

## PISCES

Imagine a student from Hawaii having an opportunity to design a lunar space station with living and research modules. Another student may be involved in developing a lunar surface vehicle to travel on the moon. Others are working on a robotic arm or machine to collect moon rocks and soil for testing and experimentation. Energy and power creation with solar technology or nuclear fuel are other areas where students or employees can be involved. And of course, astronauts having an opportunity to train and prepare on earth in a setting that is as close to the moon as one can find on earth. These are the possibilities that PISCES brings to our state.

Last session, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 907 which I introduced creating the Office of Aerospace Development and funding the Pacific International Space Center for Space Exploration (PISCES). The idea is to spur student interest in science and space exploration, create an industry which diversifies our economy and provides high paying jobs for our residents, and support space-tourism for Hawaii. PISCES would be housed at the University of Hawaii at Hilo and would compliment the world-class astronomy center and studies we currently have on Mauna Kea.

At a recent PISCES conference I attended in Hilo, I was very impressed with the audience and students I met. Honolulu Community College students were entered in a Lunar Habitat Student Design competition with 2 colleges from the mainland, and I am happy to report HCC won the competition with their creative design. My guess is at least 75% of the attendees were from NASA facilities on the mainland, and their interest to work in Hawaii with PISCES is strong. Hawaii is the only state in the union that has an agreement with NASA, and recently it was announced that NASA was investing \$640,000 towards our PISCES project. This is just the beginning of a partnership and industry where billions of dollars are currently invested annually throughout the world.

The idea for PISCES came from high level discussions held at the annual Japan-US Science, Technology and Space Applications Program (JUSTSAP) symposia over the past several years. Former Governor George Ariyoshi is a valuable supporter of JUSTAP and PISCES involved in the efforts. With support and assistance from Jim Crisafulli of the state Department of Business, Economic Development, a bill was crafted last session which lay the foundation for Hawaii becoming a major player in the space exploration industry and a major partner in the United States' effort to return to and colonize the moon. There is debate on who will get to the moon next; Japan, China or the US. PISCES will help the US with this endeavor, and it is my hope international alliances will be developed for this mission which is for humankind.

The Pacific International Space Center for Exploration Systems is a visionary idea with countless supporters. The opportunities for our youth and residents are many. The STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) initiatives we passed last session for our high school students are connected directly to PISCES. With this vision, scientists, engineers, mathematicians, geologists, astronauts and others will have a chance to grow-up, be educated, and work in Hawaii.