



Tapuitema

...ina ia manino le folauga.



Official American Samoa Government Weekly Newsletter

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For additional news, information and much, much, more about your government, visit the ASG Website at <http://www.americansamoa.gov>

Bill to ban plastic bags passes in the Fono, heads to Governor for approval

The Senate, in a vote of 11-3, has issued its final ok on a House bill that aims to ban the distribution of plastic shopping bags in the territory. The bill will be enrolled and forwarded to the Governor for review and consideration.

Supporters of the bill include the Department of Commerce, the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, the American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Governor's Coral Reef Advisory Group.

According to prior testimony from DMWR director Ufagafa Ray Tulafono, plastic bags have a severe impact on marine life, which includes turtles and especially coral reefs. Ufagafa referred to recent research showing that 60% of our coral reefs are destroyed or damaged, and plastic bags are the list of

culprits.

The bill's preamble states that for several reasons, fossil fuel-based plastic shopping bags provided to customers by retail establishments, restaurants and grocery stores pose a hazard to the natural environment. "Plastic bags litter our landscape, fill our streams, and find their way to the oceans," it says. "It is difficult, if not, impossible for small craft to anchor in Pago Pago Harbor due to layers of plastic bags that cover the floor of our harbor."

"Certainly, American Samoa has an interest in protecting its natural environment and beauty and in decreasing the amount of waste flowing into its landfills and ocean....Therefore, it is natural for American Samoa to follow the emerging international and domestic trend to ban the use of petroleum and fossil fuel based plastic shopping bags."

The ASEPA is designated,

under the measure, as the agency responsible for implementing and administering the proposed law. A sanitarian or other authorized person, including members of the Department of Public Safety or authorized employees of ASPA, ASEPA, and the Commerce Department, may issue citations for violation of this section.

Exempted under the proposed law are shopping bags produced entirely from non-petroleum-based biodegradable plastic and compostable plastic bags, verified by the ASEPA, and additional exemptions established by the federal agency.

In order to allow reasonable time for the transition required by this act, it shall become effective on the 180th day after passage by the Fono and approval by the Governor.

ASG RADIO PROGRAM

With: Gov. Togiola Tulafono

On: KSBS FM 92.1
Saturdays @ 7:30 a.m.

SHARE IMPORTANT INFORMATION & ACTIVITIES IN YOUR ASG NEWSLETTER

with your ASG workforce as well as the citizens of American Samoa. Email your articles, announcements, pictures or other information to:

Harry Stevens (harry.stevens@americansamoa.gov) or
Jacinta Galea'i (jacinta@americansamoa.gov)

March proclaimed as Developmental Disability Awareness Month

Lt. Governor Faoa A. Sunia has proclaimed March as Developmental Disability Awareness Month in the territory, and he is calling on everyone to observe the month with appropriate programs and activities, and encouraging people to seek counsel and input from any person or group with knowledge and expertise in matters concerning disabilities.

The opening ceremony, sponsored by UCEDD & SPED, was held at the AP Lutali Executive Office Building in Utulei on Monday, March 8. That same day, the Department of Health sponsored the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Needs Assessment Work Group at the Sadies by the Sea Goat Island Café.

And that's not all. This month is full of activities scheduled to promote awareness. On Wednesday, March 10, a disability wave was set to take place at the Special Education Office, followed by the Lions Club Tsunami Outreach Project Eye Care at Mageo's Guest House in Pago Pago, sponsored by the Lions Club and DD Council.

A Silent Day, sponsored by UCEDD, is scheduled to take place at the McDonalds Restaurant in

Fagatogo on Wednesday, March 17. SPED will sponsor a staff development course for SPED bus drivers on Friday, March 19. The following day, on March 20, the Shriners Club will sponsor the Shriners Golf Tournament.

From March 22-24, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation will sponsor training for counselors. The triagency will follow suit by sponsoring the triagency leadership council on March 25. Finally, SPED will sponsor Manu'a Disability Awareness from March 29 - April 2.

Daily updates of times and places for the events can be obtained by logging on to www.amsamoa.edu/academicupport.htm and clicking on the UCEDD link.

Proclamation 5613 was signed in 1987 designating March as the "National Developmental Disability Awareness Month" by former US President Ronal Reagan. American Samoa continues to celebrate and recognize people with developmental disabilities by the Governor.

"Developmental disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals

to live independently, enjoy self-determination, make choices, contribute to society, and participate fully in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of our society," the proclamation states.

"Family members, friends, and members of the community can play a central role in enhancing the lives of people with disabilities, especially when the family and community are provided with necessary support services; and public and private employers are aware of the capabilities of people with disabilities to be engaged in competitive work in inclusive settings."

Faoa wrote, "The goals of this territory properly include providing individuals with developmental disabilities the opportunities and support to make informed choices and decisions; live in homes and communities where such individuals can exercise their full rights and responsibilities as citizens; pursue meaningful and productive lives; contribute to their family, community, territory; have interdependent friendships and relationships with others; and achieve full inclusion in society."

More tax checks released

Individuals who filed their taxes by January 25 were on the list to receive their tax refund checks last Thursday, which was the fifth batch of tax checks to be released this year.

The total dollar amount of refunds released in Batch 5 was \$949,411 (\$539,591 for the Additional Child Tax Credit, \$303,735 for local, and \$106,085 for the Making Work Pay Credit).

Altogether, the total amount of tax refunds released so far this year amounts to \$3.18 million, with \$1.75 million in ACTC, \$1 million in local taxes, and \$416,485 for the MWPC.

Tax Office Manager Melvin Joseph urges the public to be patient as there is a slight delay in releasing year's checks, mainly because all three funds are put into one check and therefore, it takes more time to process the paperwork.

NEG program workers get increase in pay

The Governor's Authorized Representative Evelyn Vaitautolu Langford says that the recent increase in compensation for the workers of the NEG program was made so the territory would be in compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant award which states that participants must be paid the higher of the federal, state, or local minimum wage.

As of last week, 1,822 temporary workers were already hired under the NEG program, in 57 certified worksites, with 3 worksites awaiting certification. According to

Langford, disaster cleanup, recovery, restoration, and humanitarian efforts have been coordinated by 29 government agencies and 28 non-profit organizations and villages.

Langford explained that in the initial application for the emergency grant, the local minimum wage of \$4.41 was used as the rate of compensation. However, the rate has been adjusted to \$7 per hour in the grant modification to comply with the terms of the grant award.

The Territory's NEG award totaled \$24.8 million, with the ini-

tial \$8.2 million available last October to assist with clean up and recovery efforts following the September 20 tsunami/earthquake. Since the launching of the program, over \$2.9 million in NEG funding has been dispersed in salaries for the workers. The target of eligible unemployed individuals to be served is 2,5000 based on the work requirements identified from the worksites, and the length of the program. The first group of NEG project workers will be completing their allowable hours by next month.



97 DAYS
until the
4th Constitutional
Convention

American Samoa 4th Constitutional Convention

Forum schedule:

- *March 18, 2010 – High School Forum No. 1 [Fagaitua, Samoana, Iakina, SPA, and Poly Tech]*
- *March 25, 2010 – High School Forum No. 2 [Leone, Faasao/Maris, Kanana Fou, Tafuna, and Manumalo]*
(Note: Both High School Forums will be held at the ASCC Lecture Hall at 12:30 p.m.)
- *Constitutional Convention Roundtable Discussions continue on KVZK - Channel 2 Monday thru Friday at 7:00 p.m.*
- *For additional information on the 4th Constitutional Convention, or to participate on the blogs, please log on to the ASG Website at <http://www.americansamoa.gov>.*

For additional information or if you are interested in volunteering for the Constitutional Review Office, contact our office at 633-1582 or email us at cro@americansamoa.gov, or visit our Office on the 2nd floor of the Executive Office Building in Utulei.

HISTORICAL NOTES

By: Stan Sorensen, Historian, Office of the Governor

On March 16, 1972, the following American Samoan historic buildings were entered on the *National Register of Historic Places* in Washington, D.C.: Navy Buildings 1 (Government House), 38 (Telegraph and Radio Station) and 43 (Commissary), the Atauloma Girls' School and the Fagalele Boys' School.

On March 17, 1907, Rear Admiral Benjamin Franklin Tilley, American Samoa's first naval governor (February 17, 1900-November 27, 1901), died on active duty at the Philadelphia Navy Yard at age 59.

On March 17, 1925, Captain Henry Francis Bryan, U.S. Navy, Retired, succeeded Captain Edward Stanley Kellogg, and took office as American Samoa's 16th naval governor (until September 9, 1927). He and Captain John Martin Poyer, the Territory's 11th naval governor (March 1, 1915-June 10, 1919), were the only two governors who had retired from the U.S. Navy prior to their gubernatorial terms.

On March 20, 1887, Lawrence McCully Judd, fourth appointed civil governor of American Samoa (March 4-August 5, 1953) was born at "Rosenheim," Honolulu, Hawaii, the son of Albert Francis Judd, Chief Justice of the Kingdom of Hawaii and Agnes Hall Boyd Judd.

On March 24, 1931, Commander James Sutherland Spore relieved Captain Gatewood Sanders Lincoln and took office as American Samoa's 19th naval governor (acting) until April 22, 1931.

On March 24, 1937, Pan American World Airways' *Samoan Clipper*, a Sikorsky S-42B flying boat piloted by Captain Ed Musick, landed in Pago Pago Harbor on the first leg of her maiden flight from Honolulu, Hawaii to Auckland, New Zealand.

On March 24, 1994, the U.S. National Weather Service recorded the highest ever temperature in American Samoa: a sizzling 94 degrees Fahrenheit at the Pago Pago International Airport.

On March 26, 1901, Secretary of the Navy John D. Long directed Commander Benjamin Franklin Tilley, Commandant of the U.S. Naval Station Tutuila, to revoke William Blacklock's liquor license, despite Tilley's assurances that the Samoans were "safeguarded by law" from drinking there.

On March 26, 1973, Governor John Morse Haydon approved American Samoa's new Official Seal.



<http://eldp.pitiviti.org>
ELDP
 Executive Leadership Development Program

Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP) 2010-2011

The Graduate School's Pacific and Virgin Islands Training Initiatives (www.pitiviti.org), with funding support from the Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs (www.doi.gov/oia) is now accepting applications for the Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP). The ELDP is designed to identify individuals with promotion potential within your government and create career opportunities for them. Here are a few issues for your consideration before applying to the ELDP:

Minimum Qualifications: You must be employed with your government on a full-time basis for the past two calendar years from the date of your application. For example, if you are applying in April 2010 you must have been continuously employed by your government since April 2008. Although a bachelor's degree is strongly recommended, it is not required. We encourage individuals employed in the areas of finance, accounting, budget, and audit to apply, although the program is open to anyone, including semi-autonomous agencies and component units.

Government Support: You must have a letter of support from your immediate supervisor as part of the application process. Be sure you allow ample time to obtain this important letter of recommendation. Also, please research and follow your government's protocols and formal guidelines when requesting the letter of commitment from your supervisor.

Time Commitment: You must attend four, week-long training sessions to receive your Certificate of Completion. Sessions will be held one time per quarter in various locations. The first class is scheduled on Guam July 26-31, 2010. You must also complete several assignments between sessions that require a significant amount of time. Please review the attached Questions and Answers and Graduation Requirements for the complete list of training dates, details about the inter-session assignments, and requirements that must be met for graduation.

Funding: If you are accepted into the program, the Graduate School's Pacific and Virgin Islands Training Initiatives, with funding support from the Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs, will fund the costs associated with your travel. It will also fund all costs associated with delivering and administering the program.

Application Process:

You must submit **five documents** to apply for the program:

1. Application Form. (Contact the local DOI office at 633-2800)
2. Letter of Intent. Compose a letter that describes your interest in the program, why you want to develop a career in public service, how you believe the ELDP will contribute to your career, and your commitment to completing the ELDP. Address the letter to the *ELDP Admissions Committee*.
3. Letter of Support from Your Supervisor. Your supervisor will play a critical role in ensuring you have time to complete assignments and attend the sessions. He or she must write a letter of support indicating he/she has read the attached Questions and Answers about the ELDP and will support you in this effort. Additionally, the supervisor should describe why you are being recommended for the program and give one or two examples of your performance in your current position which indicate your potential for the program and as a future leader in your government.
4. Resume. Submit a resume that includes your formal education, professional positions, and volunteer activities. Use a format of your choice, but do not exceed two pages.
5. Personal Biography. Provide a brief personal biography that is suitable for public release. A sample biography is included below, and biographies for all of the ELDP 2009 graduates are available on the ELDP website at <http://eldp.pitiviti.org>.

We will not accept an incomplete application package. All five items must be included.

Your application must be received no later than April 15, 2010. The 2010- 2011 admissions screening committee will consist of two representatives from the Pacific and Virgin Islands Training Initiatives of the Graduate School. The final selection committee comprises two representatives from PITI-VITI, two representatives from the Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs (DOI-OIA), and one independent reviewer. The committee will strive to create a diverse class that appropriately represents all of the insular governments, technical areas, gender, and ethnicity. You will be notified of your admission status no later than June 1, 2010.

If you have questions, please contact Stephen Latimer (stephen.latimer@graduateschool.edu) or Jason Aubuchon (jason.aubuchon@graduateschool.edu) at the Pacific and Virgin Islands Training Initiatives (PITI-VITI) of the Graduate School. Both can be reached by e-mail or telephone at (808) 523-1650.

Please email your final, complete application eldp2011@pitiviti.org, or sent by postal mail to: ELDP Applications Attn: Stephen Latimer 900 Fort Street Mall, Suite 1540 Honolulu, HI 96813
 Thank you again for your interest in applying to the ELDP. We look forward to receiving your application.

For additional information and required forms, please contact the local Department of Interior office at 633-2800 or log onto the Executive Leadership Development Program website at <http://eldp.pitiviti.org>

ARRA funded projects for Fitiuta and Tafuna Airports near completion

work on the fire crash project at the Fitiuta Airport in Manu'a, along with improvements to the Pago Pago International Airport are nearing completion. Both projects, under the Department of Port Administration, are utilizing funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The Federal Aviation Administration notified the territory last year that there is an allocation of \$1.5 million from the ARRA for each of the two projects.

According to testimony from Port Director Matagi Ray McMoore during a House Budget and Appropriations hearing, the total cost for the Fitiuta Airport project

amounted to \$5.5 million, and the remainder of the funds came from other FAA funding sources. The project is expected to be completed later this year in June.

The Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Building at the Fitiuta Airport is very similar to the large fire and rescue building at the Tafuna Airport. A fire fighting facility in Fitiuta has been an issue that ASG has long been trying to address.

Congressman Faleomavaega Eni Hunkin announced last year that additional funding of \$1.2 million for this project will come from the FAA under the Airport Improvement Program (AIP).

As for improvements to the local airport facility, Matagi informed House members that the project is nearing completion. He explained that the immigration area has been relocated to another section of the airport.

According to Matagi, about \$500K more was needed to complete this project and a request for additional money was made to the FAA who approved the request which in turn, helped speed up the work.

Once completed, the end result will be more room for departing passengers, and also families who want to bid farewell to their loved ones.

Disaster Recovery Update as of March 12, 2010:

The **FEMA Joint Field Office** will transition to a **FEMA Disaster Recovery Office** on March 19, 2010 at the same location in Tafuna.

The majority of the FEMA staff will depart the territory on Sunday, March 21st.

The FEMA Disaster Recovery Office will have some senior staff and employees remaining on island for the Permanent Housing Construction Program.

Permanent Housing Construction Program:

This program was made available as an option for applicants who had **total loss and destruction** of their home.

(51) applicants chose the Permanent Housing Construction Program instead of the financial assistance.

These applicants are in **different stages** of the process for constructing their house.

Construction Orders have been issued for (15) applicants. The "construction" work consists of **site work, demolition and construction**.

The Construction Orders for the (15) applicants are for:

- 5 homes in Amanave
- 3 homes in Leone and Tula
- 2 homes in Fagasa
- 1 home in Asili and Poloa

(Continued on page 6)

Disaster Recovery Update... *(continued from page 5)*

Repairs by the ASVOAD Groups: The Mennonite Disaster Service and the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief groups continue their ministry with helping families who had **major damages** to their homes.

Approximately 148 homes were verified by FEMA as having major damages.

Over 17 homes have had major repairs completed to date.

NEG (National Emergency Grant) Update:

A U.S. Department of Labor Emergency Disaster Grant Program to assist with debris **clean up, recovery, restoration and humanitarian** efforts as a result of the disaster.

There are currently **61 certified worksites** and **1890 project workers** placed at the worksites.

Over \$2.9 million of NEG funding has been dispersed in salaries and wages for the disaster project workers since the launch of the program on November 2nd.

The first group of (100) NEG project workers will complete their allowable hours by April. They will be able to transition to either the **SOS or WIA workforce development programs**.

DUA (Disaster Unemployment Assistance) Update:

A grant administered thru the Department of Labor, Disaster Unemployment Assistance provides financial assistance to individuals whose employment or self-employment has been lost or interrupted as a direct result of a major disaster.

Approximately \$73,000 of payments are being dispersed to assist 249 individuals who qualify for DUA benefits.

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program:

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) provides grants to implement **long-term hazard mitigation measures after a major disaster declaration**.

The purpose of the HMGP is to **reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters and to enable mitigation measures to be implemented during the immediate recovery from a disaster**.

Currently there are projects being reviewed by the Hazard Mitigation Council that includes:

Flooding Mitigation

Underground Power and Communication installation

- Rockfall Mitigation
- Landslide Repairs

Assistance to Manu'a for Cyclone Rene:

The Department of Public Works, ASPA, ASTCA and Department of Agriculture are continuing with repair efforts to Manu'a.

The Department of Agriculture and the Department of Human Resources' Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program is working together on a "training project" for the Replanting of Crops on the island.