

THE NEXT MISSION

THE COMPETITION IS ON AS TO WHO WILL GET TO THE MOON NEXT—Japan, China, or the United States. Hawaii is on its way to becoming a major partner in the U.S. effort to return to and colonize the moon as well as a major player in space exploration through PISCES, the new Pacific International Space Center for Exploration Systems. PISCES is funded by S.B. 907 which I introduced and which became law this year.

In March 2007 Hawaii signed on to collaborate in NASA's Vision for Space Exploration, its plan to return humans to the moon and later travel to Mars. NASA awarded PISCES \$640,000 in Innovative Partnership Program grants to conduct lunar analog simulations. PISCES will be housed at UH-Hilo and complements Mauna Kea's world class astronomy center.

Hawaii could lead in space tourism, an industry now taking off worldwide. Next Session we will request state funding to apply for a commercial space port license. Tourists and residents will have the chance to take a short space flight, and new ground-based industries will grow.

Hawaii is the only state with a NASA agreement to explore future collaborations for innovative programs in aerospace research, education, and workforce development, as well as commercial space initiatives. These foundational steps are the beginning of a partnership in a global, billion dollar industry. I will continue efforts to secure a prominent role for Hawaii in this emerging field.

PISCES is a visionary idea with countless supporters. Imagine Hawaii residents designing a lunar space station with living and research modules, a lunar surface vehicle, or a robot to collect moon rocks and soil for testing while others create energy and power with solar technology or nuclear fuel. Astronauts train and prepare for moon exploration in a setting that is as close to the moon as one can find on earth. These are possibilities PISCES brings.

The first PISCES conference was held November 8 and 9 in Hilo, where I was invited to speak and share my hopes for Hawaii's role in space exploration. The audience and students I met were impressive. Honolulu Community College students won the Lunar Habitat Student Design competition, beating out colleges from the mainland. It seemed that NASA scientists and administrators made up at least 75% of conference attendees, and that they had a strong interest in working with PISCES.

S.B. 907 also created the Office of Aerospace Development, to create an industry that diversifies our economy and provides high paying jobs for our residents; support Hawaii space tourism; and spur student interest in science and space exploration.

The NASA-Hawaii partnership through PISCES will give us many opportunities never before available here. The STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) initiatives the Legislature passed last session for our high school students are connected directly to PISCES. Our children -- potential scientists, engineers, mathematicians, geologists, astronauts and others -- will have a chance to grow-up, be educated, and work in Hawaii in this exciting field.

PISCES is a collaboration of the Japan-U.S. Science, Technology & Space Applications Program, University of Hawaii at Hilo and Hawaii State Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

RED ROCK & SAGUARO – Hawaii's Prisoners on the Mainland

Senators Norman Sakamoto, Clarence Nishihara and I completed an informative, productive visit of the Red Rock and Saguaro correctional facilities in Eloy, Arizona. Ideally all our inmates would be

in Hawaii, but mainland prisons alleviate our local overcrowding. We met with administrators and prisoners, inspected the facilities, and reviewed the programs and services available to our inmates. When the majority of our male Hawaii inmates are transferred from the Red Rock site to the Saguaro facility, the monitoring and oversight of the prison and its inmates should be easier and more efficient. The new Saguaro facility, in the middle of rural land between Phoenix and Tucson, is in excellent condition. Saguaro just opened in July, and all inmates incarcerated here will be only from Hawaii. I introduced S.B. 932, now a law, to emphasize re-entry programs that help ex-offenders get better able to become law abiding citizens after serving their sentences. Programs and services which are or will be available to our Hawaii inmates include electrical training, woodwork or carpentry skills, computer training, music, GED classes, adult basic education, faith-based programs, Hawaiian cultural programs, animal care working with a local humane society, drug treatment, library services, life skills, and hobbies that can be done in individual cells.

The current contract with Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) is \$52 million a year, so minimizing recidivism and cutting prison costs through re-entry programs and support makes a lot of social and economic sense. Regretfully not all programs were up and running. Opening a new prison is like opening a new school, and I thought more should have been available on the first day of operations. I plan to visit Saguaro again and expect more satisfactory results, with all programs available by the first quarter of 2008. The Hawaii Department of Public Safety (DPS) will closely monitor this transition period.

Of 1300 Saguaro inmates, 864 had prison jobs, and many others were interested in getting one. Work furlough is not available to our prisoners in Arizona, so a prison job is the next best thing available to them.

Inmate concerns brought to our attention will be looked into on a case by case basis. I will request an appropriation next Session to fund an Arizona-based part-time prison advocate to check with the prisoners on a weekly basis and make certain their needs are being met and any grievances are being resolved. DPS is responsible for monitoring the contract with CCA. Expanding video conferencing will be a priority, as a major concern discussed by some prisoners was the distance away from their families and loved ones. Prisoners complained about the high cost of a long distance call at 25 cents per minute. My office will check if less expensive rates could be available to improve family communications. It does not appear that gang issues or safety of our prisoners are significant issues, and from what I was able to witness, the prison facilities are safe and secure. Drugs in the facilities do not appear to be a problem as both inmates and staff are randomly tested.

On a related note, my committee is working with the DPS to return to Hawaii the 175 women prisoners currently incarcerated in Kentucky. One possibility is to house the women at the Federal Detention Center near the airport by the end of next year. Being in Hawaii helps inmates and their families respond better to treatment and services with support nearby.

UPDATES

Honouliuli World War II Memorial

I have held meetings with officials from the Japanese Cultural Center for the Internment Camp Memorial. In the short term, a marker at the Honouliuli site is the goal. In the long term, opening an education center and memorial with public access is the plan. Federal, state, and private funds will likely be used for this project.

Transit Oriented Development

The Mayor held a second community meeting in Waipahu, and told residents how transportation-based planning will enhance life by adding convenience and reducing transit time. Two transit

stations planned for Waipahu will have a major impact on residents and businesses. A revitalization of Waipahu is expected with the future rail.

Interstate Commission On Adult Offender Supervision

The Commission will reconvene next month. My Public Safety Committee will consider suggestions and findings of the Commission for our bill package for next Session.

Broadband Task Force

The Broadband Task Force is in its infancy. We are working on a report for the Legislature on the options available, benefits to Hawaii, and recommendations for the direction the State should take.

Our District's Youngest Residents

Congratulations to Waipahu Intermediate School for scooping first place in four competitions at this month's 2007 Jr. Engineering Expo at the University of Hawaii. Student ingenuity and teamwork worked wonders as they built a popsicle stick bridge that held 83 pounds, an electromagnetic fishing pole, a marble roller coaster, and a pendulum that catapulted golf balls. The thrill of victory!

It was a pleasure to meet students from Waipahu Intermediate School, Waipahu High School and James Campbell High School when they participated in the Secondary Students Conference recently here at the State Capitol. Our future leaders showed intelligence and commitment toward improving life in Hawaii.

I met with several school groups this month: the *Island Pacific Academy* for National Reader's Day; *Keoneula Elementary School* on a Capitol Tour, which took place on the day of the Superferry vote; *Holomua Elementary School* on a Legislative Back to School Day, and *Kapolei High School* on various issue.