECIAL SCREENING

"A Whole New World" is Hawai'i County's first-ever sister city virtual concert. This event is created as a way to reconnect with our sister cities and to share messages of hope and aloha as we continue to face the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic together.

The full cooperation we received from our sister cities in the creation of this event is a testament to the strength of our relationships and our commitment to each other.

A special in-person and online screening of this virtual concert is scheduled for July 26, 2021, from 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm at the Wainaku Executive Center. Invited guests will include representatives from sister cities, host organizations, the County Council, and other special guests.

INSTALLATION OF SISTER-CITY DISPLAY CASES AT KONA AND HILO AIRPORT

Hawai'i County received approval from Hawai'i Airport District Manager Chauncey Wong Yuen to install a free-standing or a wall-mounted display case in the new Federal Inspection Station at the Kona airport and in the departure lounge at the Hilo Airport to showcase Hawai'i County's sister cities.

The display will include curated items that Hawai'i County received from its sister cities as gifts/omiyage over the years and information about each of the sister cities. Students' artwork from the sister city art exchange program may also be showcased.

SISTER CITY ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIONS

Initial planning is underway to commemorate the anniversary of the sister city relationship between Hawai'i County and the following sister cities:

Kumejima, Japan - 10 years, September 2021

Ormoc City, Philippines - 10 years, September 2021

Oshima, Japan - 60 years, January 2022



**UPCOMING
EVENTS**