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Local Kauaʻi News by Wilma Lee Kapp
2023 - Quarter 2 – May**

Local Kauaʻi News – Monday May 1, 2023

The tentatively approved state budget includes a big amount of funding to upgrade hospitals on our on Kauai. Samuel Mahelona Hospital on is in line to receive \$14.9 million in funds for planning, design and construction of a psychiatric unit, \$4 million for expansion of the emergency department, \$1 million for clinic expansion and \$1.3 million for a master plan, according to House Bill 300. Kauai Veterans Memorial Hospital will receive \$3 million for design, construction and equipment for modernization.

State lawmakers are backing Governor Josh Green's plan to build more permanent tiny homes from homeless people. Funding for the expansion of kau-hale villages is included in the tentatively approved state budget. The legislature has also approved 170-million-dollars to build or refurbish affordable rental housing for school employees. That includes every employee from custodians to administrators. Governor Green's administration is also working to quickly build Hawaii's first medical kau-hale within a few weeks. It'll be near the state Department of Health building, directly across from The Queen's Medical Center, and in view of the governor's mansion, Washington Place.

It costs a lot to be a homeowner in Hawaii. According to a new poll, Hawaii ranks number one in the United States for having the most expensive homes. Data from Zillow showed the average price for a home in the Aloha State is just over 834-thousand-dollars, which is over a two-percent increase over the past year. California and the District of Columbia rank in the top three most expansive places to own a home.

Big Island police detectives are investigating a brutal murder in Puna. A 58-year-old woman was stabbed several times on a secluded property in the Orchidland Estates area on Friday. A sword was recovered from the scene. The suspect, a 52-year-old man, was found covered in blood. Hawaii police say the man was vomiting on the way to jail in Hilo, suggesting he may have ingested a chemical. The relationship between the suspect and victim, and the motive, are not clear.

Maui researchers are creating a bio-shield to make coastlines more resilient to future tsunamis. The Hawaii Land Trust is planting about 15 species of indigenous, endemic and Polynesian introduced trees and shrubs at the Nu'u Refuge, which is a protected wetland environment of about 82 acres on Maui. They're arranged in a specific pattern to slow the velocity of a future tsunami wave. The Nu'u Refuge area serves as a resting area for native birds traveling between the islands.

The U.S. is tracking an unknown balloon that flew over American soil. NBC reports the mysterious object flew across portions of Hawaii but did not go over any sensitive areas. It is slowly moving towards Mexico, and it is not believed to be transmitting any data. Earlier this year, a Chinese spy balloon was able to fly over sensitive U.S. military installation before it was shot down.

Authorities are investigating a rare, deadly officer-involved shooting on Molokai. A man, who was allegedly armed with a machete, was shot by two officers on Sunday morning. The Maui County Police Department says the officers tried to use non-lethal force first, including using a Taser. The incident started with a call about a temporary restraining order violation. The officers used the Taser

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on the 40-year-old man, then shot him, after he reportedly advanced on them with the machete in hand.

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2023 - Quarter 2 – May**

Local Kauaï News – Tuesday May 2, 2023

Our Kauai county council has approved a \$25 million bond issuance for the The largest affordable housing project ever undertaken by the County. When completed, the entire project will include between 530 and 620 multi-family and single-family housing units, all of which will be affordable in perpetuity. It will be built in four phases, the first of which will include 111 multi-family rental units, 38 single-family homes and a community center.

The state is looking to get rid of the Wailua Reservoir Dam saying its because it no longer serves its original purpose. It was built a century ago to provide water to sugar plantations which no longer exist. The state has proposed to drain the 200-acre dam to get rid of the financial burden as well as potential safety hazards to the population down the stream. They've also issued a notice of intent to write an environmental impact statement that lays out plans for the reservoir, dam and diversion from the North Fork Wailua River. The public has until may 8th to comment on the effort.

Hawaii lawmakers are approving 100-thousand-dollars in funding to send homeless people back to the mainland. The funding will pay for airfare during the next two fiscal years. But, homeless people can only be returned to their home city if they have someone to welcome and house them there. Between 2014 and 2019, the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association paid for half of the airfares to send 744 homeless people back to their friends and family on the mainland.

Plans to impose more so-called "green fees" on Hawaii's visitors are on hold for now. A bill that would have established a visitor impact fee program within the state Department of Land and Natural Resources did not pass during this year's legislative session. Visitors would have had to buy a 50-dollar license to enter state parks, forests, hiking trails and other natural areas. The revenue generated by visitor green fees is designed to help fight the impacts of climate change, and offset the impacts tourists have on popular natural areas.

Tourists driving on the Big Island might wish they had looked up instead of looking down at GPS directions. Last weekend, they accidentally drove their SUV into a harbor off Kailua-Kona. Witnesses say they plunged into Hono-ko-hau Small Boat Harbor with their windows down. The passenger climbed out the open window and swam to safety. But, bystanders had to jump in the water to pull the driver out of the SUV, then carry her up the boat ramp. They were reportedly following GPS directions on the way to a manta ray excursion. No one was seriously hurt. The SUV sunk but has since been pulled out of the water by a tow crew.

Hawaii's lam Tongi is still standing after back-to-back nights of eliminations on American Idol. The 18-year-old from Kahuku advanced into the top eight on Monday night. He earned enough votes after singing his rendition of "What a Wonderful World" by Louis Armstrong. Tongi got a standing ovation from all three judges, including Luke Bryan, who picked the song for him.

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Local Kaua'i News – Wednesday May 3, 2023

A report, released last week from our state Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, showed that visitors to Kauai spent over \$62 million more during March 2023 compared with March 2022. Visitor spending on Kauai was \$222.5 million in March 2023, compared with \$159.9 million in March 2022. The report also noted that the total number of visitors on Kaua'i during March was up 15 percent from the previous year, and just 0.2 percent under pre-pandemic March 2019. There were a total of 122,585 visitors to Kaua'i in March 2023, compared with 106,544 in March 2022.

Golden Week has not been the shot in the arm Hawaii's tourism industry had hoped for. Arrivals from Japan, Hawaii's biggest international travel partner, are down by 50-percent compared to Golden Week in 2019, the last one before the pandemic hit. Golden Week happens from the end of April through the first week of May and is typically a huge travel holiday for Japan's residents. Japanese spending in Hawaii is also down about 360-million-dollars during the first quarter of 2023 compared to the first quarter of 2019.

Hawaii could become the first state to pay off student debt for every one of its eligible healthcare professionals. The drastic measure is part of an effort to reduce Hawaii's critical shortage of doctors and nurses. The state is committing 30-million-dollars to pay off medical professionals' student debt during the next two years -- ten-million-dollars this year and 20-million-dollars next year. Licensed doctors, nurses, therapists and medical school workers will all be eligible. Those in urban Honolulu will receive repayments of up to 25-thousand-dollars per year. Those in rural areas or in high demand fields, like primary or mental health care, will receive repayments of up to 50-thousand-dollars per year.

A statewide "sensitive places" bill is moving on. The bill that defines where people with permits are not allowed to carry concealed guns passed out of the House on Tuesday. Sensitive places listed in the bill include government buildings, medical facilities, bars or restaurants that serve alcohol, stadiums and concert halls, public libraries, parks and schools, and a few others. Critics say the bill is too broad, or even unconstitutional. There have already been threats of legal challenges if the bill is signed into law.

Today marks the fifth anniversary of the start of the historic eruption of Kilauea. The 2018 eruption lasted nearly four months and caused hundreds of millions of dollars in damage. That includes an estimated 296-million-dollars in home losses and more than 236-million-dollars in damage to public infrastructure like roads. The eruption happened in Kilauea's lower east rift zone. Two-dozen fissures ended up breaking out in the Leilani Estates and Lanipuna Gardens areas. In the end, the eruption destroyed more than 700 homes and created more than 875 new acres of land.

Hollywood writers are currently on strike for better pay and concerns about productions in Hawaii are on the rise. The last writers strike was 15 years about and it shut down Hawaii-based shows like "Lost." Hollywood lost around two-billion dollars. Now, industry leaders are watching for potential impacts on current and future productions including the live-action remake of "Lilo And Stitch" and

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NCIS Hawaii. Donne Dawson, State Film Commissioner, says it's a little too soon to tell how preproduction will be impacted considering the strike began on Tuesday. However, the impact has been immediate for late-night shows, which will be re-airing reruns this week.

The trial of a man accused of sexual assault is beginning in Honolulu. Police say Michael Hirokawa choked, punched, and stomped on a woman's head after he took her back to his Capitol Place Condo in 2020. A security guard found the victim naked in the building's elevator after seeing a trail of blood leading from Hirokawa's apartment. On Tuesday, Hirokawa pled not guilty to attempted murder, kidnapping, and sexual assault charges. If convicted, he could face life in prison.

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Local Kauaī News – Thursday May 4, 2023

A Kilauea man is back on Kauai to face child sex crime charges after he was arrested by police in Ohio. The incident allegedly happened in Feb, In broad daylight, at the Bryan J. Baptiste Sports Complex in Kapaa. Bystanders said they saw the suspect, 37-year-old Robert A. Dora, and the minor and intervened before calling 911. Dora fled the scene before he could be arrested but was eventually tracked down in Ohio. Dora was extradited back to Kauai on Thursday, April 23. Dora has been charged with first-degree sexual assault and is being held on \$1-million bail at the Kauai Community Correctional Center.

A jury at the Fifth Circuit Court in Lihu'e determined on April 26 that the Jared and Donna Mura-yama 1997 Trust committed a breach of contract and fraudulent misrepresentation in business dealings with Kalani Construction. The jury awarded Kalani Construction a verdict of nearly 11 Million Dollars. The two firms had agreed to be partners in an arrangement concerning tthe construction of a Puhi Industrial Park warehouse , sharing profits on its completion. But as it was nearing its completion, Mura-yama removed Kalani Construction from the project and refused to share profits

There are no injuries after a Mokulele Airlines plane lost an engine in the middle of a flight from Molokai to Oahu. The plane landed safely in Honolulu after some tense moments on Tuesday afternoon. Passengers reported hearing a loud boom a few minutes after takeoff. The plane was able to fly with one engine for more than 20 minutes. Mokulele Airlines is inspecting the plane to determine the cause of the engine failure. All of the passengers are getting a full refund and a 400-dollar credit.

Two former Hawaii high school football players are agreeing to settle a civil lawsuit related to a criminal sexual assault case. The case involves Jayden de Laura, who is now the starting quarterback at the University of Arizona, and Kamoi Latu, who is now the starting safety at the University of Wisconsin. Both have agreed to pay a woman who says the players raped her after the Saint Louis versus Punahou ILH Championship game in 2018. At the time, the alleged victim was 16-years-old. Both players were underage as well.

Today is the final day of Hawaii's 2023 legislative session. The nearly five-month session has pitted new governor Josh Green against several lawmakers. The state Senate rejected three of Green's cabinet nominees, which is a modern-day record. The state's general fund budget of eleven-point-three-billion-dollars for the upcoming fiscal year still hangs in the balance. It won't be voted on by the full House and Senate until their final floor sessions at the end of business today.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Friday May 5, 2023

State lawmakers have approved a budget for the next two fiscal years. The full House and Senate passed the budget on Thursday, in the closing moments of this year's legislative session. The budget for the 2024 fiscal year is eleven-point-three-billion-dollars, and ten-point-four-billion-dollars for the 2025 fiscal year. In the upcoming budget, the Department of Education is getting 64-million-dollars less than what Governor Josh Green requested, and 110-million-dollars less in 2025. The budget also features 170-million-dollars to build housing for teachers, 200-million-dollars for more preschool classrooms, and 187-million-dollars for teacher pay raises.

The Navy is now admitting to another chemical spill that was never announced to the public. It happened at Joint Base Pearl Harbor- Hickam in October of 2021, just one month before the Red Hill fuel spill. The Navy says about 300-thousand gallons of water burst from a water main adjacent to the fire suppression pumphouse on the base. The water filled the berm area of the fuel oil reclamation facility, then mixed with product from the oil-water separators. According to reports reports the contaminated mixture contained up to three-thousand gallons of fuel and also showed signs of containing toxic firefighting foam that includes harmful forever chemicals.

A former Hawaii Union officer is being sentenced to two years in prison. Charles Brown was found guilty of falsifying payment records and embezzlement to the tune of 96-thousand dollars while working at the Hawaii Longshore Workers Division. This week a judge ordered him to spend 24 months behind bars and pay nearly one-hundred-thousand dollars in fines.

Nearly 16-thousand Hawaii taxpayers can expect a check from Intuit Incorporated this season. Intuit, the parent company of TurboTax, is paying out millions of Americans as part of a multi state settlement announced last year. According to the Hawaii Office of Consumer Protection, 15,904 people across the state will receive checks this month.

A 52-year-old Big Island resident accused of killing his mother-in-law with a sword has been charged with murder. The man was charged with second-degree murder on Thursday and remains behind bars on a million-dollars bail. The brutal killing happened in the Puna area one week ago today. Police arrived at a home in the Orchidland Estates subdivision of Keaau and found the man with a large, blood-covered sword next to him. He was also allegedly wearing blood-soaked clothes and had visible injuries to his hands.

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Local Kaua'i News – Monday May 8, 2023

Our Hawai'i Department of Transportation is inviting community members to an informational town hall at Hanalei Elementary School Cafeteria on Tomorrow, Tuesday, May 9, 2023, from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. There will be three different presentations on the following: Resurfacing project from Princeville to Waikoko including pedestrian improvements through Hanalei town, Hanalei Bridge improvements, Pavement removal on Malolo Road at St. Williams Church to improve safety. HDOT officials will be on hand to answer any questions the public may have about these projects, or any other work being done on Kauai.

Former Kaua'i state Rep. James "Jimmy" Tokioka has been nominated by Governor Josh Green as the new Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism. The DBEDT director, oversees more than 300 employees within the department and its attached agencies, which include the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation and the Hawaii Tourism Authority. Tokioka's appointment also remains subject to Senate approval, though it is unclear whether the Senate will vote on it in a special session or at the start of next year's legislative session in January 2024.

After several years of trying, anti-vaping advocates in Hawaii are getting their wish. State lawmakers have passed a bill that taxes electronic smoking devices and e-liquids on the same level as other tobacco products. It also bans shipping vaping products to anyone but licensed retailers. Advocates have been pushing for the bill's passing, saying it will help solve Hawaii's youth vaping crisis. If Governor Josh Green signs the bill into law, it will go into effect on July 1st.

The 2023 legislative session is now in the rearview mirror, and some of the biggest beneficiaries are hospitals on the Big Island. They were awarded a collective 70-million-dollars for upgrades and improvements. The largest chunk of money went to the island's largest hospital. Hilo Medical Center is getting 50-million-dollars to help fund its long-awaited expansion project to reduce overcrowding. Kona Community Hospital is getting 18-and-a-half-million-dollars to make urgently needed repairs to its infrastructure.

The state will pay 26-million dollars to settle a lawsuit linked to the 2019 crash of a runaway tow-truck on Likelike Highway. Court officials say the suit alleges that Jim Braddock was left permanently incapacitated after state officials failed to properly maintain a runaway-truck ramp. Braddock's attorneys had argued that he suffered irreversible injuries in the crash and will most likely require ongoing care from a nurse for the rest of his life.

Hawaii's Iam Tongi is closing in on the American Idol crown. The 18-year-old from Kahuku advanced to the top five on Sunday night's show. He sang 'Guardian' by Alanis Morissette and dedicated it to his mom Lillie. Tongi will try to sing his way into the top three next Sunday.

Drug overdoses are becoming more common on Hawaii. Reports from the Hawaii High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area show fentanyl deaths are rising across the state. In 2021 there were 48 fatal fentanyl overdoses in Hawaii, but in 2022 that number jumped to 64.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Tuesday May 9, 2023

A live mongoose was captured last Friday in Nawiliwili after Dockworkers reported spotting a mongoose at the harbor on April 28. Between May 1 and May 5, the Kauaʻi Invasive Species Committee and state Department of Health's Vector Control Branch deployed 43 traps surrounding the harbor, one of which captured the mongoose on Friday morning. The mongoose has since been handed over to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services for analysis. Mongoose pose a serious threat to many of Hawai'i's native endangered and threatened species, including plants, birds and honu. In particular, the eggs and hatchlings of ground-nesting seabirds and waterbirds, as well as those of endangered sea turtles, make for easy targets for the mongoose. The state Department of Agriculture urges residents to report suspected invasive species to the state's toll-free pest hotline at 808-643-7378.

Navy leaders connected with the 2021 Red Hill fuel spills are testifying before a federal grand jury. The grand jury will decide if criminal charges should be filed. A federal prosecutor specializing in environmental crimes has been assigned to the grand jury. Navy Captain Trent Kalp testified for several hours on Monday. He was the commander at Fleet Logistics Center Pearl Harbor during the May 2021 fuel leak. Kalp was then relieved of command and replaced just before the larger 20-thousand-gallon fuel leak in November of 2021. Thousands of gallons of jet fuel seeped into the Navy's drinking water system. The grand jury investigation may take years before the panel decides whether to indict anyone on criminal charges.

Scammers on the islands are trying yet another tactic. The Hawaii State Judiciary says people are getting calls, telling them to pay thousands of dollars in fines because they didn't show up for jury duty. One Makiki resident, a senior citizen, tells KHNL-TV he was recently told to pay 90-thousand-dollars to resolve an outstanding bench warrant for missing his jury duty date. The scammer tried to say he was with law enforcement. The Judiciary says it never calls or emails people to inform them of an outstanding warrant or summons.

The U.S. and the Hawaii state flag are being flown at half-staff in remembrance of the victims of the recent shooting in Allen, Texas. The shooting happened May 6th at an outlet mall where eight people died. One of the victims was as young as three years old. The Hawaii State Capitol and all state offices and agencies lowered the flags this morning and will continue to do so through sunset on Thursday.

A luxury yacht that ran aground has been removed from Maui's Honolua Bay for several weeks now, but the controversy continues. The state is trying to recover 460-thousand-dollars in expenses for the removal of the yacht. But, the owner's insurance company is refusing to cover it, which makes it tougher for the state to recoup the money. The price tag includes salvage fees and reef repairs. Meanwhile, Jim Jones, the owner of the yacht that ran aground in February, says he's hired a bankruptcy attorney.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is fining an Oahu-based tour boat company a thousand dollars for getting too close to dolphins. In January, a boat operated by the company

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Dolphins and You idled and got near spinner dolphins off Makua Beach. Federal law states people must stay at least 50 yards away from Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins. The company says it cares deeply about the safety of dolphins and is following NOAA's guidelines.

Hawaii's total losses to elderly fraud spiked last year. The amount, more than 16-point-three-million-dollars, was up by 84-percent compared to 2021. That's according to the FBI's Annual Elderly Fraud report, which shows nationwide total losses of more than three-billion-dollars for the year. More than 88-thousand Americans aged 60 and older reported falling victim to scams. Nearly 400 Hawaii residents were preyed upon by scammers and lost money because of it in 2022.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday May 10, 2023

The Kauaʻi County Housing Agency held a blessing ceremony on Tuesday for the Lima Ola Supportive Housing Project in ʻEleʻele. The ceremony commemorated the start of construction for the Lima Ola Supportive Housing Project. The housing model is intended to provide low-cost rental housing to Kauaʻi residents experiencing homelessness or who are at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Under this model, tenants receive on-site social services to assist them in getting back on their feet and prepare them to move to more permanent housing. A total of 24 units, studio and one-bedroom, will be built with square footage ranging from 240 to 400 square feet. The project will also include a community building that will include offices, a reception area, and laundry facilities.

The long-awaited grand opening of the Honolulu rail system will be June 30. Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi and city officials made the announcement Wednesday morning at the rail Station at Aloha Stadium. June 30 is the start of the Fourth of July weekend and the city is looking to make rides on the rail free and open to the public for the first five days. The first phase will run between Aloha Stadium and the Kroc Center in Kapolei.

On Oahu A pretrial detainee is back behind bars after a barricade situation in Kaneohe. The Department of Public Safety says the 38-year-old man was released from custody by mistake on Tuesday. The DPS is investigating how the man was freed from a court cellblock after appearing at Kauikeaouli Hale. The man peacefully surrendered after speaking with negotiators. There are reports that he tried to hide in an attic. He was initially charged with unauthorized control of a propelled vehicle.

The newly approved state budget includes ten-million-dollars for the planning of a new Oahu Community Correctional Center. The Department of Public Safety is applauding the move, but the American Civil Liberties Union calls it a waste of taxpayer money. The ACLU would rather see the money go toward preventing incarceration with things like programs, housing, education and job training. Governor Green gets the final decision on the budget. The current OCCC has a capacity of 628 inmates but it currently houses nearly eleven-hundred.

A team from the University of Hawaii will get to develop and launch a satellite into space. The U.H. team will be one of eight to send a project aboard a NASA ship traveling to space in 2025. It's part of NASA's CubeSat Launch Initiative. The satellite developed by students at the University of Hawaii at Manoa will study the causes of global warming. The students had to raise about 100-thousand-dollars to build a low-cost prototype and did so by securing several grants.

The University of Hawaii has made some alarming predictions about the future of Hanauma Bay Nature Preserve. Hawaii's Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology predicts about 88-percent of the bay's usable beach will be underwater by 2030. That according to a five year study which evaluated the biological, physical and social carry capacities of Hanauma Bay using models. Lead researcher Ku'ulei Rodgers says these findings emphasized the significance of preparing for the future and making management decisions.

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Local Kauaï News – Thursday May 11, 2023

Kauai County may use eminent domain to seize control of the former Coco Palms resort. The possibility was discussed Wednesday, during a meeting with the Kauai County Council and Board of Land and Natural Resources. Both the county and state are upset with unpermitted developments that have been happening on the Coco Palms site. If the county condemns the land, it would be stuck paying fair market value. The Coco Palms hotel has been closed since it was devastated by Hurricane Iniki in 1992.

A Kauai cleaning company is being forced to pay back almost 97-thousand dollars in unpaid wages and damages for some workers. The U.S. Department of Labor found that All Kauai Cleaning in Luhue didn't pay 10 of it employees overtime wages or for time spent traveling in between job sites. The company was also fined an additional one-thousand-540 dollars in penalties for repeated violations. In 2014, the DOL recovered over 33-thousand dollars in unpaid wages and damages from All Kauai Cleaning.

Lopaka Santos-Dasalia, age 21, has pleaded no contest to terroristic threatening in the first degree. Santos-Dasalia, called in a bomb threat at Koloa School, the school his ex-girlfriend's children attended. The, Sept. 26, 2022 call triggered a shutdown of the school. The charge carries a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and \$10,000 in restitution. Though a judge will have final say over the sentence, prosecutors agreed to recommend Santos-Dasalia serve one year in jail, with credit for time served and the potential for early release to a drug treatment facility — along with four years of probation.

Local and state leaders are coming together to demand the clean up of areas surrounding the Navy's Red Hill fuel facility. There have been dozens of fuel leaks in the area over the last few decades as well as dangerous chemical spills from firefighting foam. On Wednesday, leaders gathered at the state Capitol to sign a "unified statement" calling for the clean up of the Red Hill facility by the US Navy.

Part of Maui's famed Hana Highway is now closed after a series of dangerous rockfalls. Drivers can't go between Hana and Kau-po for as long as the road is closed. Maui County says the closure may last up to a month. In the meantime, crews will be removing loose rocks and doing other work to stabilize cliffsides. An engineering assessment conducted Wednesday confirmed there is at least one unsafe cliffside. Rockfalls in recent days have obstructed the road. Last week, a vehicle traveling in the same area was damaged by rocks and cliffside mud.

State lawmakers have approved two-and-a-half-million-dollars for sound detectors meant to crack down on illegal noise on Oahu's roads. The microphones, which will be placed on the existing infrastructure, will include cameras to take pictures of license plates. Similar to Oahu's red-light cameras, fines will be sent to vehicles' registered owners. It's designed to reduce illegal loud noise, like from mufflers modified to be extra loud. Honolulu bans any sound coming from a vehicle that's loud enough to reach at least 30 feet.

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The Hawaii Department of Education is investigating an incident that reportedly left a busload of kids shaken and crying. On Tuesday, a bus driver decided to stop at the child development center on the Helemano Military Reservation after ruling the ride was too unsafe because of student behavior. An audio recording captured the bus driver refusing to release the elementary school students to their parents. Parents, wondering where their kids were, then called military police. The DOE says the driver followed protocol by stopping at a designated stop during an unsafe situation.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Friday May 12, 2023

A man is behind bars after he allegedly kidnapped a baby in Waipahu on Thursday. Police say the suspect broke into a woman's home at the Waipahu Towers development and forcibly took the three-month-old from her. The suspect was later located at his home and arrested. The child was uninjured and reunited with his mother.

Hawaii Governor Josh Green held a press conference to speak about the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency. On Wednesday, Green praised Hawaii's public for ending the pandemic with the country's lowest COVID mortality rate. He thanked residents for getting vaccinated, wearing masks, and following government mandates to keep people safe. Free COVID vaccinations will still be available in the state for now, and the Department of Health will continue to investigate outbreaks and other related events.

Hawaii's lawmakers have yet to support legislation that would crack down on illegal cockfighting at the federal level. On Wednesday, Senators Cory Booker of New Jersey and John Kennedy of Louisiana introduced a bill that would make it easier for federal authorities to go after those involved in illegal animal fighting. An identical bill was introduced in the House last month, and just like the new Senate companion, it was not co-sponsored by any members of Hawaii's Congressional delegation. Hawaii is one of only a few states where cockfighting is considered a misdemeanor crime and not a felony.

New data from the Hawaii Department of Transportation shows Oahu's new red light camera program has been extremely effective so far. In the nearly six months of the pilot project, far fewer drivers are running red lights at intersections with cameras. Before it had a camera, the intersection of Piikoi and South Beretania Streets saw an average of 110 red-light runners per day. Now, it sees an average of just 14 drivers running the red light each day. Citations are 200-dollars. DOT Director Ed Sniffen says, after a full year, there will be enough data to determine if red-light cameras should be permanent, and added to more intersections.

State lawmakers are allocating 33-and-a-half-million-dollars to repair the reflecting pools at the state capitol building. The money will cover planning, design and construction costs. Several House lawmakers aren't happy with the choice, saying their colleagues chose to prioritize the wrong project to give that kind of funding to. But, others say repairs to the reflecting pools are long overdue and couldn't wait any longer.

The President of the University of Hawaii is making his official recommendation for the school's new athletic director. On Friday, President David Lassner announced he'd chosen Craig Angelos, currently the senior deputy director of athletics at Long Island University. If the choice is approved by the UH Board of Regents next week, Angelos will assume the position. Leaving the role after eight years is David Matlin, who announced his retirement in January.

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2023 - Quarter 2 – May**

Local Kaua*ʻ*i News – Monday May 15, 2023

Kauai's James Tokioka is the new director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. It's the third time a state agency overseeing economic development has gotten a new leader in the past six months. The 61-year-old Tokioka initially left a communications services company and the state Legislature to become director of the state Department of Transportation's Airports Division.

Kahuku's Iam Tongi is in the American Idol finale. He was voted through to the next round again on Sunday, and is now one of the final three singers standing. On Sunday's show, Tongi sang his renditions of "Lava" and "Father and Son." The 18-year-old is Tongi is flying home to perform a live, free concert at Turtle Bay tomorrow.

There are no reports of injuries after a Southwest Airlines plane with a shattered window made an emergency landing in Honolulu. The plane, which was headed for San Diego, turned around and came back about three hours into the flight on Sunday night. The window shattered near where the first officer sits. The plane took off from Honolulu at 4:20 p.m. and landed safely back in Honolulu at 7:30 p.m.

A man who was wandering in the middle of Farrington Highway is behind bars on suspicion of attacking an 82-year-old woman. Honolulu police say it happened early Sunday morning, just after midnight. The woman reportedly slammed on her brakes to avoid hitting the 31-year-old man. After that, he allegedly jumped on the woman's hood and started stomping on her windshield. Police arrested the man after he made a run for it. He faces a felony criminal property damage charge. It's unclear if the woman was hurt.

A fisherman is counting his blessings after an extremely close call with a tiger shark. Scott Haraguchi was kayaking in waters off Oahu on Friday when the shark jumped swim away. He shared a video of the scary moment online, and it has been watched thousands of times already.

Over 70 public schools across Oahu are serving fresh poi this month. This comes as the state Department of Education aims to support local farmers and provide local menu offerings to students. Officials hope to expand the program to more kids across the state.

Hawaii is the healthiest state in the nation. That's according to a new study based on CDC data conducted by pharmaceutical intelligence company OZMOSI. States were scored based on a dozen categories including air quality, obesity, and behavioral habits. Hawaii took the top spot, followed by Colorado, Vermont, and Utah. Kentucky ranked dead last.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Tuesday May 16, 2023

KIUC our utility company, would like you to know In order to complete emergency work at the Wainiha substation, members in Wainiha and Haena will be without power this evening from 11:00 pm to approximately 3:00 am.

33 year-old Sandon Igne of Lawai, has been sentenced to 10 years in prison for causing the deaths of Eugenia Villanueva and Delfin Geronimo and caused substantial bodily injury to two other occupants of the vehicle following a crash on Christmas Eve in 2020. He was also sentenced to a lifetime driver's license revocation. At approximately 4 p.m. on December 24, 2020, after consuming multiple alcoholic beverages in Līhu'e, Igne headed westbound on Kaumuali'i Highway. Prosecutors said Igne's blood alcohol level was nearly twice the legal limit. Near Knudsen Gap, he drove off the right side of the roadway, then veered back across the roadway, crossing the westbound lane and the double solid yellow line before crashing into the vehicle travelling eastbound. Negligent Homicide in the First Degree carries a maximum sentence of ten years in prison with a maximum \$25,000 fine.

Former Honolulu City Councilman and council chair Ikaika Anderson has been arrested . Anderson, a recent candidate for lieutenant governor, was arrested at about 7 o'clock Monday night on suspicion of abuse of a household member. His attorney says it was a misdemeanor offense based on a one-sided accusation. Earlier this year, Governor Green picked Anderson to lead the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. But, Anderson withdrew his nomination in February after a Senate Committee vote to reject it.

Wildlife officials are investigating after a live snake was found and captured in Upcountry Maui. The snake was captured in Kula and given to state officials on Monday. It was found near the back entrance of Kamehameha School. All snakes are illegal in Hawaii since they pose significant threats to native wildlife. Anyone found with one in their possession can be charged with a felony.

A new plan would largely scale back the number of air tours over two of Hawaii's most popular national parks. The FAA and the National Park Service announced their court-ordered plans on Monday. Public comment on the draft plans for Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and Haleakala National Park closes on June 16th. To lower noise levels, there would be a combination of route and altitude limitations, along with predetermined no-fly days and quiet technology flight days. The plan would reduce air tours at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park by 86-percent annually and by 50-percent annually at Haleakala and would also require a complete transition to quiet technology flights by 2033.

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2023 - Quarter 2 – May**

Local Kauaï News – Wednesday May 17, 2023

Our Kauai Department of Parks and Recreation (DOPR) held a blessing ceremony on Tuesday, commemorating the completion of the playcourt renovations at Kōloa Park, on Maluhia Road. This project included significant renovations and rebuilding of the tennis court, pickleball courts and basketball court at the park. The \$958,000 project was funded through the County's Capital Improvement Program. Construction began in April 2022, and the playcourts were substantially completed and opened to the public on May 1, 2023.

The U.S. Department of Defense will begin defueling the Red Hill fuel storage facility in October. On Tuesday, Joint Task Force Red Hill submitted a revised defueling timeline to the EPA and Hawaii Department of Health. The process is now scheduled to start on October 16th and finish by January 19th, 2024. The Navy initially said defueling wouldn't be complete until June 2024. The process will remove 104-million-gallons of jet fuel from the tanks at the troubled underground facility.

The plea deal is changing in a major public corruption case at the City Department of Planning and Permitting. Jocelyn Godoy is back in court today. She is being accused of taking bribes in exchange for permits, and so are several other DPP staff members including the city's former chief building inspector Wayne Inouye and supervisor Kanani Padeken. Currently all but one defendant has pleaded guilty. One staff member was sentenced to two and a half years in prison. Godoy had previously pleaded "not guilty."

Former Honolulu City Council Chair Ikaika Anderson is vowing to fight an abuse charge following his arrest on Monday night. Anderson was arrested at his home in Waimanalo on suspicion of domestic violence. A woman who was visiting Anderson from the Big Island told police he injured her during a fight on Monday morning. Police say the woman told a coworker Anderson wouldn't let her fly home, then texted the coworker a picture of her injured arm. The coworker then contacted police, who say the alleged victim had visible injuries.

A snake found on Maui earlier this week has been humanely euthanized. The reptile, found near the Pukalani Golf Club on Monday afternoon, has been identified as a non-venomous female gopher snake measuring three-and-a-half-feet long. The snake was handed off to the Maui Plant Quarantine Branch. Concerned residents initially reported seeing children playing with the snake. It's still unclear where the snake came from. Authorities searched the surrounding area but found no evidence of other snakes, which are illegal to have in Hawaii.

A woman is recovering after being rescued off the coast of Oahu. The Honolulu Fire Department says a tour boat discovered the woman floating in deep waters on Monday afternoon. They determined she was in distress but she either couldn't or wouldn't answer any of the crew's questions. She initially declined the tour boat's medical services before being transferred to EMS. It's unclear how long she was in the water or how she got that far out into the ocean.

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2023 - Quarter 2 – May**

Local Kauaʻi News – Thursday May 18, 2023

Up to 400-thousand gallons of jet fuel are unaccounted for in the military's latest plan to defuel Red Hill. The plan, announced Tuesday, calls for defueling to start in October and end by mid-January. The plan mentions removing 104-million-gallons of fuel from the underground tanks. But, that still leaves between 100-thousand and 400-thousand gallons unaccounted for. The Department of Defense says it's still finalizing a plan for emptying the last remaining bit of fuel.

The U.S. Department of Labor has recovered \$91,097 in unpaid wages and liquidated damages for workers employed by a Honolulu restaurant that allowed its managers to pocket some of the tips earned by its servers, cooks and kitchen helpers. The department's Wage and Hour Division found Lance Yamamoto, owner of Sushi Bay, deprived workers of their full amount of tips they earned for serving the restaurant's customers, a violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act. A restaurant employer cannot keep tips received by its employees for any purposes, including allowing managers and supervisors to keep any portion of those tips.

A man from Maui has been sentenced to a decade in prison for nearly killing his wife. The man beat his wife after she spilled water on him at their home in Kihei in January of 2022. The woman says she was abused for hours and nearly fell unconscious several times. The man took a plea deal. His attempted murder charge was dropped, and he instead pleaded guilty to felony abuse, terroristic threatening, and assault.

State tax revenue is expected to finish the current fiscal year with a net loss of one-percent. The state Council on Revenues had been projecting revenue to increase by the time the fiscal year ended on June 30th. But, gains largely turned into losses in April, reversing the expectations for growth. The council had projected a revenue increase as high as six-point-five-percent in September. It fell to five-point-five-percent in January, then to two-percent in March.

New data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows Hawaii's housing shortage is easing a bit. More than six-thousand new housing units were added between 2020 and 2022. And, they are available to a larger percentage of the population, because Hawaii's population also declined during that time. Among the four major counties, Honolulu led the way, adding nearly 27-hundred new housing units in two years. Its population also declined by point-seven-five-percent as it added that housing.

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Local Kauaïi News – Friday May 19, 2023

Former Honolulu prosecutor Katherine Kealoha won't be getting out of prison early. A request to end her 13-year sentence early was officially rejected this week. A U.S. District Court judge denied Kealoha's petition, saying all of her claims were either time-barred or not properly brought. Kealoha was convicted of conspiracy and obstruction of justice in 2019, after framing her uncle for a federal crime he didn't commit. She claimed he stole her mailbox. The Bureau of Prisons says Kealoha will stay locked up until February of 2030.

The Honolulu Police Department is wrapping up its internal investigation into a police chase that ended in a violent crash in Makaha. That's what Deputy Chief Rade Vanic told the Honolulu Police Commission on Wednesday. Vanic says only one interview is remaining. The four officers involved in the chase were all charged with felonies in March, 18 months after allegedly running a car with six people off the road. Prosecutors say the officers then returned to the crash scene and acted like they didn't know what happened. They're also accused of chasing the car without their lights and sirens on, which is a violation of HPD policy. Their trial starts on May 29th.

Honolulu might raise property taxes for vacant homes. It's part of a plan to boost city income and add to the pool of rental housing. The 2020 Census said Honolulu County had more than 34-thousand empty housing units. That's about a tenth of its total housing inventory. City officials are proposing a study that would look into why so many houses are vacant, whether and how to impose a special tax on vacant homes, and how much it would cost the city to enforce that tax.

The University of Hawaii at Manoa has its new athletic director. Craig Angelos was approved by the U.H. Board of Regents on Thursday. The confirmation vote followed hours of closed-door debate by the board. In the end, eight regents voted yes, two voted no, and one abstained from voting. Angelos is pledging to focus on capital improvements and fundraising during his tenure.

Witnesses are speaking out about a violent collision between a vehicle and a moped on Maui. A woman who was on her way to work was hit from behind in Waikapu on Tuesday morning. Several witnesses have told police she was dragged nearly a half-mile down the road. The suspect took off, but a good Samaritan followed him to Olowalu, where he waited until police arrived and made the arrest. The 32-year-old woman who was hit is in a hospital fighting for her life.

Hawaii is home to three of the nation's top ten beaches. That's according to a new report from the Department of Earth & Environment at Florida International University, which has ranked America's public beaches for 33 years. This year's top ten list included Duke Kahanamoku Beach on Oahu, Wailea Beach on Maui and Poipu Beach on Kauai. The number one spot went to the state park on St. George Island just off the Florida Panhandle.

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Local Kauaï News – Monday May 22, 2023

The Kauai County Fire Department is working to determine the cause of a house fire in Kapa'a. Saturday's fire did an estimated 70-thousand-dollars in damage. Firefighters pulled up to find a downed utility line and a small structure as well as a coconut tree and two vehicles fully engulfed in flames. . Neighbors were using garden hoses to protect their homes from the spreading flames. There were no occupants in the building at the time responders arrived, and no injuries were reported. Ultimately, damage was limited to the one property. An investigation as to the cause of the fire remains ongoing at this time.

Former Hawaii state senator Sam Slom is dead at the age of 81. Slom died at a hospital on Oahu on Sunday, following an undisclosed illness. Slom served in the state senate from 1996 to 2016, and at times, was its only Republican member. In 2016, Slom lost his bid for a sixth term to former Honolulu City Councilman Stanley Chang, a Democrat, who still holds the seat.

Hawaii's Iam Tongi is the 2023 American Idol champion. The 18-year-old Kahuku native, a favorite to win since his audition, was crowned the winner of Season 21 on Sunday night. During the finale, Tongi sang "Cool Down," by Kolohe Kai, and performed a duet of "Monsters" with the song's original singer James Blunt. Tongi sang the song during his audition and dedicated it to his late father. As the new American Idol, Tongi gets 250-thousand-dollars and a recording contract.

Hawaii's largest hospital group is ending its mask mandate today. After more than three years, all medical facilities in the Queen's Health System will make masks optional for patients, staff and visitors. There will be some exceptions for certain illnesses and procedures. Private practices at Queen's are still allowed to make their own masking rules.

Residents are invited to attend an open house at the Red Hill fuel storage facility this week. The Joint Task Force for Red Hill is hosting two open house events on Tuesday and Wednesday from 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. This will give the public a chance to learn more about the defueling process and engage with community leaders.

The rare tropical permafrost near the summit of Mauna Kea is slowly receding. Researchers say the frozen soil patches, a rarity in a tropical climate, are showing signs of shrinking over time. Doctor Norbert Schorgofer of the Planetary Science Institute says the permafrost will likely go away in a few decades or less. He says there's no lasting way to prevent it from melting, but adds there are no known negative impacts on the environment if it does fully melt.

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2023 - Quarter 2 – May**

Local Kauaʻi News – Tuesday May 23, 2023

The Hawaii Department of Health is investigating a COVID-19 outbreak at a nursing home in Hilo. Public health officials say the outbreak at Life Care Center of Hilo dates back to early April. Since then, one resident has died and 93 people have been infected. That includes 76 residents and 17 staff members. However, no new cases have been identified in the past week. The same nursing home had large COVID outbreaks in 2020 and 2021.

Flags are flying at half-staff across Hawaii in honor of late state senator Sam Slom, who died Sunday at the age of 81. Slom represented East Honolulu in the state legislature for 20 years. At times, he was the only Republican in the state senate, prompting his colleagues to give him the nickname of "The Lone Ranger." No cause of death has been announced.

Honolulu EMS is reporting a large uptick in suicide attempts on Oahu. Paramedics are now responding to between ten and 15 suicide attempts per day. Honolulu EMS Director Jim Ireland says the increase has mainly happened during the past three months. The state Department of Health says, during the past four years, the leading cause of death for Hawaii residents between the ages of 15 and 44 was suicide.

Seniors who lost their eligibility for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program could see relief thanks to a bill that was recently introduced by Hawaii U.S. Representative Jill Tokuda. It would exempt Title-Two income, or Social Security benefits, from counting against benefits under SNAPs. Those who receive SNAPs must earn below a certain income level to qualify for the benefits, but some people aren't meeting those requirements with Social Security benefits. The bill is set to make it's way through legislation soon.

Kilauea is in a state of heightened unrest. The Hawaiian Volcano Observatory issued a statement Monday night, saying the volcano is not yet erupting, but is showing signs of increased activity. Scientists say the earthquakes indicate magma is accumulating beneath the surface of the volcano, and an eruption could happen with little or no warning. There were more than 100 recorded earthquakes on Saturday, including a magnitude three-point-seven felt in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and nearby communities. Kilauea last erupted on January 5th.

The Hawaii Tourism Authority is awarding more than 67-million-dollars to three contractors. The agency made the trio of multiyear procurement awards on Monday. The contractors will market Hawaii to the United States and Canada, and offer support services for destination stewardship. The HTA is retaining two contractors, the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau and Vox International. Meanwhile, the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement will manage post-arrival visitor education. Last year, visitors spent 16-point-two-billion-dollars in Hawaii, averaging 231-dollars per visitor per day. The HTA is looking to get back in the good graces of state lawmakers, who nearly killed the agency during the recent legislative session.

A man who threatened to kill and Department of Land and Natural Resources official was sentenced today. Police say Lindsey Kinney made a death threat against Oahu's harbor master on Instagram

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after having his boat impounded. Kinney was arrested by the FBI last year and was found guilty by a jury earlier this year. He was sentenced to 37 months and three years of supervised release.

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2023 - Quarter 2 – May

Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday May 24, 2023

Kauai Firefighters responded to a man in distress Tuesday afternoon in Kokeʻe. Shortly before noon, first responders were notified of a man from Florida, in his 30s, who reportedly fell off a ridge while conducting work with a local conservation group in Kokeʻe. Upon responders arrival, they found the man about 40 feet down a steep side of a ridge with injuries to his back. The man was short-hauled to a nearby landing zone in Kokeʻe, then flown to Princeville Airport. The man declined further treatment and was released at the scene.

The Hawaii Department of Education is doing damage control after it failed to use 650-thousand federal dollars meant to help schools buy local food. The DOE lost the funding after backtracking on a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant it applied for last year. DOE officials are blaming the mistake on a miscommunication between its leaders. Hawaii's congressional delegation has raised concerns about the loss of funding, saying it gives the federal government the wrong impression that Hawaii doesn't need financial help to increase how much local food it buys and serves. Last year, the DOE also gave back more than one-point-one-million-dollars in federal funding allocated through the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.

Two more suspects have been arrested in connection with the shooting that left a 17-year-old boy dead in Makaha. An 18-year-old woman and 16-year-old girl are facing a charge of first-degree hindering prosecution. The younger suspect is accused of driving the alleged shooter, a 16-year-old boy, to and from the scene on Sunday morning. The suspected shooter was charged with second-degree murder on Tuesday. The Honolulu Police Department wants the boy charged as an adult.

Hawaii may start tracking its visitors' locations with a smartphone app. The app would be loaded in advance of people's visits, or via a QR code at the airport. It would give visitors useful information, send alerts, and serve as a place to make reservations and pay fees. But, the state government would in exchange use artificial intelligence capabilities to watch where they go. Advocates say it's a way to manage tourists in real time. Earlier this week, the Council For Native Hawaiian Advancement was awarded a 27-million-dollar destination stewardship contract from the Hawaii Tourism Authority. The CNHA and state lawmakers are now having discussions about possibly implementing the app.

Oahu's red light camera pilot program may expand to catch speeders too. The Department of Transportation is six months into its two-year red light camera pilot program. More than four-thousand citations have been issued, and that's with one of the ten cameras still in the warning phase. Lawmakers say the infrastructure needed to catch speeding vehicles is already in place. In fact, the DOT's example photo of how the cameras work shows vehicle speed. But, lawmakers would have to wait until after the two-year red light pilot program is up to expand the cameras to issue citations for speeding as well.

Police aren't just handing out warning now if you're caught driving without a seatbelt. Through June 4th, police across the state will be taking a "no-excuse" approach to step up enforcement for the national "Click It or Ticket" campaign. Drivers who are ticketed could pay a fine of more than 100-

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dollars. They could also get a citation for any passengers that aren't buckled up. The campaign's goal is to save lives and reduce injuries from not wearing a seatbelt.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Thursday May 25, 2023

The NOAA's outlook for this years Central Pacific Hurricane season is out. Hurricane season starts June 1st and lasts through November 30th. Forecasters are predicting that the Central Pacific basin is expected to see four to seven tropical cyclones throughout the season. They also say there's a 50-percent chance of a busier-than normal season with warmer waters already setting in. Governor Josh Green is urging all residents to start preparing for the hurricane season now.

Tripler Medical Center is settling a medical malpractice lawsuit for nearly 30-million-dollars. In 2016, a one-month-old girl was brought to Tripler with a swollen abdomen, and after turning blue from the waist down. Doctors later determined she had a condition called mid-gut volvulus, which causes the intestines to twist. The lawsuit blames Tripler for not testing for volvulus, which led to the girl losing between 70 to 95-percent of her intestinal tract. The girl is now six-years-old and suffers from several physical and intellectual disabilities.

Governor Josh Green is announcing a new plan for Aloha Stadium and the entertainment district surrounds it. Under the new plan, the project will be delivered as one public-private partnership instead of being broken up into two contracts, one for the stadium and one for the surrounding development. Green says the two project approach "required the state to assume an undesirable amount of risk regarding ongoing funding." The developer will use state and private funds to build the new stadium which should reduce the financial burden on Hawaii taxpayers.

Hawaii now has its first FEMA-operated emergency broadcast studio. The studio in Honolulu had its grand opening on Wednesday. FEMA officials say it will boost the local capacity to keep people informed during emergencies like natural disasters. The standalone studio is built to withstand the most catastrophic disasters. It's safeguarded against 15 FEMA-identified hazards. . It's intended to serve as Oahu's last direct line of communication if internet, phone lines and cable all fail. It's also stocked with food that can accommodate two broadcasters for up to 60 days.

About 64-percent of the homes in Honolulu are vulnerable to hurricane damage. That's according to the Honolulu Department of Emergency Management, which is preparing for the start of hurricane season in one week. The vulnerable homes include single-wall homes and those built in flood zones. Oahu has 38 designated hurricane shelters. But, most are schools, which are not designed to withstand hurricane-force winds.

The owner of a Maui antique store is in trouble after police found illegal ivory and turtle shells in his shop. On Tuesday, officers were executing a warrant at the Antique Freak in Wailuku when they made the discovery. They collected ivory from elephants, whales, and walrus and also found multiple turtle shells, all of which are illegal in the state. The owner of the store, Shane Rosberg, has been arrested and charged with 26 counts of wildlife trafficking.

Oahu's paramedics are busier than they were before the pandemic. Honolulu EMS Director Doctor Jim Ireland says medical calls are up 20-percent compared to the pre-COVID years. Ireland believes the pandemic is partly to blame for the spike in emergency calls. He tells the Star Advertiser many

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people were less inclined or unable to see doctors for basic health exams during the pandemic, and are now seeing the consequences. He adds that the number of injuries is up too, as more tourists arrive and more people head outdoors.

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Local Kaua'i News – Friday May 26, 2023

The Kauai District of our state Department of Health will conduct a Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) survey to assess the emergency preparedness level and current wellbeing of Kaua'i households. Survey teams will go door-to-door (June 6 to 9, 2023). Survey teams are comprised of Kaua'i District Health Office staff with support from the Kaua'i Medical Reserve Corps, and the American Red Cross. The survey takes about 10 minutes and All survey responses will be confidential, and survey teams will not collect names or addresses. Team members will wear vests identifying themselves as part of the DOH survey team and will carry identification cards. Participating households will be offered the opportunity to complete the survey over the phone, if preferred.

Hawaii has a greater chance of being hit with a hurricane than in most years. NOAA is warning of a near to above normal Central Pacific hurricane season. It's largely because El Nino conditions are developing, making ocean waters warmer, and increasing the chance of a hurricane forming. The Central Pacific basin is expected to see four to seven tropical cyclones this hurricane season. That includes tropical depressions, tropical storms and hurricanes. Hurricane season runs from June 1st to November 30th.

A new lawsuit claims a Honolulu police officer violated department policy when he shot a man who was in his car in 2021. The lawsuit, filed Wednesday, says the officer went against the HPD's use-of-force policy when he shot the man before arresting him. The lawsuit says the plainclothes officer stayed in the car's path, then shot the driver five times after he crashed into a concrete post. The HPD's use-of-force policy states a moving vehicle on its own is not a threat that justifies the use of deadly force. Officers are required to get out of the way of oncoming vehicles instead of shooting at them.

Jury deliberations are underway in the attempted murder trial of Michael Hirokawa. Hirokawa is accused of raping and beating a woman at his home in November of 2020. Police found the woman nearly beaten to death. But, Hirokawa claims she drugged him in an attempt to steal money, and says he doesn't remember anything after drinking wine with her. He faces life in prison, if convicted.

A new lion is making his home at the Honolulu Zoo. On Thursday, Enzi the lion was flown in all the way from Indiana and introduced to his new home. The eight-year-old king of the jungle will be placed in a 120-day quarantine before guests can come visit him. Eventually, he'll be put in the public enclosure with another lion, Moxy. A spokesperson for the zoo said they're "very excited" to welcome Enzi to Hawaii.

The second suspect accused of shooting a 17-year-old boy to death at Makaha Beach park last weekend has been charged with murder. On Thursday, the 20-year-old man was charged with second-degree murder and first-degree arson. Police say he set the getaway car on fire after shooting the boy to death. The first alleged shooter, a 16-year-old boy, was charged with second-degree murder earlier this week.

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Three Honolulu police officers who arrested a ten-year-old girl want out of a lawsuit. The lawsuit claims they used excessive force and wrongfully arrested the girl in 2020 because of an allegedly offensive drawing. The officers recently requested qualified immunity, but it was rejected after a judge said there isn't enough information about what happened at the school. The officers handcuffed the girl at Honowai Elementary School in Waipahu then detained her for several hours at the Pearl City police station. A school administrator called police, reporting the girl made an offensive drawing depicting another student who might have been bullying her. In 2022, the girl's mother sued the officers, the city and county of Honolulu, the state Department of Education, and the school's vice principal.

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Local Kauaī News – Tuesday May 30, 2023

Firefighters extinguished a fire that broke out late Monday night about 11:20 in the No. 1 Chinese and BBQ restaurant located at 'Ele'ele Shopping Center. No occupants were in the building at the time and no injuries were reported. Upon arrival, police on scene reported seeing smoke and flames in the kitchen area. Firefighters used forcible entry to access the interior of the structure. Once inside, they located a commercial kitchen stove and hood on fire, and quickly extinguished all flames. Firefighters with the Fire Prevention Bureau arrived on scene to conduct an investigation. Damages to the structure and its contents are estimated to be roughly \$50,000. The investigation remains ongoing.

Our Kauai County Council has scheduled an executive session to discuss purchasing the Coco Palms ruins via eminent domain tomorrow, Wednesday May 31. PLUS there's a Resolution on the agenda supporting public access to State owned parcels rather than only for the benefit of hotel developers. Written Testimony may be submitted to: counciltestimony@kauai.gov . Those who wish to submit their testimony in person should attend the Council meeting in Council Chambers starting at 9am tomorrow, May 31.

A man is being charged after his dog injured two women over the weekend. Police say Frederick Kassebeer turned himself in on Sunday and was charged with "permitting dog to stray" and "negligent failure to control a dangerous dog." It's believed the dog got loose from Kassebeer's backyard and went to the neighbors, where it attacked 32-year-old Amber Clausen and possibly bit her mother Helen Buelo as well. An investigation is ongoing and will determine whether the dog is euthanized.

Public health officials are reporting a rise in sexually transmitted diseases in Hawaii. That includes a surge in syphilis infections, some of which are impacting unborn babies. Doctor Diana Felton is the state Department of Health's Communicable Disease Division Chief. She says there has been a rapid increase in women getting infected in recent months, especially women of childbearing age. Pregnant women can pass the infection to their fetus, which is known as congenital syphilis. Hawaii had no cases of congenial syphilis for several years until it reported a dozen cases in 2020. There were about two-dozen cases last year.

Four Honolulu police officers charged in connection with a pursuit crash in Makaha are now scheduled to go on trial on August 21st. The officers' lawyers successfully argued in favor of having the trial delayed, despite the objections of Honolulu prosecutors. The trial had been scheduled to start this week. Six people were injured in September of 2021. The officers are accused of chasing their car without their lights and sirens on, then running them off the road. Then, they allegedly returned to the scene of the crash and acted like they didn't know what happened. One of the victims suffered brain damage and another was paralyzed from the neck down.

Honolulu city councilmembers could be banned from taking on outside work or having any other financial gain beyond their elected council seat. Council Chair Tommy Waters and Vice Chair Esther Kia'aina are introducing an amendment to the city charter that would only allow councilmembers to hold one job and only make money from that job. If approved, the proposed charter amendment

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would be on the ballot in the 2024 general election. If approved by voters, it would officially take effect at the start of 2025.

Hawaii's population is getting older. Newly released census data shows nearly one in five people who live on the islands are aged 65 and older. More than 282-thousand residents are in that age group, which represents more than 19-percent of the state's total population. One in seven Hawaii residents were 65 and older in 2010, when the age group made up a bit more than 14-percent of the population. The number of residents younger than five-years-old went down eleven-and-a-half percent during that same time period, while the number of residents aged 18 and younger declined by one-and-a-half-percent.

Another tourist is making headlines after accidentally following her GPS off a boat ramp. The woman said her GPS told her to turn down a ramp at the Honokohau Small Boat Harbor in Kaulua-Kona. She told witnesses she thought the water was a large puddle, and those at the scene say they were surprised at her slow reaction. The incident comes just weeks after another pair of tourists said their vehicle GPS led them into the water at the same harbor.

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Local Kauaʻi News – Wednesday May 31, 2023

Firefighters extinguished a storage shed that caught fire early Wednesday morning at the Bryan J. Baptiste Sports Complex in Kapaʻa. No injuries were reported. Shortly after 3:30 a.m. firefighters were dispatched after receiving a report of a fire at the park. Once on scene, responders found a 10-foot by 30-foot shed fully engulfed in flames. The shed belonged to the Kauaʻi Pop Warner Football League and was used to store youth football equipment. The structure is considered a total loss, and inspectors estimate the damage to the storage shed and its contents to be roughly \$200,000. The cause of the fire remains under investigation by the Kauaʻi Police Department. Anyone with information is urged to call Police Dispatch at 808-241-1711. Those wishing to remain anonymous can submit a tip to Crime Stoppers Kauai at cskauai.org

New revelations show the Navy waited several days to tell the public about the Red Hill fuel spill. A recent deposition of Leonard Joseph Nehl, a supervisor of the Navy's drinking water system, reveals more about what happened in late November and early December of 2021. Nehl says, on November 28th, officials could smell fuel coming from the sink in Navy Captain Gordie Meyer's office bathroom. Nehl says, on that day, Meyer wanted to let people know. Instead, that night, the Navy put out a press release saying there was "no immediate indication that the water is not safe." The Navy didn't announce its public drinking water system contained fuel until December 2nd, four days later. By then, thousands of residents in the Pearl Harbor area had started getting sick.

A man accused of kidnapping and violently sexually assaulting a woman at his apartment in Honolulu in 2020 has been found not guilty. On Tuesday, after two full days of jury deliberations, Michael Hirokawa was acquitted of attempted murder, kidnapping, and sexual assault charges. Hirokawa's attorneys did not deny that he beat and sexually assaulted the woman, but argued he was drugged first. Hirokawa says he was drugged with LSD and the sleep aid Ambien and doesn't remember what happened that night.

The Department of Public Safety wants to warn the public of scammers that are calling people pretending to be sheriffs asking for money. Authorities say these scammers are telling people they have an outstanding warrant because they failed to appear in court. DPS wants to remind people not to give personal information to callers claiming to represent a law enforcement agency. If you get a call like this, report it to police.

A Hawaii couple is dead after a fishing charter boat they were on sank off Alaska's coast on Sunday. Alaska State Troopers found the body of 57-year-old Maury Agcaoili, who was among four people that were reported missing. His wife Danielle was also a passenger on the board but the U.S. Coast Guard suspended its search for the other missing individuals on Monday. On Sunday, the Coast Guard received a call that a 30-foot aluminum charter boat with five people on board- including the master and four passengers- hadn't returned. The boat was found partially submerged off Low island where Maury's body was also recovered.

A mother from the Big Island has been charged after allegedly stabbing her nine-year-old daughter multiple times. The 34-year-old woman from Pahoehoe was charged with five crimes on Tuesday,

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including assault and unlawful imprisonment. One week ago, she allegedly violated a child custody order by pulling her daughter out of school. Court documents say she then drove her daughter to a home and stabbed her several times in the hand and chest. She is also accused of lunging at a police officer with a knife, leading to another charge of attempted assault of an officer. The child has since been released from the hospital.