



JUNE PROGRESS REPORT

DISTRICT 4

Hawaiian Paradise Park, Hawaiian Beaches, Makai of Pāhoa Town, Nanawale Estates, Leilani Estates, Pohoiki, Kapoho

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“The giving of love is an education in itself.”
— Eleanor Roosevelt

Aloha!

June is, as always, the month that I turn a year older and begin to worry about my total hair count. As I looked back on these past months, I asked myself whether I was headed in the right direction. This question prompted me to think about what has this office accomplished during my term. It was easy to answer because we started these progress reports.

One project that started in February was the Neighborhood Watch bill. Initially I thought it was only going to take a month or two to finish, but resulted as a five-month project that ended this June. Even though it took a long time, the results were incredible. A bill that was originally intended to fix a problem in Puna instead produced a greater reward by providing an islandwide structure for neighborhood watches and funding in the County budget, allowing the program to succeed.

That was just one project that the public knows, but there were actually many others that are being taken care of by my diligent team. In the end, as I thought about it more, my initial question of whether or not I was headed in the right direction didn't even matter. What I really wanted to ask myself was: Do I have the right people beside me? And I honestly could answer myself, yes I do.

Sincerely,

Greggor Ilagan

Greggor Ilagan

‘IMILOA ASTRONOMY CENTER

Council Member Greggor Ilagan is supporting Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) among Puna youth by providing a new \$15,000 grant in district contingency relief funds to the ‘Imiloa Astronomy Center.

The funds are in addition to \$15,000 that Ilagan provided in 2014 to ‘Imiloa that allowed about 1,000 students from throughout Puna to be educated about the opportunities that STEAM offers across diverse industries, thereby helping students to broaden their horizons.

Although the original intent of the 2014 grant included funds for Imiloa’s Mobile Science Team to make presentations at Keonepoko Elementary, Keaau Middle School and Pahoia High and Intermediate School, scheduling difficulties and various natural disasters made it more effective for the students to be hosted at Imiloa, which allowed a total of seven schools to be reached.

This grant covered transportation costs for the students, admission into

‘Imiloa and personnel costs. Many of the children wrote to Ilagan’s office with heartfelt thank you letters, expressing amazement at their visit to the 3-D planetarium and the wonders of the universe. (Sample letter from Madison, a fourth-grader at Keonepoko, with minor edits for spelling): “I had fun because I learned about Earth, the galaxy, and the stars. ... I like it when you show us about our Earth, how it was



Students sent thank you letters to Councilman Ilagan’s office.

and how our islands were made. When I first got there I was surprised because it was my first time there and I like it there. I felt happy there and respected there.”

An additional \$15,000 grant in contingency funds during the 2015-2016 school year will continue to open Puna youths’ eyes to this Universe and perhaps inspire them to pursue careers in science and technology.

The ‘Imiloa Astronomy Center is located in Hilo and is established as a learning center where Hawaii’s cultural traditions, its legacy of exploration, and the wonders of astronomy can come together to provide inspiration and hope for future generations.

FOOD SUSTAINABILITY IN PUNA



With sponsorship from Council District 4 contingency funds, Kalani Honua provided Modern Ahupua'a permaculture workshops to promote food sustainability in Puna. Workshops focused on all aspects of sustainable agriculture, from beekeeping to understanding the plant life cycle to managing logistics (Kalani Honua photos. Used with permission).

Council member Greggor Ilagan is sponsoring a grant of \$10,000 in district contingency relief funds to Kalani to promote food sustainability in Puna and to service the community at large.



Food sustainability was the focus for the "Ag Talk Story" community meetings held in Pahoia in 2013.

In 2014, Ilagan introduced a resolution providing a \$10,000 grant of contingency funds to Kalani Honua for a yearlong series of permaculture workshops.



The word "permaculture" is a melding of the words "permanent agriculture" and refers to a system of agricultural and social design principles, centered on the simulation or use of patterns and features observed in natural ecosystems.



Food sustainability is important for a number of reasons, including emergency preparedness.

Imagine this scenario: A cyclone makes landfall along the Puna-Ka'u coast. Cut off from the rest of the world by fallen trees on both sides of Highway 137, Kalani Honua must serve as a critical link for the safety of those in Puna makai.

Today it sounds like a rehash of what happened last August with Tropical Storm Iselle. But keep in mind that this scenario could play out later this year, and every year thereafter. This part of Puna has been struck by lava flows (1955) and locally generated tsunamis (1975), and most recently a tropical storm.



Kalani Honua is a nonprofit educational retreat center and eco-community. Established more than 40 years ago on its 120-acre campus, the center is primarily known for its focus on holistic wellbeing, but during the Iselle emergency in 2014 it became a hub for emergency relief efforts through its partnership with the Hawai'i County Civil Defense Agency.

Each Council member is allowed to introduce resolutions appropriating up to \$100,000 in district contingency relief funds for the 2015-2016 fiscal year.



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH CERTIFICATE



Puna Neighborhood Watch coordinators are honored by the County Council.

Area coordinators for the various Neighborhood Watch organizations throughout Puna were recognized on July 1 with certificates that were presented by Council members Greggor Ilagan and Danny Paleka.

The certificates were presented on the same day that the County Council approved on final reading Ilagan's

bill to update the county law regarding the process of getting Neighborhood Watch signs. This bill that was sent to the Mayor's office, along with the \$15,000 in funding for Neighborhood Watch signs islandwide, supports public safety and crime prevention efforts in all communities. If you would like to start a Neighborhood Watch in your community, contact the Hawai'i Police Department.

The text of the certificate follows:

"As an Area Coordinator, you are to be commended for your unwavering diligence in helping your community become a safer place. The success of the Neighborhood Watch program in your area rests on your shoulders.

"Your responsibilities include acting as a liaison among Neighborhood Watch members, the Hawai'i Police Department, civic groups and block captains.

"You preside over community meetings; you maintain the registry of members; you represent your Neighborhood Watch program at Puna Watch meetings. You are the local reference point for your community. You make Puna safer and a great place to live.

"The Hawai'i County Council extends to you its heartfelt and deepest appreciation for your vigilance for the safety of the people of Hawai'i County. Mahalo!"

APPROVED COUNTY BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015-16

The County Council has approved, and Mayor Kenoi has signed into law, a \$438.8 million operating budget for the fiscal year that began July 1 and ended June 30, 2016. This budget comprises the general fund, which covers the day-to-day workings of the county government, including salaries, wages, and operating expenses, and 11 other special funds.

The largest source of revenue in the \$355.4 million general fund is real property taxes (\$245.5 million). The special funds include the \$36.8 million highway fund, which funds county roadway repair, traffic signs, and the operations of the Traffic Division. There is also the golf course fund, the solid waste fund, and the \$1.7 million geothermal relocation and community benefits fund, among others.

Following three days of reviews of the budget by council members on April

22-24, the County Council approved the capital and operating budgets on first reading at a special meeting May 18. The County Council approved the budgets on June 1 and sent them to Mayor Kenoi for his approval. The public has had multiple opportunities to comment on the budget at each step.

Council member Greggor Ilagan introduced two amendments to the operating budget. One took \$90,000 from the Department of Research and Development to provide an additional \$10,000 to each council district's contingency relief fund. This was approved so that each council member is allowed to use \$100,000 for projects in the district, or grants to nonprofit organizations. An-

other amendment, which would have funded the community emergency response teams and provide funding

for the installation of Neighborhood Watch signs in the Civil Defense budget, was not adopted.

Also approved is the capital improvement project budget, which is largely funded by bonds that are issued separately.

All of these budgets are available for public inspection at all council offices.



Councilman Ilagan reviews the County budget books.

RAT LUNGWORM DISEASE

Public education about the dangers of Rat Lungworm disease remains a high priority for Council Member Greggor Ilagan, and he will be working to set up public informational meetings in conjunction with the Hawaii Department of Health.

In a previous progress report, Ilagan's office had said he was bringing forth a resolution asking the State of Hawaii Department of Health to give greater attention to the public health threat of Rat Lungworm disease. However, in his discussion with officials from the Department of Health, Ilagan has learned that the points he wanted the State to address are already being addressed.

Marlena Castro Dixon, an Epidemiological Specialist with the Department of Health, says that when the hospital laboratory informs her office of a case, she or the specialist in the area contact the individual and begin an investigation, which includes interviewing the patient and others to determine exposure. When needed, she visits the affected properties to assess the area and see what the potential risks are, and answer any questions that residents have. Her office also provides rodent control through the Vector Control Branch when necessary.

Dixon also said the Department of Health is currently consulting on a comprehensive website for Rat Lungworm disease that will also contain information about other illnesses such as Leptospirosis and foodborne illnesses, and is also exploring other venues such as social media to get the word out.

Among other things, DOH is also avail-

.....
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— Greggor Ilagan

able to provide educational presentations, when requested, at no cost; give out information about rat lungworm designed specifically for residents, issue health advisories in the local newspapers. The department is also working with the farmers' markets to provide information to customers by posting fliers around each market and also on their websites.

The Sanitation Branch works with food establishments by educating them on Rat Lungworm disease and by doing periodic inspections.

"I am glad that the Health Department is focusing its efforts on this disease that has had



Sign-up

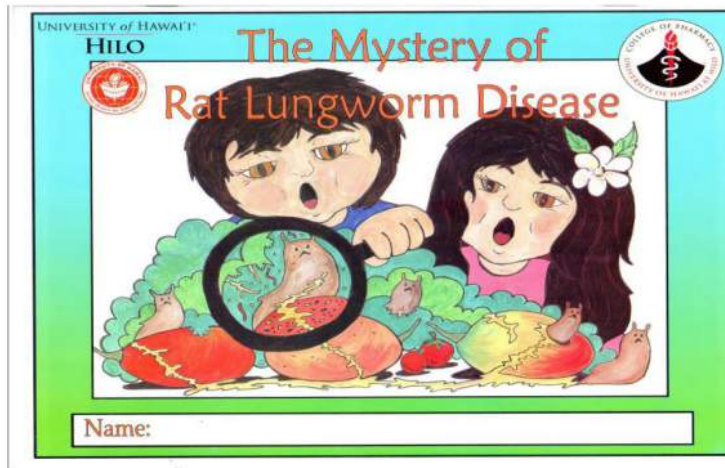
Hawai'i County Civil Defense Alerts and Notifications Self Enrollment.

Go to the following website:
www.hawaiicounty.gov/civil-defense/

808-935-0031
civil_defense@hawaiicounty.gov

such a devastating impact in Puna," Ilagan said. "My hope is that people make use of the resources available and learn about how to prevent rat lungworm disease from spreading."

More information about the public meetings will be announced when they are scheduled.



VOTE BY MAIL

Do you vote absentee? Or would you rather receive a ballot mailed to your home? It's a trick question; absentee ballots can be received and sent by mail.



Although many people are aware of

this, it's not always clear that the term "absentee voting" can mean "vote by mail" and that an "absentee polling place" means "early walk-in polling."

Council member Greggor Ilagan would like to encourage the Chief Election Officer to use plain language in communications with the public for the purpose of improving clarity and increasing voter turnout, which ultimately should lead to more representative government.

He is introducing a resolution that will be heard at the Council meeting on

July 24. Resolution 209-15 states that "the word absentee has a misleading connotation that suggests voters must be absent from their residences in order to be eligible to vote by mail, when that is not the case," and "the word absentee refers to a voter's absence from a polling place on Election Day."

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