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PRESS RELEASE

Governor and Lieutenant Governor attend the Department of Search and Rescue's General Inspection.

Pago Pago, American Samoa – On March 13, 2025, the Department of Search and Rescue (DSAR) conducted its General Inspection at Faga'alu Park. The department, comprising Marine Patrol, the Fire Department, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS), showcased its readiness and operational capabilities during the inspection. Over 120 staff members participated, underscoring the department's commitment to safety and preparedness.

The esteemed leaders in attendance included the Honorable Governor Pulaali'i Nikolao Pula and the Honorable Lieutenant Governor Pulumataala Ae Ae Jr. They were welcomed by the newly appointed Director of the Department of Search and Rescue, Utumoe Alefosio, as they joined cabinet members in observing and supporting the department's efforts to ensure the safety and well-being of the community.

The inspection commenced with a benediction led by Major Sefo Palapua of the Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa (CCAS) in Pago Pago. Drawing inspiration from the Book of Matthew, Major Palapua encouraged the workforce to serve as a beacon of light in the world. He emphasized the vital role of first responders in preserving life, reminding them that their service is a calling to protect and support the community. Addressing the divisions within the Department of Search and Rescue (DSAR), Major Palapua urged them to let their work shine as a guiding light in their mission to serve the people.

During the inspection, the Honorable Governor Pulaali'i Nikolao Pula delivered special remarks, expressing his appreciation and admiration for the dedication of DSAR personnel. "I am very impressed with today's inspection, witnessing the commitment of each of you to this demanding line of work with DSAR. It is not an easy task, yet you have dedicated yourselves to serving our community. I extend my gratitude to the Director and management for their efforts in ensuring that our department effectively serves our people," he stated.

In a thoughtful and commendable gesture, Governor Pulaali'i recognized the contributions of the previous administration, acknowledging their efforts in advocating for regulations and enforcing laws to safeguard the community. Offering a heartfelt blessing, he added, "I pray that our Heavenly Father continues to bless each and every one of you here today. May He protect you from harm as you dedicate yourselves to ensuring the safety of our people."

The Governor reaffirmed his commitment to supporting DSAR, stating, "I assure you that Lieutenant Governor Pulumataala, myself, and our administration will work to expand DSAR's workforce. We firmly believe that the safety of our people is paramount and remain dedicated to our administration's goal of eliminating drug trafficking and usage in American Samoa."

He concluded his remarks by encouraging all departments to collaborate not only with government agencies but also with village councils through Samoan Affairs and the Council of Churches to enhance community safety. He urged everyone to work with integrity, stating, "Let us restore the faith of the people in our government through our services. God bless you all."


The inspection concluded with refreshments and team-building activities for all divisions, promoting collaboration and trust among employees, and reinforcing their shared commitment to serving the people of American Samoa as one unified team.

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OUR CONTACT:

 www.americansamoa.gov

 comms@go.as.gov

 Executive Office Building
Office of the Governor
Third Floor, Utulei
Pago Pago, Am. Samoa 96799